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Editorial

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Introduction

This issue of *Webology* journal consists of some articles on different aspects of the web search research. In terms of the articles' theme, they can be divided into two main categories. The first category is mainly on reviewing research on search procedure on the web and encompasses Spink and Jansen's article (the first paper) and Asadi and Jamali's work (the third paper). The other category includes Narsesian's article (the second paper) and Safari's article (the fourth paper) which are discussions on some aspects of the web content and web resources organization.

In the first category of the papers, web searching is the key concern. This area of research has received considerable attention from researchers in the related fields and the number of publications in this area is notably increasing. After astonishing growth of the web resources, researchers in a variety of information science branches including information retrieval (IR), information seeking and human-computer interaction (HCI) commenced a range of studies on web searching and users interaction with the web resources.

In summary, there are three main groups of people who are involved in the web search studies. The first group are web users who make use of the web for a wide range of purposes including searching and browsing the web. They usually look for faster and simpler search tools to save their time and efforts and obtain more relevant results.

The second group are designers of search tools who have been attempting to develop more efficient and sometimes intelligent search facilities. The recent achievements in launching new search facilities are an indication of their efforts to improve the accessibility of information in the web environment. Finally, the third group is the web search researchers who observe and investigate the web searchers interaction with the web search tools and try to increase the existing knowledge on this interaction and hopefully making useful recommendations to enhance the level of information accessibility.

Web search research is still at its infancy stage, there are many unanswered questions which encourage researchers to carry out further research on this area. In terms of the history of this area the studies on web searching appeared as early as 1995 and have proliferated since ([Hsieh-Yee, 2001](#)). Regarding the main strands of investigations web search research is dominated by two major strands including user-oriented and technical-oriented investigations. User-oriented studies mainly focus on the user side of human-computer interaction of web searching. In contrast, technical-oriented investigations are concern about the technical side of this interaction.

Articles in This Issue

Amanda Spink and Bernard J. Jansen: *A Study of Web Search Trends*. The first paper of this issue has been written by Amanda Spink and Bernard J. Jansen who are well-known authors and researchers in the area. This article presents a fairly brief but reasonably comprehensive overview of selected findings of their research on the web searching between 1997 and 2003. In general, over this period of time they have been investigating how end users search the web and what are their main search patterns in this environment. This paper provides us with a picture of end users web search pattern. Their findings are mainly based on large sets of quantitative data of web query transaction logs in some of the general-purpose search engines.

Shant Narsesian: *Personal Homepages as an Information Resource*. This paper firstly defines what personal homepage is and then explains why we should consider personal homepages as a sort of information resources. The article highlights this fact that despite of the huge number of personal homepages, this kind of web resources has been neglected in many ways. Regarding this fact that there is a considerable diversity among the content of personal homepages it seems this kind of web pages can provide web users with useful information. In fact, content diversity and the huge number of existing homepages give them an excellent potential for being valuable information resources. The paper concludes that personal homepages hold useful information and we need to investigate them in further research.

Saeid Asadi and Hamid R. Jamali: *Shifts in Search Engine Development: A Review of Past, Present and Future Trends in Research on Search Engines*. This article covers more technical aspects about the current research and development in the web search engines. Presented papers in recent five years at four main IR conferences including WWW, SIGMOD, SIGIR and CIKM have been analysed in this paper in terms of their approaches and contents. Different concepts including specialising trend in search engine industry, personalization, and location-based search have been discussed.

Mehdi Safari: *Metadata and the Web* mainly focus about the web contents and organizing methods for web-based resources. The paper discusses on the importance and usefulness of metadata in organizing the highly unstructured environment of the web. The concept of ontology has received more attention in this paper and has been discussed in further details. The paper has concluded that by developing the semantic web the future of the web will be much more usable and manageable.

Alireza Noruzi: *Application of Ranganathan's Laws to the Web*. The last paper in this issue explains the adaptability of *Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science* with the web environment. This article illustrates how Ranganathan's Laws can be interpreted regarding the new era of information technology. In fact, this article attempts to describe how the originality and novelty of these fundamental principles still inspires the next generation of researchers after Ranganathan to redefine his laws in different context including the online world. The inspiring effect of Ranganathan's Five Laws on some recent research has been illustrated as well.

Yazdan Mansourian: Review of *Web Search: Public Searching of the Web*. The final section of this issue is a brief review on a new published book which is "*Web Search: Public Searching of the Web*" by Dr. Amanda Spink and Dr. Bernard J. Jansen. This book presents an overview of web search research in the recent years and illustrates main strands of research in this area and illuminates future directions for the researchers who want to carry out studies on web searching in the future.

References

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