Presentation

Didier Orel, Titus Plattner, and Marcel Blattner

Automatic News Generation & Reader's Comments Processing

Abstract:

In this talk, we will survey how Tamedia plans to benefit from recent technologies for Natural Language Generation to implement new and innovative methods for news generation. Tamedia is the largest private media group in Switzerland, owning more than 30 newspapers in the country: Tages Anzeiger, 20 Minuten, Sonntagszeitung, Tribune de Genève, Berner Zeitung, Basler Zeitung, 24 heures, ...

Tobi is Tamedia's automated text project for vote results at a local level. On November 25th 2018, in just five minutes, we generated about 40.000 texts – with customized variations for all 2222 municipalities in two languages. Three months later, we did the same, including even cantonal and local results.

These successful pilots for vote results demonstrated how we can address a long tail audience with localized news. These texts were generated with a template-based approach. Other media organizations, with Associated Press at the vanguard since 2014, already use this approach. But we think that a personalized distribution of these texts – with for example personalized push alerts or a tailored feed – will allow leveraging a large quantity of micro-audiences. The key success factors of these pilots were: the experienced journalists who crafted the templates; smooth user experience thanks to an elegant and clear front-end; and the measure of user feedback. Based on the positive outcome of the pilots, Tamedia plans to automate texts for sports results.

Tamedia is also enabling advanced models of text analysis to process the huge amount of comments readers write on the different digital channels. Goals are on one hand to detect toxic comments in order to support the moderation process and speed up the review time, and on the other hand to surface the most interesting comments and extract a snippet from them (see https://twitter.com/tagicomments).

Biography: Didier Orel is project and product manager at Tamedia, leading private media group in Switzerland. He's focusing on innovation projects for Media, leveraging data and machine learning potentials in media industry. Among the topics launched in this field are: automatic generation of contents, image and text search engines and news recommendation/personalization engines.

Titus Plattner is a reporter and innovation project manager at Tamedia. In 2017-2018, he was awarded with a one-year JSK fellowship at Stanford University, where he focused on the interface between journalism and computer science with project related to personalization and automatic content creation, among others.

Dr. Marcel Blattner studied physics and mathematics at the University of Zurich. As Chief Data Scientist at Tamedia Digital, Marcel Blattner is currently responsible for the development and implementation of complex data analyses that generate direct added value for all stakeholders. He is author of several publications (http://bit.ly/1zzo1MD)

Organization: Tamedia

Contact: didier.orel@tamedia.ch, titus.plattner@tamedia.ch, marcel.blattner@tamedia.ch