SOCIAL MEDIA MINING

The growth of social media over the last decade has revolutionized the way individuals interact and industries conduct business. Individuals produce data at an unprecedented rate by interacting, sharing, and consuming content through social media. Understanding and processing this new type of data to glean actionable patterns presents challenges and opportunities for interdisciplinary research, novel algorithms, and tool development.

Social Media Mining integrates social media, social network analysis, and data mining to provide a convenient and coherent platform for students, practitioners, researchers, and project managers to understand the basics and potentials of social media mining. It introduces the unique problems arising from social media data and presents fundamental concepts, emerging issues, and effective algorithms for network analysis and data mining.

Suitable for use in advanced undergraduate and beginning graduate courses as well as professional short courses, the text contains exercises of different degrees of difficulty that improve understanding and help apply concepts, principles, and methods in various scenarios of social media mining.

Reza Zafarani is a research associate of Computer Science and Engineering at Arizona State University. His research interests are in social media mining, machine learning, social network analysis, and social computing. His research emphasis is on user behavioral analysis at scale, and information integration and modeling across social media sites.

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An Introduction

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To our families . . .

Contents

Preface

We live in an age of big data. With hundreds of millions of people spending countless hours on social media to share, communicate, connect, interact, and create user-generated data at an unprecedented rate, social media has become one unique source of big data. This novel source of rich data provides unparalleled opportunities and great potential for research and development. Unfortunately, more data does not necessarily beget more good, only more of the right (or relevant) data that enables us to glean gems. Social media data differs from traditional data we are familiar with in data mining. Thus, new computational methods are needed to mine the data. Social media data is noisy, free-format, of varying length, and multimedia. Furthermore, social relations among the entities, or social networks, form an inseparable part of social media data; hence, it is important that social theories and research methods be employed with statistical and data mining methods. It is therefore a propitious time for social media mining.

Social media mining is a rapidly growing new field. It is an interdisciplinary field at the crossroad of disparate disciplines deeply rooted in computer science and social sciences. There are an active community and a large body of literature about social media. The fast-growing interests and intensifying need to harness social media data require research and the development of tools for finding insights from big social media data. This book is one of the intellectual efforts to answer the novel challenges of social media. It is designed to enable students, researchers, and practitioners to acquire fundamental concepts and algorithms for social media mining.

Researchers in this emerging field are expected to have knowledge in different areas, such as data mining, machine learning, text mining, social network analysis, and information retrieval, and are often required to consult research papers to learn the state of the art of social media mining. To mitigate such a strenuous effort and help researchers get up to speed in a

convenient way, we take advantage of our teaching and research of many years to survey, summarize, filter, categorize, and connect disparate research findings and fundamental concepts of social media mining. This book is our diligent attempt to provide an easy reference or entry point to help researchers quickly acquire a wide range of essentials of social media mining. Social media not only produces big user-generated data; it also has a huge potential for social science research, business development, and understanding human and group behavior. If you want to share a piece of information or a site on social media, you would like to grab precious attention from other equally eager users of social media; if you are curious to know what is hidden or who is influential in the complex world of social media, you might wonder how one can find this information in big and messy social media; if you hope to serve your customers better in social media, you certainly want to employ effective means to understand them better. These are just some scenarios in which social media mining can help. If one of these scenarios fits your need or you simply wish to learn something interesting in this emerging field of social media mining, this book is for you. We hope this book can be of benefit to you in accomplishing your goals of dealing with big data of social media.

Book Website and Resources

The book's website and further resources can be found at

`http://dmml.asu.edu/smm`

The website provides lecture slides, homework and exam problems, and sample projects, as well as pointers to useful material and resources that are publicly available and relevant to social media mining.

To Instructors

The book is designed for a one-semester course for senior undergraduate or graduate students. Though it is mainly written for students with a background in computer science, readers with a basic understanding of probability, statistics, and linear algebra will find it easily accessible. Some chapters can be skipped or assigned as a homework assignment for reviewing purposes if students have knowledge of a chapter. For example, if students have taken a data mining or machine learning course, they can skip Chapter 5. When time is limited, Chapters 6–8 should be discussed in

depth, and Chapters 9 and 10 can be either discussed briefly or assigned as part of reading material for course projects.

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In the past several years, enormous pioneering research has been performed by numerous researchers in the interdisciplinary fields of data mining, social computing, social network analysis, network science, computer science, and the social sciences. We are truly dwarfed by the depth, breadth, and extent of the literature, which not only made it possible for us to complete a text on this emerging topic – *social media mining* – but also made it a seemingly endless task. In the process, we have been fortunate in drawing inspiration and obtaining great support and help from many people to whom we are indebted.

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This book project stemmed from a course on social computing offered in 2008 at ASU. It was a seminar course that enjoyed active participation by graduate students and bright undergraduates with intelligent and provocative minds. Lively discussion and heated arguments were fixtures of the seminar course. Since then, it has become a regular course, evolving into a focused theme on *social media mining*. Teaching assistants, students, and guest speakers in these annual courses were of significant help to us in

choosing topics to include, determining the depth and extent of each topic, and offering feedback on lecture materials such as homework problems, slides, course projects, and reading materials.

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We have truly enjoyed our collaboration in this arduous journey. We will certainly miss our weekly meetings and many missed deadlines.