LIS618

Online Information Retrieval Techniques

subject to change: 2003–10–07

The latest version of this document is available on the web at http://openlib.org/home/krichel/lis618n03a/.

Course Description
This course will introduce the students to the theory of information retrieval and its application in large-scale commercial database system and on the WWW.

Course objectives
On completing this course, students

- will have been introduced to information retrieval models;
- will have been introduced to several commercial database systems and be aware of their strengths and weaknesses;
- will have been introduced to expert search strategies with web search engines and databases.

Prerequisites
Students should have a basic command of the Apple OS-X operating system because the machines in the lab run on this operating system, and the instructor has no clue.

Instructor
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Class structure
Classes will be held on Sundays afternoon between 13:40 and 17:30 in the multimedia lab of the Electronic Resources Center of the Bobst Library at `New York University`.
There will be a mixture of lectures and hands-on work in the lab. Provisional class details are:

0	2003–09–13	Introduction to the course and to Information Retrieval
1	2003–09–20	preparing to search and Dialog 1
2	2003–10–05	IR performance and Dialog 2
3	2003–10–12	vector model and Nexis
4	2003–10–19	other issues in information retrival, EBSCO, web of knowledge
5	2003–10–26	Google and Amazon
6	2003–11–02	Westlaw and factiva

Readings
The powerpoint slides of the intructor are the reading. The slides may point to other sources of reference as required. Database practice makes for a master searcher, only reading about them is not getting students very far. The session on Google will make use of a new book on Google hacks published by O'Reilley and Associates.
Some slides on teaching Dialog have been given to the instructor, mail him if you want a copy.
Some `reference questions` to work on are available.

Assessment
Each student will have to prepare a search exercise and report as detailed in the first lecture. This report must not exceed 7 pages. Appendices will be discarded. It will count for 50% of total grade. It is due on November 9. The remaining 50% will come from quizzes held at the start of each lecture except the first. Quizzes will last around 10 minutes and focussed on a precise short answer. The worst quiz performance will be discarded when the average is being computed.