Future Trends in Personalisation

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meanwhile, outside the library....
things are developing

and not necessarily in a good way....
privacy, control & the Facebook experiment

• as users, we have entered into a *Faustian pact* - we gain personalised services at the expense of control over what we’re willing to reveal

• the regular “mistakes” made by Facebook have eroded the user’s control over their privacy in the system by making it very, very hard to understand

• Friedrich Kessler coined *contract of adhesion* - “a contract between parties of greatly unequal bargaining power, such that the dominant party could impose a "take it or leave it" demand on the weaker party”
  

• think of those ‘terms of service’ we agree to with a click

• **but** - this is not the internet, it’s just one application. Facebook will fade....

  the world is *experimenting with privacy*
"The one site that installed the most was Dictionary.com. A visit to Dictionary.com resulted in 234 trackers being installed on our test computer [...] the vast majority of the trackers (200 out of 234) were installed by companies that the person visiting the site probably had never heard of."

not just evil, but a bit *rubbish* too....

- current recommender systems do not work well when the context is broad
- attention data is already being traded behind the scenes
- data is gathered anonymously and from poorly differentiated contexts
- this adds up to what Eli Pariser in *The Filter Bubble* calls:

  *a bad theory of you*
meanwhile, outside the library....
some new ideas are emerging....

and some look quite promising....
uncoordinated personalisation everywhere

- the only way this can really be coordinated in future is by the client:
  - either acting directly as a user
  - or
  - acting through some proxy which is instructed and trusted by the user

- **attention** is a valuable currency - sooner or later users are going to want to control how it is spent
from CRM to VRM

• vendor relationship management (VRM) (coined by Mike Vizard)

• made popular by Doc Searls, who uses the example of a car
  • a car gives the user a degree of control and privacy
  • infrastructure has emerged to support the use of the car
  • this infrastructure would never have come from the railway companies!

• Principles of VRM
  • Customers must enter relationships with vendors as independent actors.
  • Customers must be the points of integration for their own data.
  • Customers must have control of data they generate and gather. This means they must be able to share data selectively and voluntarily.
  • Customers must be able to assert their own terms of engagement
  • Customers must be free to express their demands and intentions outside of any one company’s control

http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/projectvrmar/Main_Page
the user needs an API!

• software which can act as the user’s persona - presenting a constrained and focussed interface to the world - agents

• filters which learn and adapt to changing priorities, sources & rules in a chaotic world

• a secure place for them to curate data about themselves and their preferences

• resulting in:

• systems which use contextual information curated by the user or by their agent, and which deliver accurately personalised services and recommendations
fourth parties

• a new type of business on the net

• third parties who work for the user, rather than the service provider

• the fourth party represents the user’s interests

• in other words, an agent

• a new breed of companies springing up to provide such services
Gartner Says the **Personal Cloud** Will Replace the Personal Computer as the Center of Users' Digital Lives by 2014

http://www.gartner.com/it/page.jsp?id=1947315
B.Y.O.D
it’s their cloud, not your cloud
implications for the library

• we might consider:

  • being ready to anticipate a growing demand from our users that they control their attention data

  • being ready to respond to pressure to reform how user’s activities are tracked (c.f. new ‘Cookie legislation). Such reforms may be incoherent and painful, initially....

  • how our services (will) appear in each user’s personal cloud

  • how we might work with user-appointed agents, and a much more sophisticated request/response model
thank you!