
Persuasive Recommender Systems - Keynote

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Abstract

Recommender Systems (RS) have become indispensable tools to support users when confronted with large collections. They focus the attention of users on a subset of items out of a variety of choices. Therefore RS are inherently persuasive online tools trying to pair users with items that might constitute a better match with their preferences than those choices the users might know already or they could detect on their own without the help of virtual guides. The goal of this talk is therefore to explore the range of influential cues and aspects that have been shown to influence the opinions of users and discuss avenues for further research.

Outline

Persuasion is generally seen as the intended inducing of another person to believe something, to do something or to change attitudes, mood and behavior (compare for instance to [4]). Persuasion obviously takes place via communication and argumentation, but not only. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) [3] has been proposed to explain these persuasion effects of messages. It principally identifies a main route towards persuasion that depends on the characteristics of the message itself, i.e. the quality and strength of an argument as a main determinant of persuasion effects. However, in addition there is also consistent empirical evidence that there is a peripheral route towards persuasion

that depends on various sender and receiver characteristics. For instance, the willingness and conceptual ability of the receiver to scrutinize the argument of a message has a moderating effect on the persuasion, i.e. enhanced scrutiny of a "strong" message makes the persuasion effect even stronger while an inhibited ability to scrutinize would have a weakening effect. Furthermore, additional peripheral cues such as characteristics of the source of communication like its credibility or its attractiveness of appearance also have an effect on the strength and direction of the induced attitude change. In the context of recommendation systems Gretzel & Fesenmaier [1], for instance, pointed out that the way the user's preferences are elicited has not only an effect on how users perceive the process but also influences their perception of the fit between their preferences and the recommendations. Thus persuasion happens side by side with recommendation. In Yoo et al. [6] we structured these peripheral clues in the context of product recommendations that may have an influence on the users' perception of the recommendation systems and its proposals into the type of the RS, factors related to the preference elicitation, the process and the output and aspects concerning the embodiment of a recommendation agent. By primarily focusing on accuracy a lot of recommender systems research ignores these appearance and interaction dependent aspects of a RS [2].

This talk therefore gives an overview on the impact of persuasive traits in the interaction with recommendation systems [6] as well as focuses on opportunities for further research such as explanations of recommendations [7], the impact of different design variants of these explanations such as their style of presentation [8] or the application of decision phenomena like decoy or framing effects and their interaction effects [5].

References

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