

Using Topic Information to Improve Access to Scientific Document Collections

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Introduction

- **Databases of technical documents**
- **Users are domain specialists, not information specialists**
- **Information Overload**
- **Ambiguities in Query Formulation**

Observation

- **Initial experiment with Astrophysics Data System (ADS)**
- **Abstract as Query feature - “more documents like this”**
- **Identify threads of information within results set**

FOR MORE INFO...

<http://adswww.harvard.edu>

Approach

- **Allow searcher to view and interact with a subject categorization of the documents returned in response to a query.**

Prototype

- **Interpose Subject Intermediary**
- **ACM Digital Library/ACM CCS**
- **Current Prototype**
 - **Categories Displayed**
 - **Information Conveyed in Interface**
 - **Search Options**

FOR MORE INFO...

<http://www.cs.virginia.edu/~cyberia/subject/>

Display and Interaction Issues

- **User profiles?**
- **Characterize only subsets of retrieved documents?**
- **Color and graphics?**
- **Re-issue search?**
- **Keywords vs. subject hierarchy**
 - display in order of frequency?
 - alphabetically?

Evaluation Issues

- **Separability from interface**
- **Appropriate test collection**

Conclusion

- **Current aim is improving access to technical documents**
- **Further revisions of prototype underway**
- **Initial responses lively**

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