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Query Understanding Guest Editorial

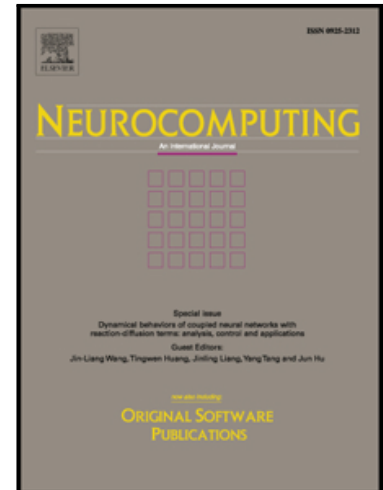
Liqiang Nie , Richang Hong , Peng Cui

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Query Understanding

Guest Editorial

Liqliang Nie, Shandong University, Tsingtao, China, nieliqliang@sdu.edu.cn;

Richang Hong, Hefei University of Technology, Hefei, China, hongrc.hfut@gmail.com;

Peng Cui, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China, cuip@tsinghua.edu.cn.

With the exponential growth of textual, acoustic and visual data, available on the Web and stored in private repositories, information seeking is becoming an indispensable activity in people's daily life. Meanwhile, many efforts have been dedicated to query understanding to boost the search performance, and great success has been achieved, especially for simple queries. On the other hand, as the web surfers get increasingly savvy and specific with their search behaviors, the queries tend to be more complex and sophisticated than ever. Furthermore, as the development of community-based question answering forums, keywords-based queries have somehow shifted to natural language questions. The latter can express information needs more precisely. Putting this together opens up great potentials in terms of both research and applications.

This special issue serves as a forum to bring together active researchers all over the world to share their recent advances in this exciting area. We solicit original contributions in three-fold: (1) present state-of-the-art theories and novel application scenarios related to query understanding; (2) survey the recent progress in this area; and (3) build benchmark datasets.

In this special issue, we accepted 13 papers in total. We can roughly divide these accepted papers into three categories: question answering, Web search, and others.

Regarding the question answering, the work [1] presents a novel query completion algorithm based on ranking cQA questions with entity and phrase information for cQA search, and a demonstration system has been developed. Without involvement of query log, this method clearly helps users complete their queries. Another work in [2] explores recurrent convolutional neural network for answer selection in community question answering. It is able to capture both the semantic matching between question and answer and the semantic correlations embedded in the sequence of answers.

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