

Query classification via Topic Models for an art image archive

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Abstract

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on query classification. Click-through information has been shown to be a useful source for improving this task. However, far too little attention has been paid to queries in very specific domains such as art, culture and history. We propose an approach that exploits topic models built from a domain specific corpus as a mean to enrich both the query and the categories against which the query need to be classified. We take an Art Library as the case study and show that topic model enrichment improves over the enrichment via click-through considerably.

1 Introduction

In Information Science, transaction log analyses have been carried out since its early stages (Peters, 1993). Within this tradition, lately, Query Classification (QC) to detect user web search intent has obtained interesting results (Shen et al., 2006a; Shen et al., 2006b; Li et al., 2008; Cao et al., 2009). A QC system is required to automatically label a large proportion of user queries to a given target taxonomy. Successfully mapping a user query to target categories brings improvements in general web search and online advertising. Recently, most studies have focused on the mapping of user queries to a general target taxonomy. However, little has been discussed about learning to classify queries in a specific domain. In this paper, we focus on QC for queries in transaction logs of an image archive; we take the Bridgeman Art Library (BAL)¹, one of the world's top image libraries for art, culture and history, as our

¹<http://www.bridgemanart.com/>

case study. Learning to classify queries in this domain is particularly challenging due to the specific vocabulary and the small amount of textual information associated with the images. Examples of user queries taken from BAL logs and categories from BAL taxonomy are:

Queries monster woman; messe; ribera crucifixion; woman perfume, etc.

Categories Religion and Belief; People and Science; etc.

Clearly, classifying these queries against these domain specific categories is a hard challenge and standard text classification techniques need to be tailored for the specific problem in hands.

Following the literature on web search classification (Cao et al., 2009), we enrich the queries by exploiting the click-through information, which provides us with titles of the images as well as keywords assigned by domain experts to the clicked images. Furthermore, we employ unsupervised Topic Models (Blei et al., 2003) to detect the topics of the queries as well as to enrich the target taxonomy. The novelty of our work is on the use of Topic Models for a domain specific application and in particular the proposal of using the metadata itself as a source to train the model.

We confirm the impact of the click-through information, which increased the number of correct categories found by 120%, and show that for closed domain image archive, Topic Models (TM) bring a valuable contribution when built out of a very domain specific data-set. In particular, we compare the results obtained by TM enrichment when the model is built out of (a) Wikipedia pages and (b) the Bridgeman Catalogue itself. The latter increased the number of correct categories found by 117% and resulted in a raise of 18% in F1-measure with respect to the classifier based on click-through information.

2 Bridgeman Art Library (BAL)

Taxonomy In Bridgeman Art Library, images are classified with sub-categories from a two-level taxonomy. We use “top-category” and “sub-category” to refer to the first and second level, respectively. The taxonomy contains 289 top-categories and 1,148 sub-categories, with an average of ≈ 4 sub-categories for top-category. The top-categories can be divided into three main groups “topic”, “object” and “material”, we will come back to this with more details in Section 4. A sample of the taxonomy is given in Figure 1.

- (-) **Ancient and world cultures**
 - Greek, roman and etruscan
 - Egyptian
 - Asia
 - Middle and near east
 - Pre-history and europe
 - Oceania
 - Africa
 - Americas
- (-) **Business and industry**
 - Money
 - Banking
 - Industry
 - Shops and markets
 - Trades and professions
 - Agriculture
 - Portraits of people in business and industry
- (-) **Religion and Belief**
 - Christianity old testament general
 - Christianity old testament personalities
 - Christianity new testament life of virgin
 - Christianity new testament nativity madonna & holy family
 - Christianity new testament life of christ
 - Christianity parables / sacraments
 - Islam / islamic / moslem / muslim
 - Hinduism / hindu
 - Buddhism / buddhist
 - ...

Figure 1: Taxonomy

Catalogue The Catalogue contains 324,232 images. Their distribution by group of category is as following: “Topic” 79%, “Material” 18% and “Object” 3% (Figure 2). For each image the metadata contains the title, a description, keywords and a sub-category from the taxonomy above, besides other information we are not going to consider in this paper. The keyword field is for free-text terms (no controlled vocabulary is used), the terms provides physical description, aspects of the image, like the color, shape or the object described, dates, conceptual terms, etc. An example is given in Table 1.

Query Logs Query logs contain information about the queries (usually 1 to max. 5 words each)

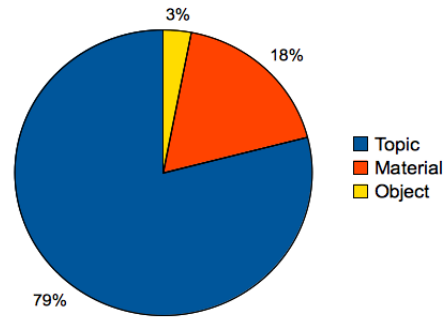


Figure 2: Distribution of images in the Bridgeman metadata among the three groups: topic, material, object

and the corresponding clicked images (i.e., the image that the user clicked after submitting the query). Via this clicked image, queries can be mapped to the information about the image provided in the metadata.

3 Data enrichment via Topic Models

Since a query can express different information needs and hence can be associated to different categories, we choose multiple classification and aim to classify a query by assigning to it three top-categories out of the BAL taxonomy.

To overcome the distance in the vocabulary between the queries and the categories, we enrich the query with the words from the title, description and keywords associated with the corresponding clicked image, and enrich the top-category with its sub-categories. We represent the enriched queries and enriched categories as vectors built using occurrence counts as values for these words. Still this enrichment does not cover the gap between the query and the top-categories, hence we exploit topic models (TMs) to reduce the distance and capture their semantic similarity. The full enrichment process is sketched in Figure 3.

Hidden Topic Models A topic model (Blei et al., 2003; Griffiths and Steyvers, 2004; Blei and Lafferty, 2007) is a semantic representation of text that discovers the abstract topics occurring in a collection of documents. Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), first introduced by (Blei et al., 2003), is a type of topic model that performs the so-called latent semantic analysis (LSA). By analyzing similar patterns of documents and word use, LDA allows representing text on a *latent* semantic level,

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Title | A Section of the Passaic Class Single-Turret Ironclad Monitor (engraving) |
| Keywords | design, battleship, weapon, armoured, boat, submarine, warship, naval, cannon, ship; |
| Description | Transverse section of pilot-house and turret; The Passaic class, single- turret monitors of the U.S. Navy were enlarged versions of the original Monitor ships; the first Passaic was commissioned 5 November 1863; |
| Sub-category | Sea Battles |

Table 1: Meta-data: An example

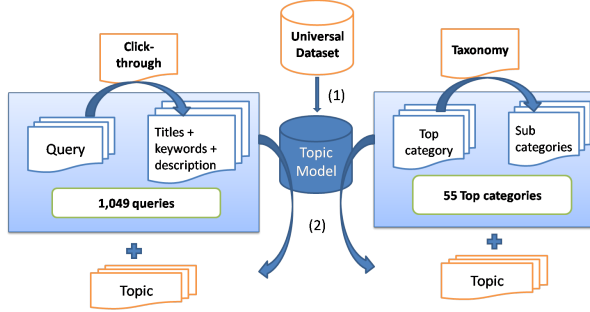


Figure 3: Enriching queries and categories: (1) Learning a TM from the universal data-set; (2) Enriching queries and categories with their topics

rather than by lexical occurrence. It has been used in many applications such as dimensionality reduction (Blei et al., 2003), text categorization, clustering, collaborative filtering and other tasks for textual documents as well as other kinds of discrete data.

The underlying idea of LDA is based upon a probabilistic procedure of generating new documents: First, each document d in the corpus is generated by sampling a distribution θ over topics from a Dirichlet distribution ($Dir(\alpha)$). After that, the topic assignment for each observed word w is performed by sampling a topic z from a multinomial distribution ($Mult(\theta)$). This process is repeated until all T topics have been generated for the whole corpus.

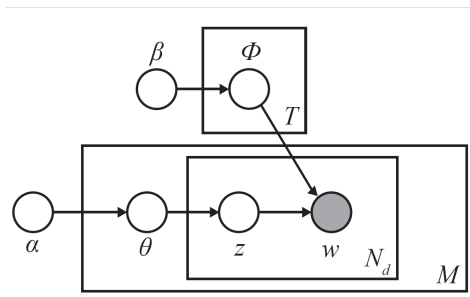


Figure 4: Latent Dirichlet Allocation

- α, β : Dirichlet prior

- M : number of documents
- N_d : number of words in document d
- z : latent topic
- w : observed word
- θ : distribution of topic in documents
- ϕ : distribution of words generated from topic z

Conversely, given a set of documents, we can discover a set of topics that are responsible for generating a document, and the distribution of words that belong to a topic. Estimating these parameters for LDA is intractable. Different solutions for approximating estimation such as Variational Methods (Blei et al., 2003) and Gibbs Sampling (Griffiths and Steyvers, 2004) can be used. Gibbs Sampling is an example of a Markov chain Monte Carlo with relatively simple algorithm for approximate inference in high dimensional models, with the first use for LDA reported in (Griffiths and Steyvers, 2004).

In our experiment, we have estimated the multinomial observations by unsupervised learning with GibbsLDA++ toolkit.² Following the data enrichment approach in (Phan et al., 2010), we have enriched the query and category with hidden topic. In particular, given a probability $\vartheta_{m,k}$ of document m over topic k , the corresponding weight $w_{\text{topic}_k,m}$ was determined by discretizing $\vartheta_{m,k}$ using two parameters *cut-off* and *scale*:

$$w_{\text{topic}_k,m} = \begin{cases} \text{round}(\text{scale} \times \vartheta_{m,k}), & \text{if } \vartheta_{m,k} \geq \text{cut-off} \\ 0, & \text{if } \vartheta_{m,k} < \text{cut-off} \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

We chose *cut-off* = 0.01, *scale* = 20 as to ensure that the number of topics assigned to a query/category does not exceed the number of original terms of that query/category, i.e., to keep a balance weight between topics enriched and original terms.

To discover the set of topics and the distribution of words per topic, we need to choose a universal data set. Since we are interested in topics within

²<http://gibbslda.sourceforge.net/>

a rather specific domain, we need to choose a data set that provides an appropriate vocabulary. We have tried two options, a Topic Model built out of selected pages of Wikipedia and a Topic Model built out of BAL Catalogue.

Wikipedia Topic Model Wikipedia is a rich source of data that has been widely exploited to extract knowledge in many different domains. We have used a version of it, viz. WaCKyedia (Baroni et al., 2009),³ that contains around 3 million articles from Wikipedia segmented, normalized, POS-tagged and parsed. In order to extract those pages that could provide a better model for our specific domain, we selected those pages that contain at least one content word of the BAL browse categories listed below.

The Arts and Entertainment, Ancient and World Cultures, Architecture, Business and Industry, Crafts and Design, Places, Science and Medicine History, Religion and Belief, Sport, People and Society, Travel and Transport, Plants and Animals Land and Sea, Emotions and Ideas

For our vocabulary, we considered only words in the selected WaCKyedia pages that are either Nouns (N.*) or Verbs (VV.*) or Adjectives (J.*) after being lemmatized. We obtain $\approx 14K$ documents, with a vocabulary of $\approx 200K$ words, out of which we computed 100 topics. Examples of random topics are illustrated in Figure 5.

| Topic 0 | Topic 4 | Topic 19 | Topic 33 | Topic 45 | Topic 89 |
|------------|----------|----------|-------------|----------|----------|
| business | ship | sport | design | japan | plant |
| company | military | team | designer | japanese | cell |
| travel | war | world | intelligent | manga | soil |
| management | force | football | industrial | tokyo | specie |
| market | army | league | product | ainu | flower |
| service | navy | play | graphic | shogi | grow |
| sell | sea | event | interior | textbook | seed |
| financial | weapon | win | creative | osaka | tree |

Figure 5: Hidden topics derived from WaCKyedia

Bridgeman catalogue Topic Model The most straightforward way of choosing a close domain corpus is to use the Bridgeman catalogue itself. We group together images that share the same sub-categories and consider each group of sub-category as a document. We have 732 documents and $\approx 136K$ words, out of which we computed 100 topics. Examples of topics estimated from this dataset are given in Figure 6.

³WaCKyedia (<http://wacky.sslmit.unibo.it/doku.php>)

| Topic 3 | Topic 15 | Topic 21 | Topic 45 | Topic 59 | Topic 81 |
|------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| railway | bc | christ | portrait | cotton | wedding |
| train | century | jesus | king | design | valentine |
| car | marble | crucifixion | queen | silk | bride |
| railroad | stone | cross | engraving | tapestry | marriage |
| carriage | bronze | life | charles | textile | baptism |
| locomotive | photo | supper | henry | printed | contract |
| express | depicting | lord | prince | carpet | mariee |
| pacific | statue | holy | duke | wool | groom |

Figure 6: Hidden topics derived from the Bridgeman catalogue

4 Data Sets

Categories From a BAL six month log, we extracted all the top category connected to the queries via the click-through information and obtained the list of 55 categories given by group in Table 2.

Queries From the six month log we have extracted a sample of 1,049 queries by preserving the distribution of queries per top-category obtained via the click-through information and the taxonomy. We selected only queries with at least one clicked image. Not all image metadata contains title, keywords and a description: for around 60% of images the meta-data provides only the title and sub-category. For each query, we kept only one clicked image randomly selected. We leave for future study the impact the full set of clicked images per query could have on our query classifier.

Gold-standard: annotation by domain experts

The 1,049 queries have been annotated by a domain expert who was asked to assign up to three categories per query out of the 55 categories in Table 2 and to mark the query as “unknown” if no category in the list was considered to be appropriate. The domain expert looked at the click-through information and the corresponding image to assign the categories to the query. The distribution of queries per group of categories obtained by this manual annotation is as following: 1395, 268, 87 queries have been annotated with a category out of the “topic”, “object” and “material” group, respectively.

Out of this sample, 100 queries have been annotated by three annotators, BAL cataloguers, twice: (a) by looking at the click-through information and the image, and (b) by looking only at the query. The agreement between the annotators in both cases is moderate (kappa in average 0.60 for

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Topics | Land and Sea; Places; Religion and Belief; Ancient and World Cultures; Mythology Mythological Myth; Allegory/Allegorical; People and Society; Sports and Leisure; History; Travel and Transport; Personalities; Business and Industry; Costume & Fashion; Plants and Animals; Botanical; Animals; The Arts and Entertainment; Emotions and Ideas; Science and Medicine; Science; Medicine; Architecture; Photography. |
| Materials | Metalwork; Silver, Gold & Silver Gilt; Lacquer & Japanning; Enamels; Semi-precious Stones; Bone, Ivory & Shellwork; Glass; Stained Glass; Textiles; Ceramics. |
| Objects | Crafts and Design; Manuscripts; Maps; Ephemera; Posters; Magazines; Choir Books; Cards & Postcards; Sculpture; Clocks, Watches, Barometers & Sundials; Oriental Miniatures; Furniture; Arms, Armour & Militaria; Objects de Vertu; Trade Emblems, City Crests, Coats of Arms; Coins & Medals; Icons; Mosaics; Inventions; Jewellery; Juvenilia/Children’s Toys & Games; Lighting; |

Table 2: Categories used by the annotators

the annotation without click-through information and 0.64 for the annotation done using the click-through information), the agreement is higher for the categories within the “topic” group. For each annotator, using the click-through information and the image has not had a significant impact on the annotation of categories from the “topic” group (kappa in average 0.80), whereas it has increased and changed the annotation of categories from the other two groups, “object” (kappa 0.57) and “material” (kappa 0.62).

Gold-standard: automatic extraction from the meta-data of the clicked image The top-category associated in the taxonomy with the sub-categories of the image clicked after querying can be extracted automatically exploiting the click-through information. Hence, we created a second gold-standard using such automatic extraction. Though our extraction is automatic, the assignment of the categories to the images is the result of the manual annotation by BAL cataloguers through the years. This annotation was done, of course, by looking only at the images, differently from the previous one for which the domain experts was given both the query and the clicked image. This second gold-standard differs from the one created by domain experts. For instance, the query “mountain lake near piedmont” is classified to the category “Places” by the expert, while using the automatic mapping method, we obtain the category “Emotions & Ideas: Peace & Relaxation”. The kappa agreement between the manual annotation and the automatic extraction is 0.52, 0.53, 0.6 for categories within the “material”, “object” and “topic” group, respectively.

In our experiment, we will evaluate the classifier against the “manual” gold-standard and use the second one only to select the most challenging queries (those queries the classifiers fail clas-

sifying in either cases: when evaluated against the manual or the automatic gold-standard) and analyse them in further detail.

5 Experiments

Let $Q = \{q_1, q_2, \dots, q_N\}$ be a set of N queries and $C = \{c_1, c_2, \dots, c_M\}$ a set of M categories. We represent each query q_i and category c_j as the vectors $\vec{q}_i = \{w_{tq_i}\}_{t \in V}$ and $\vec{c}_j = \{w_{tc_j}\}_{t \in V}$ where V is the vocabulary that contains all terms in the corpus and w_{tq_i}, w_{tc_j} are the frequency in q_i and c_j , respectively, of each term t in the vocabulary.

We use the cosine similarity measure to assign categories to the queries. For each query q_i , the cosine similarity between every pair $\langle q_i, c_j \rangle_{j=1..M}$ is computed as:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{cosin_sim}(q_i, c_j) &= \frac{\vec{q}_i \cdot \vec{c}_j}{|\vec{q}_i| \cdot |\vec{c}_j|} = \\ &= \frac{\sum_{t \in V} w_{tq_i} \cdot w_{tc_j}}{\sqrt{\sum_{t \in V} w_{tq_i}^2} \cdot \sqrt{\sum_{t \in V} w_{tc_j}^2}} \end{aligned}$$

For each query, the top 3 categories with highest cosine similarities are returned.

The different query and category enrichment methods are spelled out in Table 3. To evaluate the effect of click-through information in query classification, we set up two different configurations: QR , where besides the terms contained in the top and sub-categories, V consists of terms appearing in the queries; $QR-CT$ for which V consists also of terms in the title, keywords, description fields of the clicked images’ meta-data. In the case of the classifiers exploiting topic models, both vocabulary is extended with the hidden topics too and both queries and categories are enriched with them as explained in section 3. In particular, TM_{wiki} is the classifier based on the model built with the hidden topics extracted from WaCKpe-

dia, and TM_{BAL} is the one based on the model built out of Bridgeman metadata.

| Setting | Query enrichment | Category enrichment |
|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| QR | q | CAT + sCAT |
| $QR-CT$ | $q + ct$ | CAT + sCAT |
| TM_{wiki} | $q + ct \oplus HT_{wiki}$ | CAT + sCAT \oplus HT_{wiki} |
| TM_{BAL} | $q + ct \oplus HT_{BAL}$ | CAT + sCAT \oplus HT_{BAL} |

- q : query
- ct : click-through information: title, keywords and description - if available
- CAT: top category
- sCAT: all sub categories of the corresponding CAT
- HT_{wiki} : hidden topics from WaCKpedia
- HT_{BAL} : hidden topics from Bridgeman Metadata

Table 3: Experimental Setting

5.1 Results

To evaluate the classifiers, first of all we compute Precision, Recall and F-measure as defined for KDD Cup competition and reported below.⁴ The results obtained are given in Table 4.

$$P = \frac{\sum_i \# \text{ queries correctly tagged as } c_i}{\sum_i \# \text{ queries tagged as } c_i} \quad (2)$$

$$R = \frac{\sum_i \# \text{ queries correctly tagged as } c_i}{\sum_i \# \text{ queries manually labeled as } c_i} \quad (3)$$

$$F - \text{measure} = \frac{2 \times P \times R}{P + R} \quad (4)$$

The F-measure average at KDD Cup competition was 0.24, with the best performing system reaching the result of 0.44 F-measure. Differently from our scenario, the KDD Cup task was for web search query classification against 67 general domain categories (like shopping, companies, cars etc.) and classifiers could assign max. 5 categories.

In the following we report further studies of our results by considering the number of queries that are assigned the correct category in each of the three positions (Hits # 1, 2, 3). Furthermore,

⁴<http://www.sigkdd.org/kddcup/index.php?section=2005&method=task>

| | Precision | Recall | F-measure |
|------------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| $QR-CT$ | 0.11 | 0.17 | 0.13 |
| TM_{BAL} | 0.26 | 0.40 | 0.31 |

Table 4: P, R and F measures – Evaluation

we provide the total number of correct categories found in all position 1, 2 and 3 ($\sum_{Top.3}$).

| Setting | Hits | | | |
|-------------|------|-----|-----|----------------|
| | # 1 | # 2 | # 3 | $\sum_{Top.3}$ |
| QR | 92 | 38 | 26 | 156 |
| $QR-CT$ | 183 | 97 | 62 | 342 |
| TM_{wiki} | 145 | 112 | 88 | 345 |
| TM_{BAL} | 340 | 257 | 144 | 741 |

Table 5: Results of query classification: number of correct categories found (for 1,049 queries)

As can be seen in Table 5, the performance of query classification using only terms in the queries (QR) is very poor. Already enriching the query with the words from the title, keywords and description ($QR-CT$) increases the $\sum_{Top.3}$ by nearly 120%.

Topics derived from the TM estimated from Wikipedia (TM_{wiki}) did not help much in finding the right categories for a query. In comparison to $QR-CT$ classifier, they decreased the number of correct categories in position 1 and they only slightly raised the number of correct categories when considering the three positions.

On the other hand, the TM built from the Bridgeman catalogue (TM_{BAL}) increased the results considerably for each of the three positions. Compared with $QR-CT$, 399 other correct categories were further found by using topics extracted from the catalogue, giving a raise of 117%.

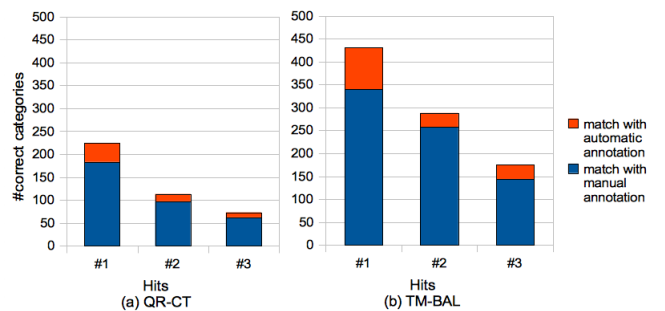


Figure 7: Matching $QR-CT$ and TM_{BAL} correct categories against the manual and automatic gold-standards

Figure 7 reports the number of hits in each position 1, 2, 3 for the two settings $QR-CT$ and TM_{BAL} . It clearly shows that TM_{BAL} outperforms $QR-CT$ and matches more correct categories both when considering either of the two gold-standards. It is interesting to note that this holds in particular for categories in the first posi-

tion of the ranked list (Hits #1): it results in a raise of 92% in the first position (from 224 correct categories to 431).

5.2 Analysis of wrong classification

To better understand the results obtained, we looked into the wrong classification. Figure 8 reports the number of queries for which $QR-CT$ and TM_{BAL} have not selected in the top three positions any correct category using either the manual gold-standard and the automatic classification.

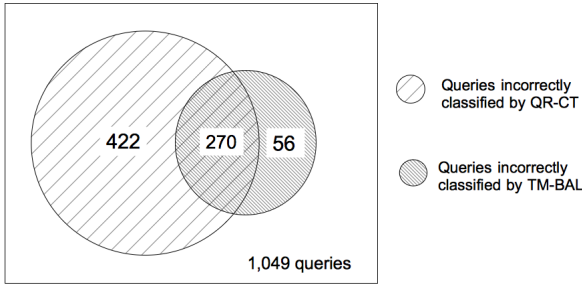


Figure 8: Queries incorrectly classified

We found that there were 692 queries (422+270) for which $QR-CT$ had not found any correct category in the top three positions; whereas 326 queries incorrectly classified by TM_{BAL} , of which 270 queries were in common with those wrongly classified by $QR-CT$.

We further analyzed the set of 270 queries of Figure 8 which we take to be the most difficult queries to classify since neither of the two classifiers have succeed with them considering either the manual or the automatic gold-standard. These queries and the categories assigned to them by the $QR-CT$ and TM_{BAL} classifier have been checked and evaluated again by the domain expert.

Figure 9 gives an example out of the 270 and the result of the second run evaluation by the domain expert. The top categories assigned to the query “mountain lake near piedmont” by the classifier $QR-CT$ and TM_{BAL} are “Ancient & World Cultures” and “Land & Sea”, respectively. The two categories do not match either the correct category assigned by the expert (“Places”) or the category assigned by the automatic method (“Emotions & Ideas”). However, after being checked by the expert, it was decided that the category proposed by the TM_{BAL} classifier (“Land & Sea”) was also correct whereas the one assigned by $QR-CT$ was not. This query and click-through information do not share any common words with the category

“Land & Sea” and its sub-categories, hence it was not possible for the $QR-CT$ classifier to spot their similarity. However, the enrichment with the hidden topics discovered the similarity between the query and the top-category: they share `topic 14` with high probability.

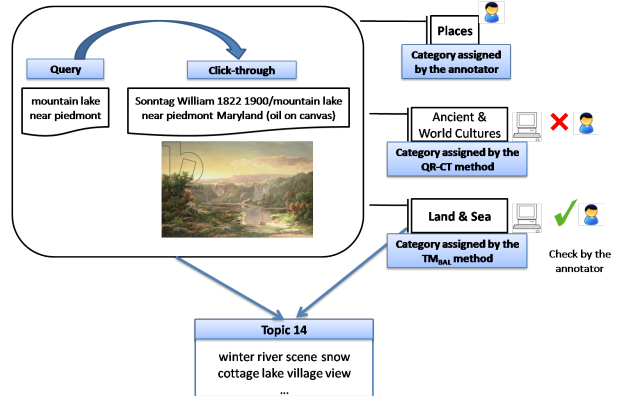


Figure 9: Effects of TM on the classification task

In total, the categories assigned to these 270 queries, were considered to be corrected in 123 cases for the TM_{BAL} classifier and in 45 cases for the $QR-CT$ (Table 6).

| Setting | Hits | | | |
|------------|------|-----|-----|----------------|
| | # 1 | # 2 | # 3 | $\sum_{Top.3}$ |
| $QR-CT$ | 31 | 7 | 7 | 45 |
| TM_{BAL} | 59 | 43 | 21 | 123 |

Table 6: Correct categories checked by the expert for the 270 queries (using the click-through information)

Finally, the numbers of queries with at least one correct label out of these 270 queries are 39 (14%) for the $QR-CT$ method and 115 (43%) for the TM_{BAL} method.

6 Related Work

(Cao et al., 2009) shows that context information is crucial for web search query classification. They consider the context to be both previous queries within the same session and pages of the clicked urls. In this paper, we focus on information similar to the latter and postpone the analysis of query session to further studies. (Cao et al., 2009) also shows that the taxonomy-based association between adjacent labels is useful for our task. Similarly, we exploit Bridgeman taxonomy to enrich the categories target of the classifier.

Finally, the use of a gold-standard automatically

created via click-through information is inspired by (Hofmann et al., 2010) where it has been shown that system rankings based on clicks are very close to those based on purchase decisions. There is strong evidence in favor of the relevance of click-through data to detect user’s intention.

7 Conclusions

This paper shows the effect of the click-through information and the use of topic models in query classification in the art, history and culture closed domain. The main contribution of this study is the proposal of using the metadata as a source to train topic models for the query and category enrichment. In particular, we first enriched the queries with the click-through information including information associated with the image clicked by the user. Then, we used topic models built out of Wikipedia and the Bridgeman catalogue to analyze topics for both of the queries and the target categories. Experiments from the real dataset extracted from the query logs have shown the impact of the click-through information and topic models built from the catalogue in helping to find the correct categories for a given query.

In this paper, we have not considered more than one click-through image for each query. However, we expect that more click-through images can give a better understanding of user intent. Further research regarding this issue might be studied in more detail in future.

Acknowledgments

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