Bayesian Networks and INEX'03

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ABSTRACT

We present a Bayesian framework for XML document retrieval. This framework allows us to consider *content-only* (CO) queries. We perform the retrieval task using inference in our network. The proposed model can adapt to a specific corpus through parameter learning and it uses a grammar to speed up the retrieval process in large or distributed databases. We also experimented list filtering to avoid overlap in the retrieved element list.

Keywords

Bayesian networks, INEX, XML, Focused retrieval, Structured document retrieval

1. INTRODUCTION

The goal of our model is to provide a generic system for performing different Information Retrieval (IR) tasks on collections of structured documents. We take an IR approach to this problem. We want to retrieve specific relevant elements from the collection as an answer to a query. The elements may be any document or document part (full document, section(s), paragraph(s), etc.) indexed from the structural description of the collection. We consider the task as a *focused retrieval*, first described in [1, 7].

This year, we focused on *content only* (CO) queries since many research questions still remain open for this specific task. The Bayesian Network (BN) model is briefly described in section 2.1. We also present modifications with respect to the model presented last year.

2. MODELS

The generic BN model used for the CO task was described in the last proceedings [8]. We only give here the main model characteristics. Our work is an attempt to develop a formal model for structured document access. Our model relies on Bayesian networks and provides an alternative to other specific approaches for handling structured documents [6, 3, 4]. BN offer a general framework for taking into account relation dependencies between different structural elements. Those elements, which we call *doxels* (for Document Element) will be random variables in our BN.

We believe that this approach allows casting different access information tasks into a unique formalism, and that these models allow performing sophisticated inferences, e.g. they allow to compute the relevance of different document parts in the presence of missing or uncertain information. Compared to other approaches based on BN, we propose a general framework which should adapt to different types of structured documents or collections. Another original aspect of our work is that model parameters are learnt from data. This allows to rapidly adapt the model to different document collections and IR tasks.

We have made the following additions to the model presented last year :

- We experimented with different weighting schemes for terms in the different doxels. Weight importance may be relative to the whole corpus of documents, to doxels labelled with the same tag, etc. ;
- We introduced a grammar for modelling different constraints on the possible relevance values of doxels knowing its parent relevance value ;
- To limit the overlap (e.g. return a section and one of its paragraph) of retrieved doxels, we introduced simple filtering techniques.

2.1 Bayesian networks

The BN structure we used directly reflects the document hierarchy, *i.e.* we consider that each structural part within that hierarchy has an associated random variable. The root of the BN is thus a "corpus" variable, its children the "journal collection" variables, etc. In this model, due to the conditional independence property of the BN variables, relevance is a local property in the following sense: if we know the relevance of a journal, the relevance value of the journal collection will not bring any new information on the relevance of one article of this journal (figure 1).

In our model, the random variable associated to a structural element can take three different values in the set $V = \{N, G, E\}$ which is related to the *specificity* dimension of the INEX'03 assessment scale:

N (for Not relevant) when the element is not relevant;

G (for too biG) when the element is marginally or fairly specific;

E (for Exact) when the element has a high specificity.

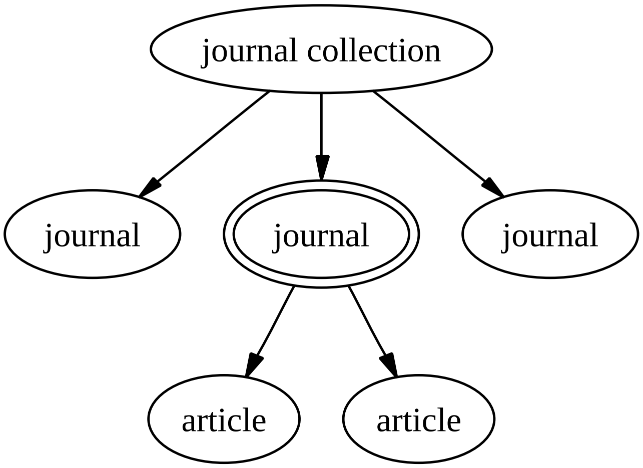

Figure 1: Independence in the BN. When we know the relevance of a journal, the relevance of the journal collection have no influence on the articles within this journal.

For any doxel e and for a given query, the probability $P(e = E|\text{query})$ gives us the *final* Retrieval Status Value (RSV) of this element. This value is used for the ranking of the different doxels with respect to the query.

We considered *two* other types of random variables. The first one is the query that is described as a vector of word frequencies. Note that this random variable is always observed (known). The second one is associated to *baseline* models and can take only two values: *relevant* and *not relevant.*

For a given query, a local relevance score is computed for each doxel via the baseline score models. This score only depends on the query and the doxel content. Based on these local scores and on parameters, BN inference is then used to combine evidence and scores for different doxels in the document model. For computing the local score, different models could be used. We used in our experiments simple retrieval methods and classical ones such as Okapi. The first one (*ratio*) computes for each element the value S_1:

$$S_1(\text{element}) = \frac{\sum_{\text{term}t} tf_{\text{query}}(t) \frac{tf_{\text{element}}(t)}{tf_{\text{parent}}(t)}}{\sum_{\text{term}t} tf_{\text{query}}(t)}$$

where tf_{parent} denotes the term frequency in the parent of the element, tf_{element} the term frequency within the element and tf_{query} within the query. The second one (*weight ratio*) is simply S_1 divided by a decreasing function of the element length:

$$S_2(\text{element}) = \frac{S_1(\text{element})}{\log(20 + \text{length}(\text{element}))}$$

where the length of the element is number of words that this element and its descendants contain. All those formulas and coefficient were determined empirically. The main advantages of these formulas are that they give scores that are naturally bounded (between 0 and 1) and that they can be computed *locally.* We can then define the probability that an element is relevant (R) for the first (resp. second) model M_1 (M_2) by:

$$P(M_i = R|\text{query}, \text{element content}) = S_i \text{ with } i \in \{1, 2\}$$

We also tried to add the classical Okapi model, but as its RSV are harder to normalise, we were not able to integrate it with success into our BN framework. We will try to use the normalisation proposed by Robertson [9] next year: our goal was to prove BN can perform better than its baseline models.

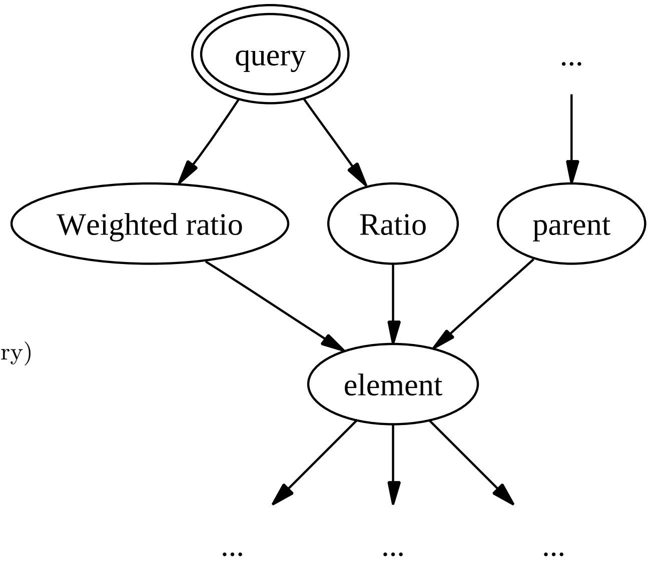

Figure 2: Bayesian Network model (detail view). The element state depends on the parent state and on the relevance of the element for the model *ratio* (M_1) and *weighted ratio* (M_2)

In our model, the probability that an element is in the state N, G or E depends on the parent state and on the fact that M_i has judged the element as relevant or not relevant (figure 2). We can then compute the probability using this formula for any element e and any state $v \in V$:

$$\begin{aligned} P(e = v|\text{query}) = \sum_{\substack{v_p \in V \\ r_1, r_2 \in \{R, \neg R\}}} & \theta_{c(e), v, v_p, r_1, r_2} \\ & \times P(e \text{ parent} = v_p) \\ & \times P(M_1 = r_1|\text{query}) \\ & \times P(M_2 = r_2|\text{query}) \end{aligned}$$

where θ is a learnt parameter that depends on the different states of the four random variables (element state, parent state, baseline model 1 and 2 relevance) and on the category $c(e)$ of the element. The categories used in our experiment are shown in table 1. In our BN, scores are computed recursively with the above formula: we begin by the biggest doxels (INEX volumes) and then we compute scores while going deeper and deeper in the document tree (article, body, paragraph and so on).

tags	category $c(e)$
ss, ss1, sec1	section
bib, bibl, ack, reviewers	misc
ip, ip1, ip2, ip3, bb, app, p1, p2	paragraph
figw, fig	figure
l1, l2, l3, l4, l5, l6, l7, l8, l9, la, lb, lc, ld, le, numeric-list, numeric-rbrace, bullet-list, index	list
index-entry, item-none, item-bold, item-both, item-bullet, item-diamond, item-letpara, item-mdash, item-numpara, item-roman, item-text	item
hdr, hdr2, hdr1, h3, h2, h2a, h1a, h1, h	header
bdy, article	container
* (any other tag)	other

Table 1: Element categories

Adding a grammar to the BN

We used a grammar in order to add some constraint on the retrieval inference process. That grammar enables us to express coherence rules on scored doxels within the same document path:

- A non relevant element *may not* have a relevant descendant:

$$\forall c, r_1, r_2, \theta_{c,v,N,r_1,r_2} = 0 \text{ if } v \in \{G, E\}$$

- An exact doxel (E) can not have a child which is "too big" (G).

$$\forall c, r_1, r_2, \theta_{c,G,E,r_1,r_2} = 0$$

The main interest of this grammar is to provide us a way to make a decision about whether we can find an element which has a higher RSV in the set of descendants of a given element. Indeed, we can show that:

$$P(e = E|\text{query}) \leq P(p = E|\text{query}) + P(p = G|\text{query}) \quad (1)$$

where p is the parent of the doxel e.

Learning parameters

In order to fit a specific corpus, parameters are learnt from observations using the Expectation Maximization (EM) algorithm. An observation $O^{(i)}$ is a query with its associated relevance assessments (document/part is relevant or not relevant to the query). EM [2] optimises the model parameters Θ with respect to the likelihood $\mathcal{L}$ of the observed data:

$$\mathcal{L}(O, \Theta) = \log P(O|\Theta)$$

where $O = \left\{O^{(1)}, \ldots, O^{(|O|)}\right\}$ are the N observations. Observations may or may not be *complete*, *i.e.* relevance assessments need not to be known for each structural element in the BN in order to learn the parameters. Each observation O_i can be decomposed into E_i and H_i where E_i corresponds to structural entities for which we know whether they are relevant or not, i.e. structural parts for which we have a relevance assessment. E_i is called the evidence. H_i corresponds to hidden observations, i.e. all other nodes of the BN.

In our experiment, we used for learning the 30 CO queries from INEX'02 and their associated relevance assessments.

2.2 Filtering

A Structured IR system has to cope with overlapping doxels, as it may for example return a section and its paragraph. In order to avoid duplicate information, it might be interesting to filter out the returned result in order to choose between different levels of granularity. We thus developed a simple filtering algorithm which we describe below. The basic idea is to remove an element when another element in the retrieved list contains or is contained by the element. For INEX'03, we chose a very simple filtering mainly motivated by intuition.

The filtering we chose removes some of the retrieved doxels in the list while preserving the relative ranking of other document components. Kazai et al. [5] had this idea with the BEP[1]. We can consider our filtering step as an instance of BEP which does not take into account hyperlinks. Filtering is a necessary step for improving the effectiveness of Structured IR systems.

We tried the three following strategies:

Root oriented If a doxel appears on the retrieved list, its descendants in the document tree will not give any new information when they appear later. We thus remove any element in the ranked list if an ancestor is higher in the list. This simple method favours large doxels which is in conflict with the CO objective (retrieve the most specific doxels as possible).

Leaf oriented This is the inverse of the previous approach. We remove an element from the list when there is a descendant higher. The limit of this method is that when the latter is not relevant, then all the other informations brought by the ancestor are lost for the user.

BEP BEP strategy cumulates root and leaf oriented filtering. That is, an element is kept only if there is neither descendant nor ancestor higher in the retrieved list.

We chose the "Root oriented" strategy for two official submissions for INEX'03. This strategy gave the best results with the INEX'02 collection.

3. EXPERIMENTS

Three official runs were submitted to INEX'03:

okapi-1 In this run, we used the Okapi weighting scheme; every volume (and not every doxel) in the INEX corpus was considered as a document while the average document length used in the Okapi formula was local: for every doxel, the average document length was the average length of the doxel and its siblings. Results were filtered with "root oriented" strategy.

[1] Best Entry Point

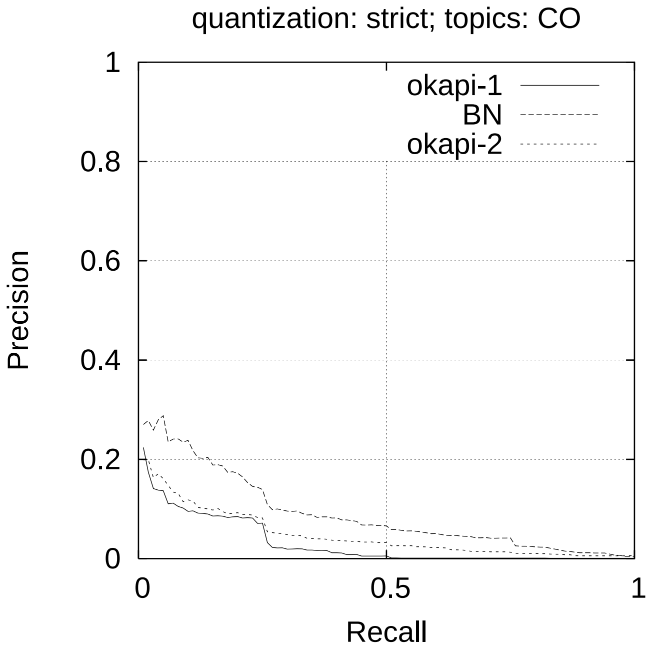

Figure 3: Official runs (strict quantisation)

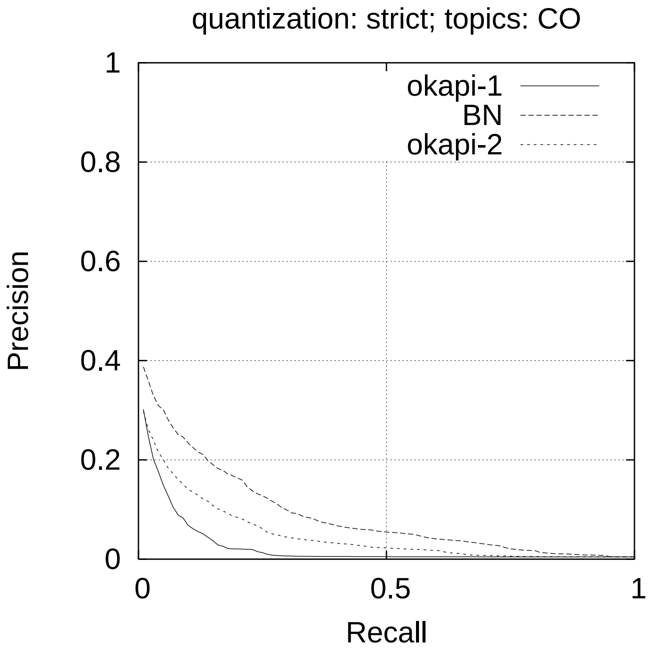

Figure 4: Official runs (generalised quantisation)

BN In this run, we submitted the doxel retrieved with the BN which is described in section 2.1. Results were filtered with the "root oriented" strategy.

okapi-2 In this run, we used the Okapi weighting scheme; every article (and not every doxel) in the INEX corpus was considered as a document while the average document length was the same as for okapi-1.

	average precision	rank
okapi-1	0.030 / 0.024	35 / 36
bn	0.046 / 0.048	19 / 18
okapi-2	0.089 / 0.087	7 / 5

Table 2: Results: in each cell, the first number is the strict quantisation, the second one the generalised.

The results are summarised in figures (3,4) and table 2. There is a gap between the model okapi-2 and the two other ones BN and okapi-1. The BN model is limited by its two baseline models that have performances that are a little below the BN results – these results are not shown here but are based on experiments with the INEX'02 dataset. The best performances are thus reached by a model which is very close to the standard Okapi (term weight are computed on an article basis): the only change is the length normalisation, which is local. Some preliminary experiments have shown this kind of normalisation gives the best results.

The main results we obtained are twofold. Firstly, with respect to last year, BN have shown they are able to perform reasonably well with respect to the baseline models performances. Secondly, using classical models as Okapi can help to improve significantly the BN performances as they perform much better than other models we have experimented. We still need to investigate further the filtering process, as we believe this is a key issue in XML retrieval.

4. CONCLUSION

We have described a new model for performing IR on structured documents. It is based on BN whose conditional probability functions are learnt from the data via EM. This model uses a grammar for restricting the allowed state of a doxel in our BN knowing the state of its parent. The BN framework has thus three advantages:

1. it can be used in distributed IR, as we only need the score of the parent element in order to compute the score of any its descendants;
2. it can use simultaneously different baseline models: we can therefore use specific models for non textual media (image, sound, etc.) as another source of evidence;
3. whole parts of the corpus can be ignored when retrieving doxels using inequality (1).

The model has still to be improved, tuned and developed, and several limitations have still to be overcome in order to obtain an operational structured information retrieval system. In particular, we should improve the baseline models and further experiments are thus needed for tuning the learning algorithms and for filtering.

5. REFERENCES

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