

LIS618

Database Searching

subject to change: 2003-03-23

The latest version of this document is available on the web at <http://openlib.org/home/krichel/lis618p03s/>.

Course Description

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

Web searching will not be covered at all. Upon student demand, there will be an introduction to relational databases.

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

Prerequisites

Students should have a basic command of the MS Windows operating system because the machines in the lab run on this operating system.

Instructor

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Class structure

Classes will be held on Wednesday afternoon between 14:40 and 16:30 at the computer lab of the Palmer School. There will be a mixture of lectures and hands-on work in the lab. Provisional class details are:

0	2003-01-22	Introduction
1	2003-01-29	Information Retrieval 1
2	2003-02-05	Information Retrieval 2
3	2003-02-12	Information Retrieval 3
4	2003-02-19	DIALOG 1
5	2003-02-26	DIALOG 2
6	2003-03-05	DIALOG 3
7	2003-03-19	Charles' special lecture
8	2003-03-26	DIALOG 4
9	2003-04-02	Nexis
10	2003-04-09	Google 1
11	2003-04-23	Google 2
12	2003-04-30	citation searching

Readings

The powerpoint slides of the instructor 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'Reilly 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 5 pages. Appendices will be discarded. It will count for 50% of total grade. It is due on April 9. The remaining 50% will come from quizzes held at the start of each lecture except the first and second lecture. Quizzes will last around 10 minutes and focussed on a precise short answer. The two worst quiz performances will be discarded when the average is being computed.