

Data is not the (only) answer: An alternative view of user requirements

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people in systems

- two developments:
- (representations of patterns of aggregated usage) OR (people)
 - the development of *data-centric* approaches and services which provide scholars with resources targeted to their individual, personalised needs
 - *pervasive* networking technologies which have reduced some barriers to collaboration
- note this is 'OR' not 'XOR'!

resource discovery via other people

- ‘gestures’ indicating attention - *enlightened self-interest*
- direct human ‘presence’ rather than anonymous or algorithmic actor
- can a well developed & highly available social network reduce ‘filter-failure’?

however....

- the scholar is not always in a 'social' mood - they might be:
 - collaborative
 - competitive
 - neutral
- much of recent technology-enhanced collaborative enterprise depends on *enlightened self-interest....*
- ...this might not always apply
- will people demand more control over their own attention data?
 - what do you know about me?
 - can I reuse this data myself elsewhere?
 - can I remove it from your system?

lessons from AOL

- anonymised user 4417749....
- ...or as her friends know her, Thelma Arnold
- user 927

anonymity: bug or feature?

- it is an aspiration of service-providers to make services responsive to users without requiring their direct intervention
- but:
 - perhaps, as a user, I welcome the chance to intervene
 - perhaps I want other people, known to me, to be able to intervene on my behalf
- David Kay asked: “could you imagine an undergrad submitting a list?”
 - well yes, I think I could! (*High Fidelity*) :-)
- what about an opt out for anonymity to get richer services?

niche/specialist networks

- recommendation systems being tried with some apparent benefits being realised at undergraduate level
- **but**, in academia, beyond undergraduate it's *long tail* all the way!
- small networks based on people actually *knowing* each other
- economic/business drivers underpinning service design may be changing

questions for service providers

- what can those who provide digital library services offer the “long-tail” of academia?
 - in which context(s) might the personal/social network offer a good approach to resource discovery?
 - when might the service built on aggregated, anonymised attention data be appropriate?
 - can these approaches be integrated by service providers, or is this task best left to the user or another agent?