Searching the Deep Web

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What is Deep Web?

- ✶ Information accessed *only* through HTML form pages
  - database queries
  - results embedded in HTML pages
- (was) part of invisible Web
  - any information on Web can't search
    - Javascript output
    - unlabeled images, video, music, …
      - extract information?
    - pages sitting on servers with no paths from crawler seeds

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Extent of problem

- Estimates
  - 500 times larger than "surface" Web in terabytes of information
  - diverse uses and topics
    - 51% databases of Web pages behind query forms non-commercial (2004)
      - includes pages also reachable by standard crawling
    - 17% surface Web sites are not commercial sites (2004)
  - in 2004 Google and Yahoo each indexed 32% Web objects behind query forms
    - 84% overlap ⇒ 63% not indexed by either

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Growth estimates

- 43,000-96,000 Deep Web sites est. in 2000
  - 7500 terabytes ⇒ 500 times surface Web
  - estimate by overlap analysis - underestimates
- 307,000 Deep Web sites est. 2004 (2007 publ.)
  - 450,000 Web databases: avg. 1.5 per site
  - 1,258,000 unique Web query interfaces (forms)
    - avg. 2.8 per database
    - 72% at depth 3 or less
    - 94% databases have some interface at depth 3 or less
    - exclude non-query forms, site search
  - estimate extrapolation from sampling

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Approaches to getting deep Web data

- Application programming interfaces
  - allow search engines get at data
  - a few popular site provide
  - not unified interfaces
- virtual data integration
  - a.k.a. mediating
  - "broker" user query to relevant data sources
    - issue query real time
- Surfacing
  - a.k.a warehousing
  - build up HTML result pages in advance

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Virtual Data Integration

- In advance:
  - identify pool of databases with HTML access pages
    - crawl
  - develop model and query mapping for each source: mediator system
    - domains + semantic models
    - identify content/topics of source
    - develop "wrappers" to "translate" queries

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Virtual Data Integration

- When receive user query:
  - from pool choose set of database sources to query
    - based on source content and query content
    - real-time content/topic analysis of query
  - develop appropriate query for each data source
  - integrate (federate) results for user
    - extract info
    - combine (rank?) results
    - example Kosmix

Mediated scheme

- Mappings
  form inputs → elements of mediated scheme
  query over mediated scheme
  → queries over each form
- creating mediated scheme
  - manually
  - by analysis of forms HARD

Virtual Integration: Issues

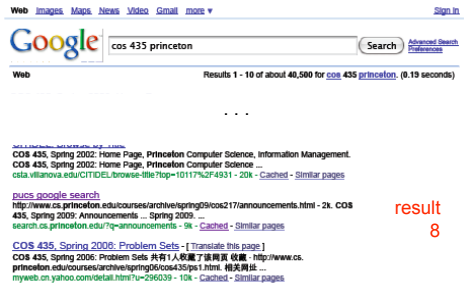
- Good for specific domains
  - easier to do
  - viable when commercial value
- Doesn't scale well

Surfacing

- In advance:
  - crawl for HTML pages containing forms that access databases
  - for each form
    - execute many queries to database using form
      - how choose queries?
    - index each resulting HTML page as part of general index of Web pages
  - pulls database information to surface
- When receive user query:
  - database results are returned like any other

Google query: cos 435 princeton

executed April 30, 2009 in AM



result 8

cached version of pucs google search

Surfacing: Google methodology

- Major Problem:
  Determine queries to use for each form
  - determine templates
    - SELECT * FROM DB WHERE *predicates*
  - generate values for *predicates*
- Goal:
  Good coverage of large number of databases
  - "Good", not exhaustive
    - limit load on target sites during indexing
    - limit size pressure on search engine index
    - want "surfaced" pages good for indexing
  - trading off depth within DB site for breadth of sites

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Google: generating values

- generic text boxes: any words
  - select seed words from form page to start
    - tf-idf analysis
  - extract more keywords from initial form results
  - repeat until …
  - choose subset of keywords found
- typed text boxes: well-defined set values
  - type can be recognized with high precision
    - relatively few types over many domains
      - zip code, date, …
    - often distinctive input names
    - test types using sample of values

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Google designers' observations

- # URLs generated proportional to size database, not # possible queries
- semantics not "significant role" in form queries
  - exceptions: correlated inputs
    - min-max ranges - mine collection of forms for patterns
    - keyword+database selection - HARD
      when choice of databases (select box)
- user still gets fresh data
  - Search result gives URL with embedded DB query
    - doesn't work for POST forms

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more observations

- is now part of Google Search
  - in results of "more than 1000 queries per second"
    2009
- impact on "long tail of queries"
  - top 10,000 forms acct for 50% Deep Web results
  - top 100,000 forms acct for 85% Deep Web results
- domain independent approach important
- next (now?) automatically extract database data (relational) from surfaced pages

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One other effort

- Univ Utah DeepPeep
  - specializes in Web forms
  - goal: index all Web forms
  - "tracks 45,000 forms across 7 domains"
  - claims 90% content retrieved each indexed site
  - uses focused crawler

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Deep Peep focused crawler

- Classifiers
  - Pages classified by taxonomy
    e.g. arts, movies, jobs, ….
  - Form classifier
  - Link classifier
    - Want links likely lead to search form interfaces
      eventually
    - Learn features of good paths
      - Get samples by backwards crawls

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Next challenges

- Data behind Javascript code
  - mashups, visualizations
- Combining data from multiple sources
  - general, not custom, solution

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