

Information Retrieval

Design and Sources

Roslina Othman



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INFORMATION RETRIEVAL: DESIGN AND SOURCES

Editor

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9. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF IR EVALUATION TESTS

Roslina Othman and Zalifah Awang Zakaria

ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of information retrieval evaluation tests. The types of IR evaluation tests, with the examples of every types of tests are mentioned; laboratory, semi-laboratory, semi operational, operational and simulation. The most significant elements of an evaluation test are used as the basis of explanation for its strengths and weaknesses. Degree of control is the determinant of the adoption of an evaluation test type. In many cases, a laboratory test is intended to examine the back end of the system such as indexing and stemming, while an operational evaluation test is for front-end involving users.

9.1 Introduction

Many evaluation tests of IR system emerged since 1960s, with tests evaluating different treatments and definitions of the system, and revealing more about the systems and their users. Evaluation tests in IR can be carried out in several ways, and each test employs its own way to achieve its intended purpose and objectives (Othman, 2009). Some tests are laboratory-based while others are based in a real setting and are referred to as operational evaluation tests. The *Cranfield* tests, as examples of the laboratory tests, employed artificial searches, did not involve users, and concentrated on indexing systems. Then, the *Medlars* test, an example of operational test evaluated a batch IR system that included searches designed not by the users themselves but by