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Week 6

+I would have liked to have seen more information about the systems and techniques the developers of these user-modeling shells were using, just to get a sense of how well their strategies lend themselves to the systems they designed (and how complex the resulting systems are). Right now, these shells are just described as a bunch of abstractions with slightly different capabilities and with no real purpose given beyond market research. I did, however, appreciate the list of the typical characteristics of these systems, since it reveals the common design decisions that apparently had to be made. (And on the note of wanting to see more information – what sort of failover strategies might a user-modeling system have?)

+There are more applications of user-modeling beyond market research, and it would have been nice to see more specific (or more in-depth) examples of those applications presented in this paper.

+I also would have liked to have seen more information on how the developers of these shells intended to handle privacy issues? They don't address the issue much in this reading, but what happens when all of the usage data – and the assumptions about their future usage, if those have been made by the system – is compromised?

+There seemed to be a good representation of systems that directly obtained information from the user regarding their preferences vs systems that observed and made “educated guesses” listed in this reading. I would have liked to have seen which ones were considered more successful...and whether these “stereotypes” that almost everyone seems to make use of were really the best way to approach the problem. Does the existence of these stereotypes skew data? How often are they updated? How user-friendly is the system that a person could manually change the system's assumptions about them, and how direct is the system's methods for gathering this data in the first place?

+I think the projected future of these systems is interesting, but again, they raise the issue of privacy. When a user-modeling agent is able to follow the user around (courtesy of ubicom, I suppose?) where does one draw the line when it comes to data-gathering? And again, how public is this data going to be?