



Stanford eCorner

Value in User Click Rates

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/2095/Value-in-User-Click-Rates>

In a non-centralized system like the Internet, the best information is likely coming from a multitude of disparate sources. Anna Patterson, Co-founder of search engine Cuil, explains why her company's search tool takes user click rates into consideration during search rankings, and how the practice has also allowed her engineering team to simultaneously track user habits with minimal effort.



Transcript

Well, one of the things that motivated us is the technology, because what we do when we go through the Web in order to come up with the models of the pages and the way that concepts and ideas on the pages interact. We realized, you know, we wanted to get a way from some of the stillness you see on the Web. So Direct Hit, a lot of people don't remember it, but if you clicked on a result, it would promote the results; if people didn't click on it, it would demote the results. So you can imagine, if something ever got to the front page, essentially it gets some clicks, it would always stay there. So I think one of the amazing beauties about the Web, when I remember the Web when it first came out is that there was always this artful page on, whatever, Harry Potter, and what the world created was always changing, the main fan was always changing, and so the pages were always changing. So I really wanted to make a conscious effort to uncover those zealots out there about their particular topic that changes over time. And I did a lot of mining at the archive to see these things change over time. So when we made that decision, we realized we didn't actually have to track any individual user habits. So it actually came out of the technology decision. We realized that because we've made one technology and product decision, we could make this other decision on the privacy.