Abstract

Community Question-Answering (CQA) services, such as Yahoo! Answers and Stack Overflow, have become important sources of seeking and sharing information. Online users use CQA to look for information and share knowledge on topics ranging from arts to travel. The questions posted on CQA sites are often relying on the wisdom of crowd, that is, the best answer could come from a culmination of several answers by different people with varying expertise and opinions. Given that CQA is a user-driven service, user experience becomes an important aspect, affecting the activeness and even the survival of the site. In this work, we are interested in studying the behavior of the users who participate in CQA as askers and/or answerers. Specifically, we wish to understand how different types of users could be identified based on their behaviors with respect to a CQA-specific problem at hand. The two such problems we are addressing are:

1. Looking for answerer: finding the correct answerer could reduce the waiting time and also increase the chance that the question would be answered. We examine characteristic in two popular CQA sites (Stack Overflow and Yahoo! Answer) and proposed a method, QRec, to identify the potential answerers by constructing user profiles and activity levels.

2. Finding rising stars: In CQA, there is typically a small fraction of users who provide high quality posts and earn a very high reputation status from the community. These top contributors are critical to the community since they drive the development of the site and attract traffic from Internet users. Identifying these individuals could be highly valuable, but this is not an easy task. In this work, we attempt to perform this analysis by extracting different sets of features to predict future contribution.
Examination Committee: Prof. Chirag Shah (chair), Prof. Ahmed Elgammal, Prof. Amlie Marian and Prof. Eric Allender