

Extracting User Behavior by Web Communities Technology on Global Web Logs

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Abstract. A lot of work has been done on extracting the model of web user behavior. Most of them target server-side logs that cannot track user behavior outside of the server. Recently, a novel way has been developed to collect web browsing histories, using the same method for determining TV audience ratings; i.e., by collecting data from randomly selected users called panels. The logs collected from panels (called panel logs) cover an extremely broad URL-space, and it is difficult to capture the global behaviors of the users. Here we utilize mining results of web community to group those URLs into easily understandable topics. We also use search keywords in search engine sites because user behavior is deeply related to search keyword according to preliminary experiments on panel logs. We develop a prototype system to extract user access patterns from the panel logs and to capture the global behavior based on web communities.

1 Introduction

Web user behavior analysis is a very important research area, with a wide area of applications such as one-to-one marketing, and user behavior identification. Most research uses access logs on server-side (so called these server logs). On the other hand, a new kind of web business similar to the survey method on TV audience rating has emerged. It collects histories of URLs visited by users (called panels) who are randomly selected without statistical deviation. We call those URLs as *panel logs*.

The panel logs include *panel ID which is assigned to each panel, access time of web pages, reference second of web pages, URLs of accessed web page and so on*. Therefore we know that when or where did each panel access URLs. Moreover panel logs also include search keywords submitted to search engines. However, it is difficult to capture the user behavior based on URL-level analysis because panel logs cover an extremely broad URL-space.

Here we apply web community mining techniques¹ to give a better understanding of user global behavior. A web community is a collection of web pages created by individuals or any kind of associations that have a common interest on a specific topic[1]. We use the results of web community mining to map an

¹ In this paper, ‘community’ means ‘web community’

URL to an easy-to-understand topic. We also statistically analyze the importance of search keywords that appear in the panel sessions and their relation with the pages in the web communities. We propose a system to interactively support the analysis of global user behavior from panel logs and demonstrate the effectiveness of our proposed system.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 will review related work. In section 3 we will explain panel logs and web communities. Our system will be discussed in section 4. Section 5 will show example of using the system and discuss effectiveness of our system, while section 6 will give the conclusion.

2 Related works

– Extracting user behavior

This field is a hot topic because it is directly connected to e-commerce business. [2,3] discussed how to extract user behavior patterns. A method to cluster users with the same behavior patterns is presented in [4]. As for users' grouping, it is discussed in [5].

These research focus on user behavior on a certain web server because these logs are limited only to web pages in a web server.

– Extracting relevance of web communities

Most of the works adopt web page link analysis. Recently, some approaches which use access logs have been proposed. [6] proposed web pages clustering using access logs and [7] proposed extracting relevance of web communities from users' access patterns. [8] discussed usability of using OLAP for web access logs analysis.

– Analysis of search keywords

Search engine vendors are doing analysis of the search keywords. Clustering of search keywords using Lycos's server logs were presented in [9]. [10] showed the result of clustering of Encarta's server logs which is an online encyclopedia provided by Microsoft. The research to improve search precision was discussed in [11]. These works analyze user behavior related to search keywords.

– Visualization of access logs

To easily understand the results of access logs analysis, [12] proposed a method to visualize access logs. [13] discussed visualization of user behavior at an online yellowpage site.

– Others

[14] has some similarities with our study. This paper discusses clustering users and web pages, and its purpose is to extract correlation between clustered users and web pages. This research also uses proxy logs which are client side logs. These logs record all URLs which are viewed by users and are similar to panel logs because it is easy to identify users using their private IP. Recently, they provide the logs in the internet open to the public, but few researches have been done using these logs. Some other works focus on different aspects of web log mining, such as indexing method for large web access logs[15], and analyzing web access logs in mobile environment[16].

As mentioned above, most of the researches focus on the analysis of user behavior in a web site. [14] uses proxy logs which are similar to our study.

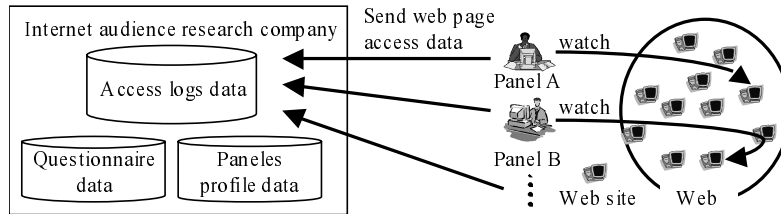


Fig. 1. Collection method of panel logs

Table 1. The details of the panel logs

An amount of data	about 10(Giga byte)
A term of collecting data	45(weeks)
A number of access	55,415,473(access)
A number of session	1,148,093(session)
A number of panels	about 10,000(persons)
A kind of search keyword	334,232(variety)

However, its purpose is to cluster web pages only, while our purpose is extended further to help understanding of the user behavior.

3 Panel logs and web communities

3.1 Panel logs

In our experiments, we use panel logs built by Video Research Interactive, Inc. that is one of internet rating companies. Panels are randomly selected based on RDD(Random Digit Dialing), and are requested to install a software that automatically reports web access log to the server of Video Research Interactive. Details of the data is shown in Figure 1 and Table 1.

We do not use the questionnaire data and the panels profile data in Figure 1 due to privacy reasons. The panel logs consist of *panel ID*, *access time of web pages*, *reference second of web pages*, *URLs of accessed web page and so on*, and the data size is 10GB and all panels are in Japanese. Panel ID is a unique ID which is assigned to each panel, and it is specific to an individual panel. Notice that panel logs also include search keywords submitted to search engines.

Usually, analysis of access logs uses the concept of *session* which is a sequence of web accesses. A session is defined as a set of URLs visited by a panel during a web browsing activity. We employed a well-known 30 minutes threshold for the maximum interval[17], such that two continuous accesses within 30 minutes interval are regarded as in a same session.

3.2 Web communities

We use the notion of web community to capture the global behavior of panels. A web community is a set of web pages created by individuals or any kind of

associations that have a common interest on a specific topic. By examining how panels navigate through web communities, we can see more abstract behavior of panels than URL-level analysis, such as, what kinds of pages are visited by panels with the same interest.

In this paper, we define a web community as ‘a set of relating web page which are combined by hyperlinks’[18]. Most researches on web communities can be loosely classified into two methods. One method is extracting dense sub-graphs[19] and the other is extracting complete bipartite graphs[20]. The former method determines the borderline between inside and outside of the web community using the theorem of “Maximum Flow Minimum Cut” based on network theory. The latter method extracts complete bipartite graphs in the web snapshot as the hyperlinks between web pages which include common interest topics represented by complete bipartite graphs.

In our previous work, we created a web community chart[21] which based on the complete bipartite graphs, and extracted communities automatically from a large amount of web pages. We crawled 4.5 million web pages at February 2002 and automatically created 17 hundred thousand communities from one million selected pages. In this paper, we analyze panel logs using web communities extracted by our proposed technique. Moreover, though it is not very accurate, we automatically extract community labels which are word lists expressing the community contents, by analyzing anchor tags of the links to the pages belonging to the communities. Therefore, one can have a summary of communities without actually browsing them.

Since the time of the web page crawling for the web communities is in between the duration of panel logs collection, there are some web pages which are not covered by the crawling due to the change and deletion of pages which were accessed by the panels. Thus we define *matching factor* as follows to examine matching ratio between the URLs belonging to web-communities and the URLs included in panel logs.

$$\text{matching factor} = \frac{\text{the matching number of URLs belong to communities and included in panel logs}}{\text{the number of URLs included in panel logs}}$$

We measured the *matching factor* and the result was only about 19%. We enhanced the matching factor by softening the matching condition using follow processes.

- Deleting directory or file part when the URLs included in panel logs do not match the URLs belonging to web-communities².
- Deleting site(domain) part when the URLs deleted directory part do not match³.

The result is shown in Table 2. If we delete directory(file) part in URLs, the matching factor increases about 40% and when we delete ‘subdomain part’, the matching factor improves further about 8%. By modifying URLs, about

² When ‘http://xxx.yyy.com/aaa/bbb/ccc.html’ does not match, delete ‘ccc.html’ and check the remaining ‘http://xxx.yyy.com/aaa/bbb/’. This process is repeated on the URL includes directory or file part.

³ When ‘http://xxx.yyy.com/’ does not match, delete ‘xxx’ and check the remaining ‘http://yyy.com/’. Note we do not check top/second domain name like ‘.com’, ‘co.jp’ and so on.

Table 2. The matching factor between the URLs belonging to web-communities and the URLs included in panel logs

no modification	18.8%
matching when deleting directory(file) part	36.3%
matching when deleting site part	7.7%
no matching	37.2%

65% of the URLs included in panel logs are covered by the URLs in the web communities.

3.3 Other results of preliminary experiments

According to preliminary experiments on panel logs, user behavior is deeply related to search engine sites and search keywords. We omit the details due to the space limitation. The analysis system also focuses on search keywords as well as the mapping with web communities.

The preliminary experiments also reveal that many panel logs include "Yahoo! shopping", "Yahoo! auctions" and "Rakuten"⁴. We can easily infer the contents of these sites without the labeling from web communities. So we define "Yahoo! shopping" and "Rakuten" as "Shopping sites", "Yahoo! auctions" and "Rakuten auctions" as "Auction sites" and "Search engine or portal sites" as "the search engine group".

4 Panel logs analysis system

Our proposed system does not only provide both analysis features based on the community mapping and search keywords, but also supports the synergy between them. Since the search keywords represent the user purposes of web browsing, we can infer the reason behind a user visit to a certain community from the relation between the search keywords and the web community. Even when the search keyword is absent, we can understand some details of the page visit from the relation between pages in the community. Since the results from conventional URL analysis is hard to digest, the relation between web communities will help us to figure out the global user behavior.

The web communities in our system are identified by serial numbers (called *community IDs*). The system has a function `FindIDByURL()` to find community ID by analyst specified URL, as well as following functions :

- *ListIDByKeyword()* : A function to show a list of web communities visited by users following some search keywords

If we input some search keywords, we can see the list of communities which are visited using these keywords.

- *ListKeywordByID()* : A function to show lists of search keywords used for visiting the communities

If any community ID specified, the list of search keywords used for visiting the communities are showed.

⁴ Rakuten is the most popular shopping site in Japan.

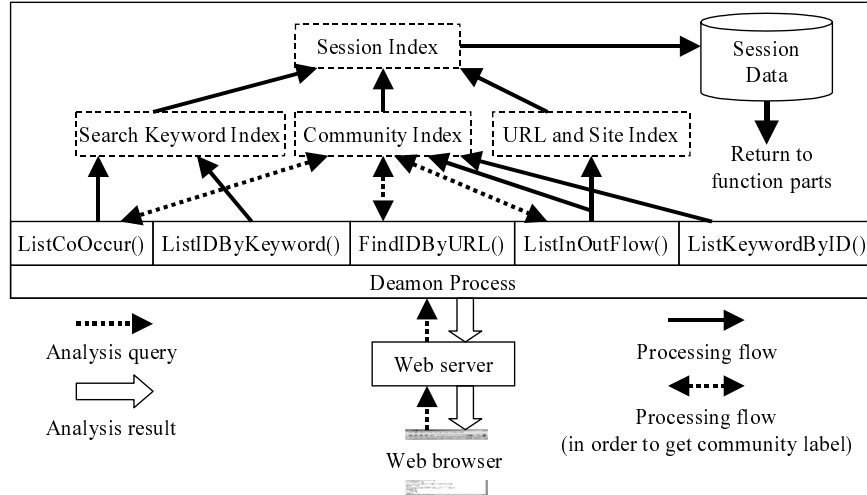


Fig. 2. Architecture of the system

- *ListInOutFlow()* : A function to show inflow and outflow communities
If any community ID, URL or site name specified then the lists of communities visited before and after the specified community are shown.
- *ListCoOccur()* : A function to show co-occurrence of communities
If we input some search keywords and specify any community ID then the lists of communities in the sessions which include the specified search keywords and community ID.
This function allows analysts to specify parameters such as co-occurrence number N_{CO} and it can find communities which were visited together with at least other N_{CO} communities in the sessions when users input specified keywords and visit specified community.

Our system also supports *continuous analysis*. We can start new analysis immediately using the current results whenever we find them interesting, Therefore, it is easy to analyze user behavior based on a new perspective of search keywords and visits to the communities.

The architecture of the system is shown in Figure 2. In our system, the panel logs are maintained in session units (labeled as session data) and stored in secondary device. We used a session index to access the session data. The system has indices for communities, search keywords, URLs and site names to find appropriate sessions. Each index holds session IDs, which can be used to access session data through session index. The community index also contains community labels. It is used to search community ID from an URL or to obtain a community label that corresponds to a community ID.

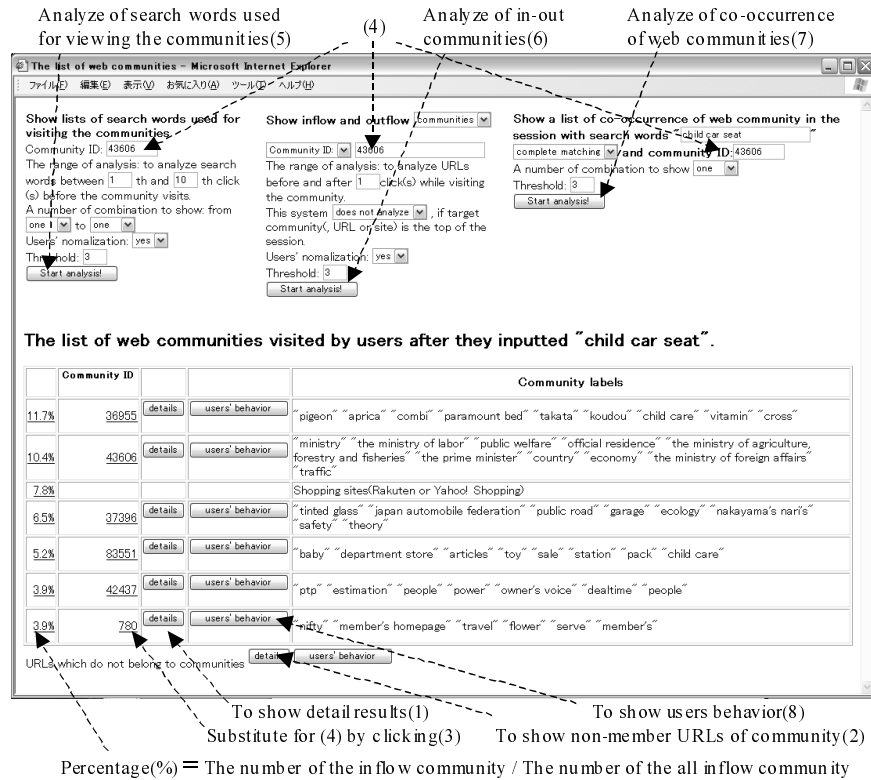


Fig. 3. A list of web communities visited by users following search keyword 'child car seat'

5 Example of extracting global user behavior

Here we describe some examples of the results obtained by our system to show its effectiveness. In this paper, we used panel logs which are collected from Japanese people. Therefore, all results have been translated from Japanese vocabulary items. We can specify search keywords, community IDs, URLs or site names to begin the analysis. Further queries can be performed based on the previous results.

5.1 Examples of analysis results using our system

Figure 3 shows a list of web communities visited by users looking for 'child car seat'(by function *ListIDByKeyword()*). The results are sorted according to order of frequency. Using community labels, we infer that community ID of 36955 relates to child car seat vendors. Similarly, we also suppose that community ID of 43606 relates to administrative agencies. We can see a more detailed results on the community by pushing button (1) in Figure 3. As we mentioned in section

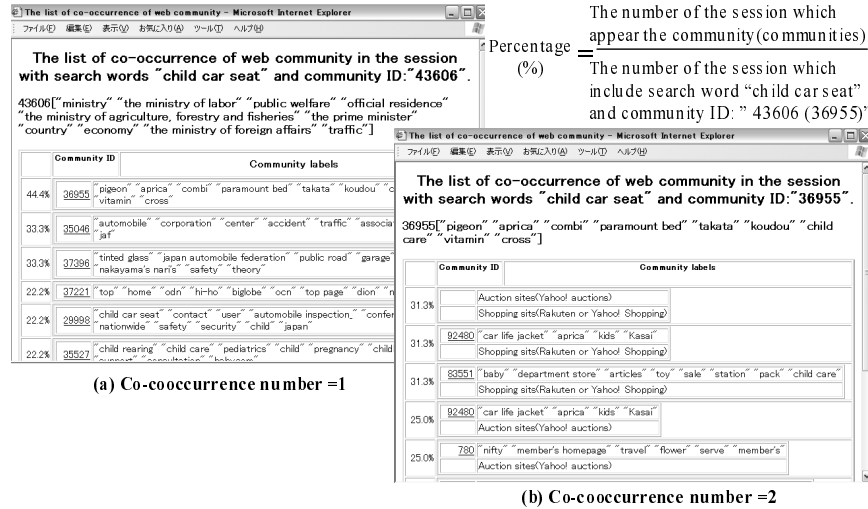


Fig. 4. Lists of co-occurrence of web communities following search keywords ‘child car seat’ and visiting community ‘child car seat vendors’ or ‘administrative organs’

3.2, there are 35% of URLs which do not belong to any communities in panel logs. One can also see these URLs by pushing button (2) in Figure 3.

When an analyst is interested in the co-occurrence of web communities in a result, the analyst can analyze further from that point. Figure 4 shows a result of pushing button (7) in Figure 3. Figure 4(a) represents the co-occurrence of web communities in the sessions which include search keywords “child car seat” and administrative agencies’ community (community ID is 43606). The result indicates that there is a high possibility that users of those sessions also visit child car seat vendors’ community or automobile association’s community. Further study to each community reveals that community ID “35046” includes only “National Consumer Affairs Center” and community ID “37396” includes only “Japan Automobile federation”.

In Figure 4(b), we show the result when the co-occurrence number is two. The result indicates frequent patterns, which represent visits to three communities in the same session because the analyst has already specified community ID 36955 (which relates to child car seat vendors). The result shows that those users have a great potential for visiting auction sites *or* shopping sites in the same session. Note that it is easy to understand that community ID “83551” relates to shopping sites and community ID “92480” relates to vendors by using the community labels.

Analysis with the proposed system can clearly depict the global user behavior. For example, the user behavior with search keywords *child car seat* can be classified into user access patterns as shown in Figure 5. Notice that a significant access pattern emerges because the child car seat is used only for a short period. After the child grows up, the child car seat is no longer needed. Thus many owners put the unused seats for sale on the auction sites. The access pat-

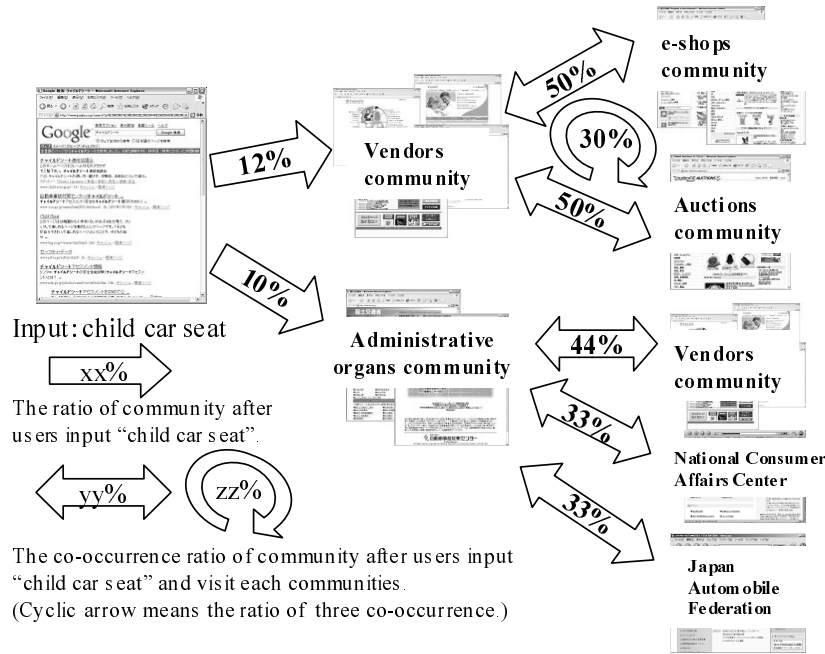


Fig. 5. The user behavior for search keyword 'child car seat'

tern shows that many users are trying to find secondhand goods at auction sites while simultaneously visiting the child car seat vendors and e-shops to compare the performance and the price. On the other hand, the aim of users which visit the community concerned with administrative organs is to acquire knowledge of the method of installation, safety standards and so on. These users also tend to visit the communities of child car seat vendors, non-profit organizations and other administrative organs. Most of these users do not go to the auctions community.

5.2 Users' behavior on other topics

We show users' behavior found using our system in Figure 6. Figure 6(a) indicates users' behavior accompanied search keywords "Shinkansen" (the high speed bullet train). We found interesting transitions between communities such as "Promote the construction of new Shinkansen lines", "Rail fun" and "Ekiben" as well as ordinary results like "Train schedule".

Figure 6(b) shows another example for search keywords "Train schedule". Most of the users visit "Train schedule communities" but we also found some behaviors related to certain regions as the results of co-occurrence community analysis.

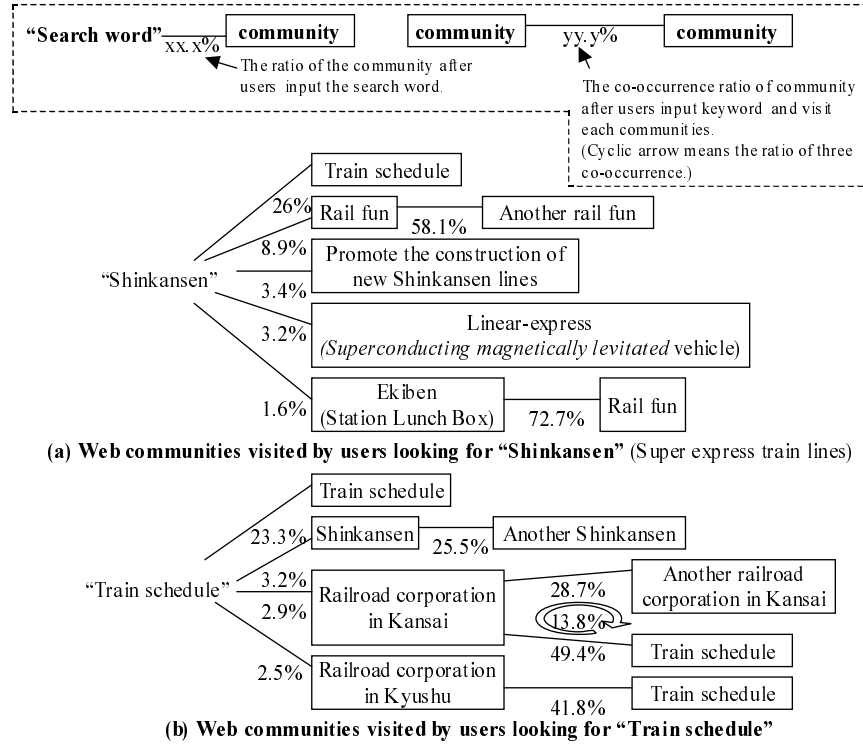


Fig. 6. The other examples of users' behavior

6 Conclusion

It is difficult to grasp the user behavior from panel logs because these kind of logs cover an extremely broad URL-space. We proposed some methods to analyze panel logs using web community mapping and also showed the importance of search keywords from panel logs preliminary analysis.

We implemented the methods in a system to analyze user global behavior from panel logs. The system facilitates the mapping with web communities as well as the synergy with the search keyword analysis. We have confirmed the effectiveness of the system. The system can discover the reasons behind some web browsing patterns as well as the relation between them.

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