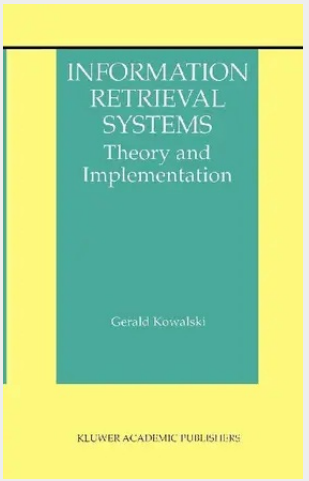
Kowalski

Information Retrieval Systems

Theory and Implementation

The growth of the Internet and the availability of enormous volumes of data in digital form have necessitated intense interest in techniques to assist the user in locating data of interest. The Internet has over 350 million pages of data and is expected to reach over one billion pages by the year 2000. Buried on the Internet are both valuable nuggets to answer questions as well as a large quantity of information the average person does not care about. The Digital Library effort is also progressing, with the goal of migrating from the traditional book environment to a digital library environment. The challenge to both authors of new publications that will reside on this information domain and developers of systems to locate information is to provide the information and capabilities to sort out the non-relevant items from those desired by the consumer. In effect, as we proceed down this path, it will be the computer that determines what we see versus the human being. The days of going to a library and browsing the new book shelf are being replaced by electronic searching the Internet or the library catalogs. Whatever the search engines return will constrain our knowledge of what information is available. An understanding of Information Retrieval Systems puts this new environment into perspective for both the creator of documents and the consumer trying to locate information.

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