

Remembrance of Data Past

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Abstract: Digital storage now acts as an archive of users' memories, keeping records of data as well as of the context in which the data was acquired. This data comes in different forms, mixing both unstructured text content and structured information. With more data available, it is ironically getting more difficult to find the data we need. Numerous search tools have been developed for web documents or personal files. However, most of these tools index text content, allowing for some ranking on the textual part of the query, but only consider structure and a small subset of context as filtering conditions. These keyword-only searches do not take advantage of the additional information available in the structure of the data, nor do they leverage the rich contextual information to help users find the data they remember having stored or accessed. I will discuss the need for a structure- and context-aware search interface for personal information. I will present different types of contextual information that can be leveraged for personal information search and propose a data model that unifies context, structure, and content and scoring mechanisms to integrate context, structure, and content in user searches allowing for some flexibility in user queries.