Extracting Information from the Web
(Web Services and Friends)
What is Intelligence?

- For computers: any behavior that mimics human thought processes
  - Including but not limited to:
    - Learning
    - Reasoning
    - Decision making
- Generally speaking, there’s not an agreed upon definition of what intelligence is that doesn’t depending on relating it to human intelligence
Artificial Intelligence

- Variety of techniques for making machines able to achieve goals in the world in ways that mimic human abilities
  - Techniques do not necessarily have to mimic the biological ways in which these abilities in humans work though
- Long a focus of study for CS
- Examples:
  - Chess playing
  - FPS games
  - Speech recognition
  - Image recognition
  - Recommender systems (machine learning)
  - Handwriting recognition systems (classifiers)
- One constant though: “As soon as you figure out how to do it, it’s no longer AI”
How to Exploit AI Techniques

- Find the algorithms, understand them, implement them!
  - Many are math-intensive
  - Wide variety of algorithms to cover: learning how to write classifiers doesn’t help you write game AI
- Find someone else’s code and integrate it
  - All the usual problems of dealing with the idiosyncrasies of others’ code, Jython integration issues (a la Swing’s weirdness), etc.
Another Approach: Exploiting Human Intelligence

- There’s a lot of knowledge out there already
- Some of it is encoded in a way that machines can make sense of it
- If you’re really clever, you may be able to get people to help out directly
- Why? Humans are generally smarter than machines

“Computers are worthless. They can only give you answers.”
- Pablo Picasso

“Computers are incredibly fast, accurate, and stupid. Human beings are incredibly slow, inaccurate, and brilliant.”
- Albert Einstein
Exploiting Human Intelligence: Approach #1

- Clever UI design: make the people do your work for you without them knowing it
- Example: the ESP game (http://www.espgame.org/) [Luis von Ahn and Laura Dabbish]
The ESP Game

- Two player web-based game
- You are randomly paired with an online partner
- Both see the same image
- Goal is to guess what your partner is typing about the image
- As soon as a guess of yours is equal to a guess that your partner has made you get a new image
- “Taboo words” can’t be used
- You get points each time you agree with your partner; number of points depends on number of taboo words
  - More taboo words -> harder to guess -> more points
Behind the Scenes

- Guise: moderately entertaining game
- Real goal: label all images on the web
  - Provide a textual search engine for images
  - Provide meaningful alternative text to visually impaired users
- The ESP game is a front end to *image tagging*
  - Annotate images with terms that describe them
  - Human-provided information is more accurate, richer, more subtle than machine analysis of the image
  - Most approaches don’t even do this: rely on text in `<IMG>` tags
- Taboo words are words tags that have already been found
  - System rewards refinement of tags with more points
- Already collected 7M labels for approximately 3M images
- Doing this is more an art than a science, but it’s way cool...
Accessing Human Intelligence: Approach #2

- Find latent knowledge embedded in the world and *mine* it
- The web makes this easier than it’s ever been before

- In all likelihood, this provides different sorts of knowledge than “traditional” AI (you probably couldn’t build opponents in a first-person shooter game using this technique)
Example

- Through the act of buying, people express their preferences, tastes, opinions
- Amazon has mountains of this data
  - Not just who has bought what
  - Similarities between books
  - Confluences of interest among book buyers
- All of this encoded into the Amazon website, waiting to be used
- How might you use it?
  - Social networking applications?
  - Suggest dating opportunities based on overlap of Amazon recommendation lists?
  - Visualize degree-of-separation between people, based on similarities of their book tastes?
Example

- People are very good at separating the wheat from the chaff when it comes to browsing web pages
  - Some you consider authoritative, fun, etc., and may check on a day-by-day basis
  - Some you may link to yourself
- Google knows how people rate pages on the web, by calculating how many people link to certain pages: PageRank algorithm
- Hard-core algorithmic work running on their servers...but results are sitting around, waiting for you to reap
- How might you use it?
  - Build an app that provides easy access to authoritative information around you
  - Example: ubicomp application that, as I walk around the city, gives me top-ranked info on the business I’m nearest (”how good is this restaurant?”)
Example

- People are very good at understanding relationships, subtle differences between words
- Thesaurus.com provides an expert-eye view of word similarity
- Massive lists of semantic relationships among words, waiting to be mined and extracted
- How might you use it?
  - Creative writing app that provides built-in synonym lookup on every word
  - Image tagger that uses synonyms of suggested words, to broaden search possibilities
  - del.icio.us social bookmarks manager that automatically uses synonyms to provide search based on word similarity
Extracting Information from the Web

- Can be really really painful

Mining nice looking page:

Means parsing this:

```html
<body>
  <h1>Journey to the End of the Night</h1>
  <p>By Laurence Venard</p>
  <p>Reading Guide</p>
</body>
```
Strategies

- Some web sites try to make this easier for you

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/jython

Strategies

• There are tools to help with parsing
• **DOM - the Document Object Model (and related tools)**
• Makes HTML-formatted text (along with CSS, JavaScript, etc.) look like a tree data structure
  • (Relatively) easy programmatic tools for walking through the structure, extracting key bits, etc.
• Many APIs and programming models, some simple, some not
• Caveat: if the page’s structure changes, you’re hosed
Example (Simple) DOM Usage

- httpunit:  http://httpunit.sourceforge.net

```python
import com.meterware.httpunit as httpunit
import sys

class Test:
    def __init__(self, url):
        wc = httpunit.WebConversation()
        req = httpunit.GetMethodWebRequest(url)
        resp = wc.getResponse(req)
        page = wc.getCurrentPage()
        images = page.getImages()
        forms = page.getForms()
        links = page.getLinks()

        print "---- Images ----"
        for i in images:
            if i.link != None:
                print i.name, "(", i.link.getURLString(), ")"

        print "---- Forms ----"
        for f in forms:
            print f.action

        print "---- Links ----"
        for l in links:
            print l.text, "(", l.getURLString(), ")"

if __name__ == "__main__":
    t = Test(sys.argv[1])
```
A Strategy Recap

- So far we have two strategies:
  - Either get the site to return the least information possible (a la Wikipedia), and then parse it
  - Or, get ready to do some heavy-duty HTML parsing (perhaps with the assistance of one of the many DOM libraries)
- Why so hard?
- Largely a mismatch in goals:
  - The web is designed to provide information to people, not programs
  - Writing a program to extract information from web content (as opposed to web structure) is both hard and fragile
- Is there an equivalent of the web designed for programs, not people?
Web Services

- The Big New Thing on the web
- Web Services are the web for programs
- Provide network protocols designed for accessing information in a structured and systematic way, amenable to machine processing
- Co-exists alongside the regular human-readable web
- Example: Amazon
  - Has a human-readable web site (the one you use)
  - Has a machine-readable web services site (an extra service that provides access to Amazon’s data through a standard network protocol)
- Who has Web Services?
  - Amazon, Google, FedEx, eBay, PayPal, ...
  - Makes extracting the information from these sites way easier than trying to use the human-readable web
Other Uses for Web Services: Alternative UIs

- **Piranha Pricecheck**: customized Amazon UI for smart phones
  - Access reviews, deals, etc., faster than wireless web
Other Uses for Web Services: Alternative UIs

- Delicious Library: uses Amazon as a back-end data source for personal book/CD/DVD catalogs
Other Uses for Web Services: Alternative UIs

- eLister: Custom application for creating and managing eBay auctions
The Building Blocks of Web Services

- Move away from simple HTTP and HTML
  - Too unstructured for easy machine use
- New tools:
  - Ways to define the operations available on a service
    - Parseable specification of the network protocol for a service
    - Not as ad hoc and error prone as a human-readable specification
  - Ways to communicate with the service in a structured way
    - HTTP has basically GET and POST and crams everything into these
    - Need something that looks and works more like function calls in a program: pass parameters to service, get results from service
- Requirement: language/OS/platform independent
  - So, no crazy pickled Jython data structures
  - Too Jython dependent, not easy to write clients in other languages
WSDL

- The *Web Services Description Language*
- Pronounced *whizz-dull*
- A markup language for describing network protocols for services
  - What operations
  - What parameters
  - What return values
- You create a document that describes the protocol that your service will speak
  - Or, if you’re writing a client, you find and use the document describing the protocol of the service you want to communicate with
WSDL Pros and Cons

**Pros:**
- Allows you to write specs for protocols that can be *parsed by machines*
- Why is this important?
  - Can have programs that *generate* the necessary networking boilerplate
  - More robust, less error-prone, than hand-coded protocols
  - The *spec is the spec*, rather than the *implementation is the spec*
- Platform independent: can have programs that generate WSDL protocol implementations in any language

**Cons:**
- Verbose, verbose, verbose...
- Still only specifies the syntax of a network protocol--you have to specify the semantics
WSDL Concepts

- **Ports**: endpoints for communication. Think of them as analogous to a socket bound to an address (IP address + port) on which a program is listening
- Ports are *typed*: meaning that they are defined to accept a certain set of operations (analogous to the message types in our IM protocol)
- **Services**: collections of one or more ports
- **Messages**: data exchanged over ports
- Messages are also typed: meaning that the data they contain is in a fixed, agreed-upon format
Using WSDL

- WSDL is an XML-based language (read: monstrously verbose)
- Example: StockQuote service
  - Defines the operations available on the service
  - GetTradePrice request (client-to-server)
    - Takes ticker symbol of a stock, and a time
    - Returns price in a response
WSDL StockQuote Service

<?xml version="1.0"?>
<definitions name="StockQuote"
  targetNamespace="example.com-stockquote.wsdl"
  xmlns:tns="example.com-stockquote.wsdl"
  xmlns:xsd="www.w3.org/XMLSchema"
  xmlns:xsd1="example.com-stockquote.xsd"
  xmlns:schema="schemas.xmlsoap.org soap"
  xmlns="schemas.xmlsoap.org-wsdl">

<message name="GetTradePriceInput">
  <part name="tickerSymbol" element="xsd:string"/>
  <part name="time" element="xsd:timeInstant"/>
</message>

<message name="GetTradePriceOutput">
  <part name="result" type="xsd:float"/>
</message>

<portType name="StockQuotePortType">
  <input message="tns:GetTradePriceInput"/>
  <output message="tns:GetTradePriceOutput"/>
</operation>
</portType>

<binding name="StockQuoteSoapBinding" type="tns:StockQuotePortType">
  <soap:binding style="rpc" transport="schemas.xmlsoap.org-http"/>
  <operation name="GetTradePrice">
    <soap:operation soapAction="example.com-GetTradePrice"/>
    <input>
      <soap:body use="encoded" namespace="example.com-stockquote"
        encodingStyle="schemas.xmlsoap.org-encoding"/>
    </input>
    <output>
      <soap:body use="encoded" namespace="example.com-stockquote"
        encodingStyle="schemas.xmlsoap.org-encoding"/>
    </output>
  </operation>
</binding>

<service name="StockQuoteService">
  <documentation>My first service</documentation>
</service>

Boilerplate, pointers to related WSDL files, format version numbers, etc.

Defines the input argument type of the request

Defines the output result type

Sets up a port containing one operation: GetTradePrice, saying what the input and return parameter types are

Boilerplate, describing how messages will be encoded.

Finally, define the service itself, with a documentation string and the port description
SOAP

- WSDL defines the operations defined by a service
- SOAP is the mechanism for encoding the actual messages and transmitting them to and from the server
- SOAP stands for Simple Object Access Protocol
- Wins the award for the **worst name ever**, because SOAP is many things, but not simple
- SOAP messages are encoding using XML
  - So the data that gets sent “on the wire” is an XML document that structures the message, its parameters, etc.
  - At least as verbose as WSDL
  - As you might expect, not the fastest protocol in the world...
- Again, SOAP is the language that defines the messages that are actually sent and received
  - This is what you would have to parse if you implemented a web service or client “by hand”
SOAP Example

- This is the “on the wire” data transmitted in the WSDL example
- Curious fact: SOAP messages are often transmitted using HTTP
  - They are the payload in HTTP GET and POST messages
- Request:

```
POST /StockQuote HTTP/1.1
Host: www.stockquoteserver.com
Content-Type: text/xml; charset="utf-8"
Content-Length: nnnn
SOAPAction: "Some-URI"

<SOAP-ENV:Envelope
   xmlns:SOAP-ENV="schemas.xmlsoap.org—envelope"
   SOAP-ENV:encodingStyle="schemas.xmlsoap.org—encoding">
   <SOAP-ENV:Body>
       <m:GetLastTradePrice xmlns:m="Some-URI">
           <symbol>DIS</symbol>
       </m:GetLastTradePrice>
   </SOAP-ENV:Body>
</SOAP-ENV:Envelope>
```
SOAP Example (cont’d)

• Here’s the response:

HTTP/1.1 200 OK
Content-Type: text/xml; charset="utf-8"
Content-Length: nnnn

<SOAP-ENV:Envelope
   xmlns:SOAP-ENV="schemas.xmlsoap.org—envelope"
   SOAP-ENV:encodingStyle="schemas.xmlsoap.org—encoding"/>
  <SOAP-ENV:Body>
    <m:GetLastTradePriceResponse xmlns:m="Some-URI">
      <Price>34.5</Price>
    </m:GetLastTradePriceResponse>
  </SOAP-ENV:Body>
</SOAP-ENV:Envelope>
Implementation Notes

- At the lowest layer, all of this still uses sockets
  - Many, many layers on top of sockets:
    - SOAP is often sent *using* HTTP (i.e., embedded inside HTTP GET and POST messages)
    - HTTP is generally layered atop raw IP sockets
- So, if you wanted to, you could do all of this just using send() and recv() on top of sockets
- (But you wouldn’t want to)
Why is Any of This a Good Thing?

- Because you generally don’t do any SOAP by hand
  - You’d only do WSDL by hand if you were creating your own web service

- Designed to let tools manipulate the protocols
  - We’ll see how these work next

- Inertia: even though web services might not be the ideal approach, they’ve been implemented widely enough that they’ve got momentum
  - Widespread enough that it’s good to know how to work with them

- Standards: efforts are underway to standardize some service interfaces
  - Means you could write one client that could work with multiple web services
  - *Semantic Web*: defining web interfaces for basically everything
Using Web Services

- Using tools to create web services code
- Feed WSDL file into tool that emits stub code
  - Contains all of the networking code, exposes function call interfaces
  - Stubs take care of mechanics--you have to write the semantic code
    - Eg: stub would handle all of the parameter passing of ONLINE_USERS; you’d still have to use those parameters to update your GUI
  - Call into the generated stubs whenever you need to communicate with the server
- Remote Procedure Calls: make networked message passing look like function calls (sort of)
- Very often, you’ll use web services without actually seeing any XML
Web Services Tools

- Many, many flavors
- I couldn’t find any Python/Jython ones that didn’t suck
- Reasonable Java tool: Apache Axis
  - Provides command line tool for generating stubs
  - Generated stub code requires Axis library (and a bunch of other stuff)
  - More complexity than you need for most things
- Outline:
  - Feed WSDL file into tool, get out Java source code for stubs
  - Compile Java source code
  - Use compiled Java code from Jython to communicate with server
Example: Using the Google API

- Download and install Apache Axis
  - ZIP file, will create a directory wherever you unpack it
- Generate stubs from the WSDL file
  - set CLASSPATH to include full path to necessary libraries that come with Axis
    - axis.jar, commons-logging.jar, log4j-1.2.8.jar, wsdl4j.jar, commons-discovery.jar, jaxrpc.jar, saaj.jar
    - java org.apache.axis.wsdl.WSDL2Java GoogleSearch.wsdl
    - This creates a directory GoogleSearch with the Java source code in it
- Compile the Java source code
  - cd GoogleSearch
  - javac *.java
- Bundle the compiled code (”.class” files) into a JAR (”Java Archive”)
  - cd ..
  - jar cvf GoogleSearch.jar ./GoogleSearch
  - This creates a new file, GoogleSearch.jar, containing all the stubs
- Add GoogleSearch.jar to your CLASSPATH, and you can now use it from Jython!
  - import GoogleSearch as google
Or....

- Let Google do the work for you:
  - Go to www.google.com/apis
  - Sign up for an account
  - Download googleapi.zip
  - Use the googleapi.jar file that comes with it
    - (Pre-built stubs from Google’s WSDL description)
The Next Assignment: IM

- The *Know-it-All* interface
  - Extend the IM client to make you look like you are the master of all human knowledge

- Two parts for this one (actual window names may vary):
  - The Wiki Ferret window
    - Access Wikipedia to bring up encyclopedia entries for words in the chat transcript
    - “Old school” part of the assignment
    - Not a web service; just a regular old web server
    - I’ve provided a wrapper for talking to Wikipedia
    - You need to pull out text and display it appropriately formatted
  - The Googlemeister window
    - Find top-ranked hits for each exchange in the transcript; show the last several
    - Uses the Google Web Services API
    - Display hits in a side panel or something, link to external Swing web view
Using Wikipedia

- wiki.py class (provided on web site)
  - `w = Wiki()`
  - `w.fetchTopic("Jython")`
- Returns a tuple: (HTTP_code, result)
- *Result* is the contents of the page, including HTTP headers
- A blank line separates the headers from the content
- Content has Wiki-style markup (square brackets) around linked items

- Word of warning: you don’t want to hammer the Wikipedia server!
  - They’re cautious about attacks, and will pull the plug on you
  - Try to take care to look up words once per session, rather than zillions of times per session
"Jython" is a version of [[Python programming language|Python]] that's written in [[Java (programming language)|Java]] and that runs in the Java environment.

Jython programs can seamlessly import and use any Java class. Except for some standard modules, Jython programs use Java classes instead of Python modules. For example, a user interface in Jython would be written with [[Swing (Java)|Swing]] or [[AWT]], rather than with Tkinter.

Jython has both an [[interpreter (computing)|interpreter]] and a [[compiler]].

Jython was formerly known as "JPython".

== External links ==
* [http://www.jython.org/ Jython Home Page]
* [http://www-106.ibm.com/developerworks/java/library/j-jython.html Charming Jython: Learn how the Java implementation of Python can aid your development efforts]

[[Category:Programming languages]]
Displaying Results

- Provide some UI for looking up Wikipedia entries for words
  - Easy: double click on words in transcript area
  - Fancy: look up (long?) words as they are typed and indicate which have an entry (coloring, or other highlighting)
- Be sure to detect words with no entry
  - Returns headers only; no content
- Display results
  - Strip headers
  - Don’t display internal formatting
  - Several options for display: separate window, side bar, tool tip, etc.
- Up to you whether you want to display links in some special way
- Up to you whether you want to be fancy and support linking
Getting Ready to Use the Google API

- Easier: actual Web Service!
- Step 1: Download the API (this is a pre-generated API)
- Step 2: Register with Google
  - Registration causes key that uniquely identifies you to be emailed to you
  - Used by Google to limit improper use (hacks)
- Step 3: Update your CLASSPATH to include googleapi.jar
  - Windows:
    - Control Panel -> System Properties -> Advanced -> Environment Variables
    - Edit CLASSPATH
    - Add *full path* to googleapi.jar, separated from existing stuff by a “;” (only)
  - Macintosh:
    - Edit `/Users/yourname/.bashrc`
    - Add the following line:
      - `export CLASSPATH="${CLASSPATH}:/full/path/to/googleapi.jar"`
    - Restart Terminal.app, or type “source /Users/yourname/.bashrc”
Using the Google API

- `googleapi.jar` is a pre-built set of stubs for talking to Google
  - No need to do crazy WSDL stuff, add libraries to CLASSPATH (other than `googleapi.jar` itself)

- Import `google`
- Create a `GoogleSearch` object
  - Set your key
  - Set your query string
  - Can also set: maxResults, safeSearch, etc.
- Call `doSearch`
- Returned is a Result
  - Contains list of `ResultElements`
  - Each `ResultElement` contains title, URL, snippet, summary, directoryCategory, cachedSize, etc.

```python
import com.google.soap.search as googleapi
import sys
class Google:
    def __init__(self, key, term):
        g = googleapi.GoogleSearch()
        g.setKey(key)
        g.setQueryString(term)
        r = g.doSearch()
        print "Search comments: ", r.searchComments
        results = r.resultElements
        for i in results:
            print i.title + ":" + str(i.URL)

if __name__ == "__main__":
    g = Google(sys.argv[1], sys.argv[2])
```
More Details

- If you want to see the documentation on the Java API:
  - View googleapi/javadoc/index.html
  - Pretty easy to tell how to call from Jython
- IMPORTANT: if you don’t want me to know your key, don’t hard code it in the program!
  - Instead, provide a way for me to use my key
  - If you don’t care one way or another, hard coding it makes it a little easier for me to test
Displaying the Results

- Take text that appears in the transcript
- Feed it into a the google search API
- Get several (3-5?) results (actual number depends on your UI)
- Display in an organized way
  - Example: time-ordered, like the transcript
- Show query, followed by results, visually distinct from one another
  - Results should show at least title and some way to click the URL
- Should display several (3-5?) sets of these, so that users can access queries for past text entries
- Options for display: side window, tool tips, hovering translucent do-dads, etc.
- Clicking URL should launch (or reuse) a Swing HTML viewer
import javax.swing as swing
import java.awt as awt

content="""<HTML><BODY>
Hello there!<P>
<A HREF="http://www.cc.gatech.edu">CoC Home Page</A><P>
<A HREF="http://www.cc.gatech.edu/classes/AY2005/cs6452_spring">CS6452 Spring 05</A><P>
</BODY>
</HTML>"

class HTMLExample:
    def __init__(self):
        self.frame = swing.JFrame("HTML Example")
        self.html = swing.JEditorPane()
        self.html.contentType = "text/html"
        self.html.editable = 0
        self.html.hyperlinkUpdate = self.followHyperlink
        self.html.preferredSize = (400, 400)
        self.html.text = content
        self.frame.contentPane.layout = awt.BorderLayout()
        self.frame.contentPane.add("Center", swing.JScrollPane(self.html))
        self.frame.pack()
        self.frame.show()

    def followHyperlink(self, event):
        if event.eventType == swing.event.HyperlinkEvent.EventType.ACTIVATED:
            self.html.setPage(event.URL)

if __name__ == "__main__":
    h = HTMLExample()
The Next Assignment: Social Navigation

- Much easier than last one!
- Basics:
  - Use the Placelab location estimation technology to figure out your position in the real world (expressed at latitude/longitude coordinates)
  - Distribute your coordinates and read your friends’ coordinates
    - In the GET_USER_INFO message, add one more item to the dict:
      - “Location” -> [latitude, longitude]
      - Value should be a list or tuple containing the coordinates
  - Use these coordinates to emit a map, using the Google Maps API
  - Display the map in a web browser--shows your location and the location of your friends
- See separate slides on Placelab and Google Maps for programming hints