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Dr. Chirag Shah
Seeking Synergy in Information Seeking

Abstract:

Traditional Internet search model has hit its limit. While there still remains many engineering and technological challenges, the next big conceptual leap in searching has to come from considering social and collaborative aspects with people's online activities. In this talk, I will introduce two seemingly disconnected but highly relevant branches of this new era of information seeking: community-based Q&A, and collaborative searching. I will discuss how Internet searchers are increasingly using community/social Q&A services and what it means to researchers and developers. I will also describe how incorporating collaborative support while seeking information could help us achieve something more than the sum of our individual contributions. For example, I will discuss how we could identify potential collaborations among Internet searchers by analyzing their individual search processes, and combine those processes to create a synergic solution that can be better than what those individuals could have achieved working independently. These themes will be supported by various data-sets (e.g., Yahoo! Answers, WiliAnswers), systems (e.g., Coagmento), and experiments (lab and field), and will focus on both the system side and the user side of this research. I will conclude the talk by listing emerging challenges and opportunities in this area.

About the speaker:

Dr. Chirag Shah is an assistant professor in the Dept. of Library & Information Science (LIS) within the School of Communication & Information (SC&I) at Rutgers University. He received his PhD from School of Information & Library Science (SILS) at UNC Chapel Hill, and MS in Computer Science from UMass Amherst. His research interests include studies of interactive information seeking, especially in the context of online social networks and collaborations, contextual information mining, and investigation of social media for understanding people, events, and trends. He is the author of a book on collaborative information seeking, published by Springer. At Rutgers, he runs a research group on Information Seeking and Behavior (http://infoseeking.org/), as well as special interest groups on Collaborative Information Seeking and Social Information Seeking. He also belongs to the Social Media Information Lab (http://sm.rutgers.edu/).