

Preface

Web personalization can be defined as any set of actions that can tailor the web experience to a particular user or set of users. The experience can be something as casual as browsing a web site or as (economically) significant as trading stocks or purchasing a car. The actions can range from simply making the presentation more pleasing to anticipating the needs of a user and providing customized and relevant information. To achieve effective personalization, organizations must rely on all available data, including the usage and clickstream data (reflecting user behaviour), the site content, the site structure, domain knowledge, as well as user demographics and profiles. Efficient and intelligent techniques are needed to mine this data for actionable knowledge, and to effectively use the discovered knowledge to enhance the users' web experience. These techniques must address important challenges emanating from the size of the data, the fact that they are heterogeneous and very personal in nature, as well as the dynamic nature of user interactions with the web. These challenges include the scalability of the personalization solutions, data integration, and successful integration of techniques from machine learning, information retrieval and filtering, databases, agent architectures, knowledge representation, data mining, text mining, statistics, information security and privacy, user modelling and human-computer interaction.

Recommender systems represent one special and prominent class of such personalized web applications, which particularly focus on the user-dependent filtering and selection of relevant information and — in an e-Commerce context — aim to support online users in the decision-making and buying process. Recommender systems have been a subject of extensive research in AI over the last decade, but with today's increasing number of e-commerce environments on the web, the demand for new approaches to intelligent product recommendation is higher than ever. There are more online users, more online channels, more vendors, more products and, most importantly, increasingly complex products and services. These recent developments in the area of recommender systems generated new demands, in particular with respect to interactivity, adaptivity, and user preference elicitation. These challenges, however, are also in the focus of general web personalization research.

In the face of this increasing overlap of the two research areas, the aim of this workshop is to bring together researchers and practitioners of both fields, to foster an exchange of information and ideas, and to facilitate a discussion of current and emerging topics related to "web intelligence," particularly regarding its application in recommender systems. This workshop represented the sixth in a successful series of ITWP workshops that have been held at IJCAI and AAAI and would be — after the successful event on AAAI'07 — the second workshop to join topics in web personalization and recommender systems.

This year's workshop attracted a number of high-quality contributions from 12 different countries. Of these, 7 papers (less than 40 percent) were accepted for full presentation at the workshop, with an additional 3 accepted for short presentations. The accepted papers deal with a variety of issues and techniques for creating more intelligent personalization systems, but generally fell into a three broad categories: personalization in search and navigation; personalization on the social web; and modeling and strategies for recommendation. In keeping with the increasing emphasis on the "social web" and personalization on media-sharing web sites, this year's workshop also includes an exciting invited address by Paul Lamere of Sun Microsystems Labs, entitled "Music Recommendation Is Broken, and Only You Can Fix It!"

— Bamshad Mobasher, Sarabjot Singh Anand, Alfred Kobsa, and Dietmar Jannach