Evaluation

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Evaluation

- Evaluation is key to building effective and efficient search engines
 - measurement usually carried out in controlled laboratory experiments
 - online testing can also be done

Evaluation Corpus

- *Test collections* consisting of documents, queries, and relevance judgments, e.g.
 - CACM: Titles and abstracts from the Communications of the ACM from 1958-1979. Queries and relevance judgments generated by computer scientists.
 - AP: Associated Press newswire documents from 1988-1990 (from TREC disks 1-3). Queries are the title fields from TREC topics 51-150. Topics and relevance judgments generated by government information analysts.
 - GOV2: Web pages crawled from websites in the .gov domain during early 2004. Queries are the title fields from TREC topics 701-850. Topics and relevance judgments generated by government analysts.

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Test Collections

Collection	Number of	Size	Average number
	documents		of words/doc.
CACM	3,204	2.2 Mb	64
AP	242,918	$0.7~\mathrm{Gb}$	474
GOV2	25,205,179	426 Gb	1073

Collection	Number of	Average number of	Average number of
	queries	words/query	relevant docs/query
CACM	64	13.0	16
AP	100	4.3	220
GOV2	150	3.1	180

TREC Topic Example

<top>

<num> Number: 794

<title> pet therapy

<desc> Description:

How are pets or animals used in therapy for humans and what are the benefits?

<narr> Narrative:

Relevant documents must include details of how pet- or animal-assisted therapy is or has been used. Relevant details include information about pet therapy programs, descriptions of the circumstances in which pet therapy is used, the benefits of this type of therapy, the degree of success of this therapy, and any laws or regulations governing it.

Relevance Judgments

- Obtaining relevance judgments is an expensive, time-consuming process
 - who does it?
 - what are the instructions?
 - what is the level of agreement?
- TREC judgments
 - generally binary
 - agreement good because of "narrative"

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Pooling

- Exhaustive judgments for all documents in a collection is not practical
- Pooling technique is used in TREC
 - top k (for TREC, k varied between 50 and 200) from the rankings obtained by different search engines (or retrieval algorithms) are merged into a pool
 - duplicates are removed
 - documents are presented in some random order to the relevance judges
- Produces a large number of relevance judgments for each query, although still incomplete

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Can we avoid human judgments?

- No
- Makes experimental work hard
 - Especially on a large scale

Evaluating at large search engines

- Search engines have test collections of queries and hand-ranked results
- Search engines often use precision at top k,
 e.g., k = 10
- Seach engines also use non-relevance-based measures.
 - Clickthrough on first result
 - Not very reliable if you look at a single clickthrough... but pretty reliable in the aggregate.
 - Studies on user behavior in the lab

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- Purpose: Test a single innovation
- Prerequisite: You have a large search engine up and running.
- Have most users use old system

- Divert a small proportion of traffic (e.g., 1%) to the new system that includes the innovation
- Evaluate with an "automatic" measure like clickthrough on first result
- Now we can directly see if the innovation does improve user happiness.
- Probably the evaluation methodology that large search engines trust most

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- Used for both tuning and evaluating search engines
 - also for various techniques such as query suggestion
- Typical contents
 - User identifier or user session identifier
 - Query terms stored exactly as user entered
 - List of URLs of results, their ranks on the result list, and whether they were clicked on
 - Timestamp(s) records the time of user events such as query submission, clicks

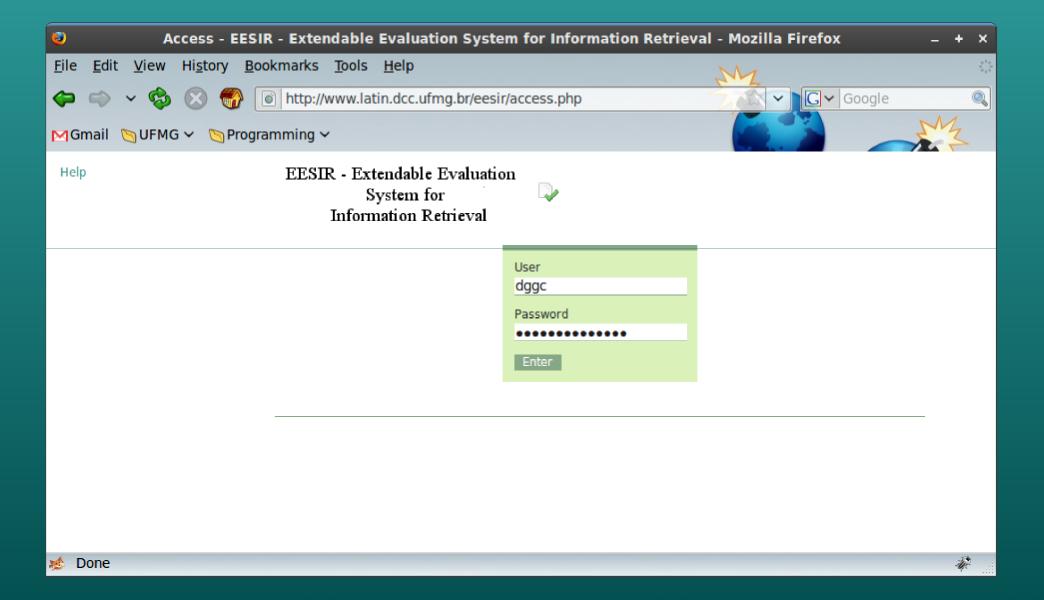
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- Clicks are not relevance judgments
 - although they are correlated
 - biased by a number of factors such as rank on result list
- Can use clickthough data to predict preferences between pairs of documents
 - appropriate for tasks with multiple levels of relevance, focused on user relevance
 - various "policies" used to generate preferences

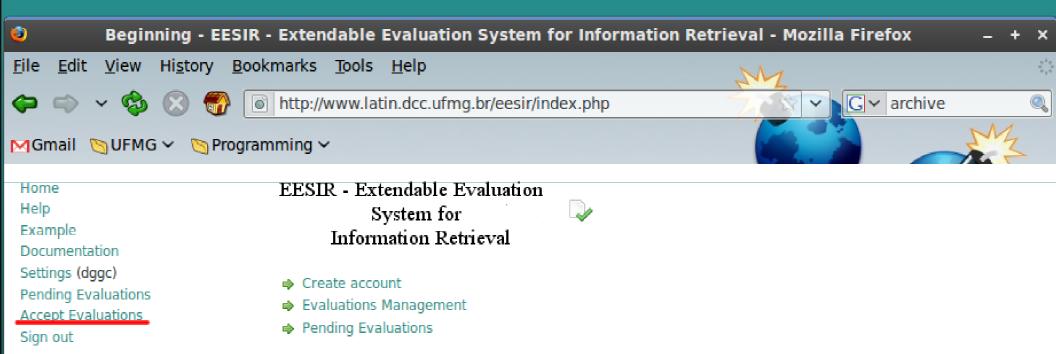
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EESIR – Extendable Evaluation System for Information Retrieval

Login



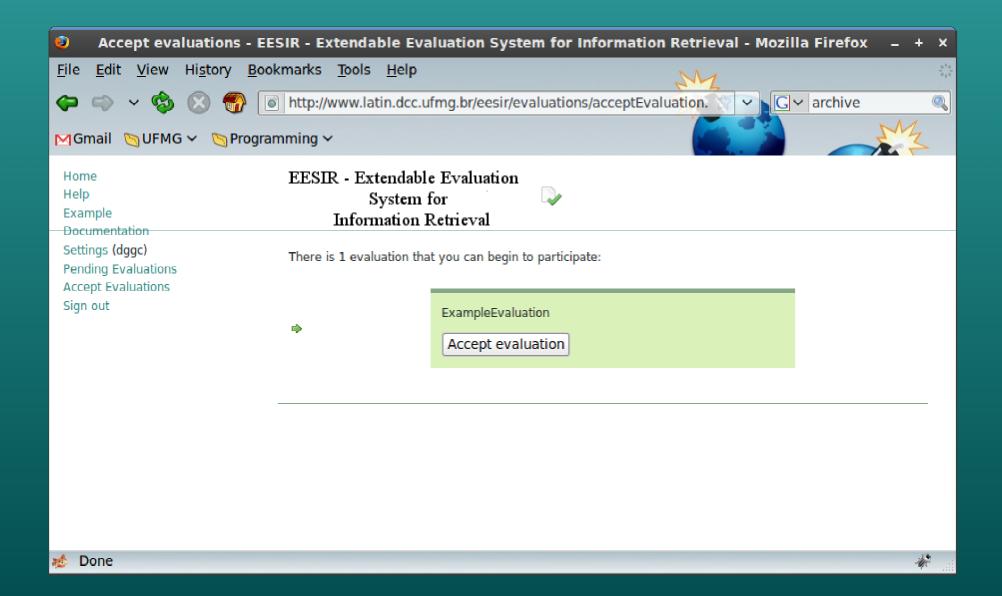
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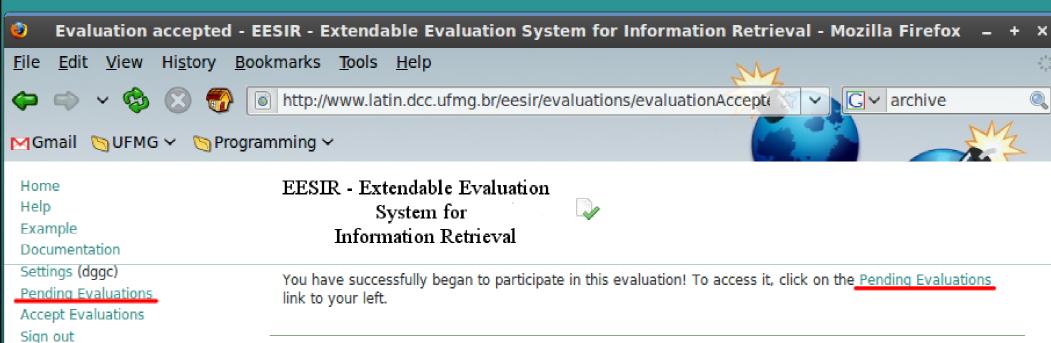




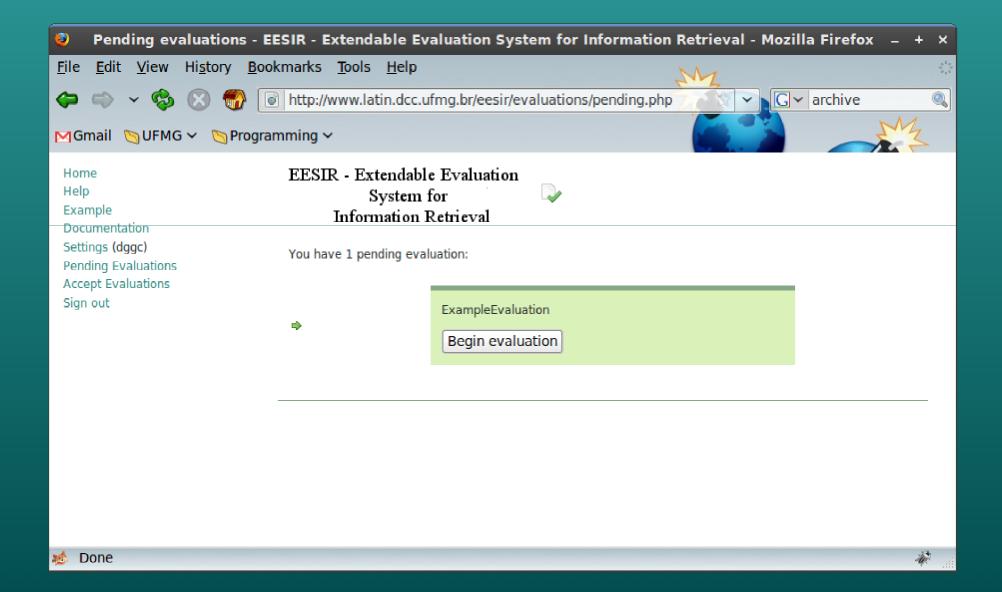
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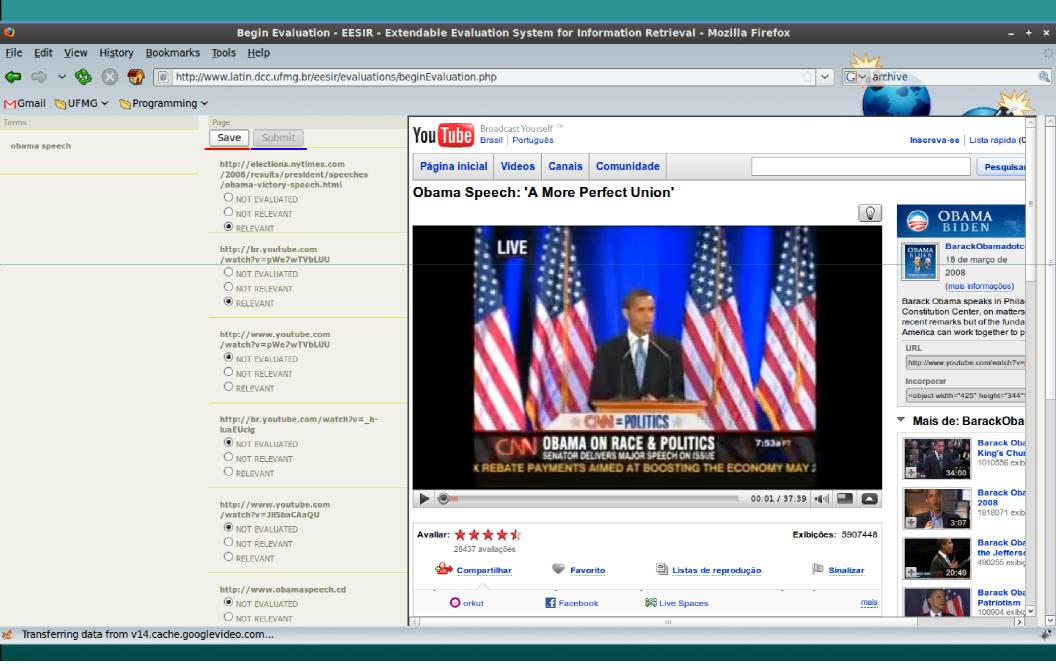
Pending evaluations



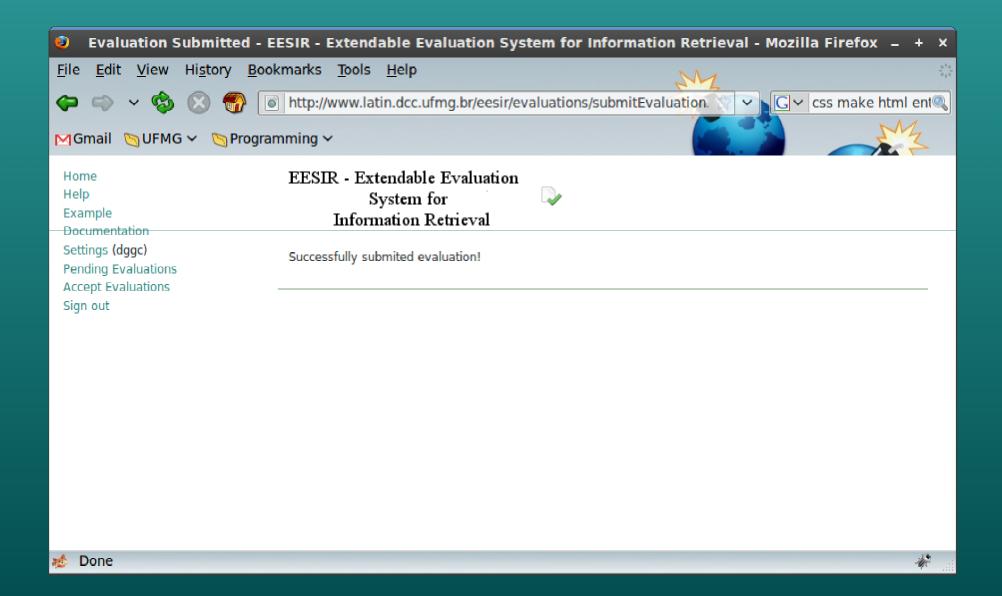
Begin



Let's



Done



Interface

- Thrift is a software framework for scalable cross-language services development.
 - It combines a powerful software stack with a code generation engine to build services that work efficiently and seamlessly between C++, Java, Python, PHP, and Ruby. Thrift was developed at Facebook and released as open source.

http://incubator.apache.org/thrift