Exploiting user interactions to support complex book search tasks

Marijn Koolen
Huygens ING

Search Engines Amsterdam
29-09-2016, Spui25, Amsterdam
looking for astonishingly INTRICATE mystery plots, do you know any?

Book talk

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1 sharonghamari First Message Jul 18, 2007, 9:17am

I am looking for mysteries (including thriller, crime, suspense) that have very very complicated plots. It's hard coming up with search parameters for this on the usual search engines. They need not be prize winners. Intricacy is what I'm looking for. You know the sort of thing I mean -- wheels within wheels. Any suggestions?
Sharon Ghamari

2 kathi Jul 18, 2007, 9:31am

It's been a long, long time since I read it, but check out Tour de Force by Christianna Brand. I remember it as being especially intricate. I know I've read many other intricately plotted crime novels, but I'm only on my second mug of coffee, and the cerebral neurons are just beginning to fire. I hope you will post some of your own suggestions.

3 Doondeck Jul 18, 2007, 11:03am
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1 Morphidea

Mar 5, 2008, 10:12am

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Bird by Bird by Anne Lamott
Ex Libris by Anne Fadiman
She's Such a Geek by Annalee Newitz (ed.)

Other than the oddness of them all have Ann as part of their name what seems to be in common is that they are essays by women. There is humor and inspiration in them. They are essays about things I'm interested in (reading, writing, fitting in when different from the norm.)

I don't know exactly what to search for in order to find books similiar to these. Maybe I should start a library with just these books and see what gets recommended?

Any suggestions?
Observations

• Book searchers struggling with existing systems (search engines, recommender systems)

• Requests are highly complex:
  • example docs + textual query + personal profile + context of use

• Need for models dealing with complex relevance aspects, personal interests, preferences, background knowledge

• Need for interfaces to support for such tasks
Philosophy with Murder on the Side

By Axel Mickyfinn on November 25, 2004

Format: Hardcover

At first appearances a murder mystery set in Athens at the time of Plato. A young man, Tramachus, is found dead, apparently killed by wolves, but suspicions remain. The youngster's former tutor, Diagoras employs the help of Herakles, a decipherer of enigmas, to explain the odd behaviour of Tramachus before his death. The mystery deepens with a further death and continues to weave itself around Athens, the Academy, the Piraeus, the law courts, and draws heavily upon philosophical and cultural references.

The plot, however, is on more than one level - the narrator, by means of footnotes, is the translator of an edition of the Greek text. Both reading for the first time and translating, he perceives that the text holds a second, hidden, meaning within. As he progresses, he comes to suspect that the text is making direct references to his life and then events in his life take a strange and sinister turn.

A superb novel which will make the reader think. The intriguing double plot and the discussions of reader, ideas, and texts reminded me somewhat of Borges, for this is essentially a philosophical novel, not a genre mystery.
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A superb novel which will make the reader think. The intriguing double plot and the discussions of reader, idea, and texts reminded me somewhat of Borges, for this is essentially a philosophical novel, not a genre mystery.
Apple sucks, November 5, 2011

By E. Miller "FOX.DIE" (Iraq) - See all my reviews

This review is from: Steve Jobs (Hardcover)

Apple sucks. Steve Jobs just took out of date technology put it in a white case and they "mainstream". They also charged ridiculous prices for things.
Observations

- User-generated content covers quality aspects, textual characteristics, opinions & perspectives
- Unstructured, noisy, diverse
- Skewed towards popular
- Often kept out of search index
- May require NLP/Text Mining
Overview

1. Complex Search Tasks
2. (Social) User Interactions
3. System Support
4. Conclusions
1. Complex Search Tasks
Complex Requests

• Many textual relevance aspects

• Examples of known books and authors

• Context of use

• Search criteria vs. selection criteria (i.e. searching within information of relevant/interesting books)
Search Stages

- Information search process models
  - e.g., pre-focus, focus formulation, and post-focus (Vakkari, 2001), Kuhlthau’s six stage model (Kuhlthau, 1991)
  - focused on search as part of academic research
- Decision stages in book selection
  - e.g., browsing, selecting, judging, sampling, and sustained reading (Goodall, 1989)
Textual Aspects

- **Non-topical aspects:** writing style, humour, characters, plot, setting, pace, engagement

- **Modelling relevance:** standard retrieval models on full-text of books or metadata is not enough
Any book as good as 'David Copperfield'?

What the Dickens...?

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1 Urquhart First Message  

Can someone recommend a book that has all the joy, charm, numerous characters, pathos, adventure, love of language, etc. that the novel David Copperfield has?

Its characters, such as Uriah Heep, etc., are now a part of our language and culture.

I am 65 and have spent a lifetime looking and have never found a book that matches this one. Please Advise.

Country Boy

Reply | More

2 almigwin  

Apr 4, 2007, 8:40pm
Reading Experience

• Many information needs based on previous reading experience

• 36% of requests explicitly reference previous reading experience, often with examples

• 15% mention authors:

  • looking for similar authors or order in oeuvre
Essays (?) Recommendations

Book talk

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Any suggestions?
Can you recommend.....

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1 burgett7  Jul 16, 2007, 12:39pm  
I have started reading Portrait of Dr. Gachet, a book about the Van Gogh painting. I recently purchased Strapless, the story of Sargent's painting Madame X. I also read The Lost Painting about the rediscovery of a missing Caravaggio painting.

I am looking for more titles with this "Books about (specific) paintings" theme.

Reply | More

2 thorold  Jul 16, 2007, 4:57pm  
Wasn't Girl with a pearl earring by Tracy Chevalier the book that started the latest round of this particular craze? I haven't read it.

A History of the World In 10 1/2 Chapters by Julian Barnes isn't entirely about one painting, but a big chunk of it is about Géricault's "Raft of the Medusa"

The Birth of Venus by Sarah Dunant is only rather obliquely about the painting.

A la recherche du temps perdu is - inter alia - about a small patch of yellow in Vermeer's "View of Delft", but it probably isn’t what you’re looking for!
Politics of Multiculturalism Recommendations?

Political Philosophy

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1  steve.clason

Sep 26, 2010, 11:32pm

I'm new, and would appreciate any recommended reading on the politics of multiculturalism. Parekh's *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (which I just finished) in the end left me unconvinced, though I did find much of value I thought he depended way too much on being able to talk out the details later. It may be that I found his writing style really irritating so adopted a defiant skepticism, but still...

Anyway, I've read Sen, Rawls, Habermas, and Nussbaum, still don't feel like I've wrapped my little brain around the issue very well and would appreciate any suggestions for further anyone might offer.

Reply | More

2  rsterling

Edited: Sep 27, 2010, 1:31am

Will Kymlicka's *Multicultural Citizenship* is one of the key works within this literature, and his later work has built on but also modified his argument there. See his author page here. I think his latest ones are *Multicultural Odysseys* and *Politics in the Vernacular.*
Reading Order

• Readers often want advice on where to start reading:
  • a prolific author’s oeuvre
  • a set of books on a topic
  • Also common issue in scholarly domain
Adrienne von Speyr

Catholic Tradition

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1 josephx23
Feb 13, 2009, 11:32am

Is anyone here familiar with the mystic (and friend of Fr. Hans urs von Balthasar) Adrienne von Speyr? Anyone have any recommendations about where to start with her writings?

More

2 liamfoley
Feb 21, 2009, 2:46pm

she wrote a commentary on The Holy Mass but it is heavy on references to the old liturgy. She has a book on Mary in Redemption, hard, in my opinion to read in isolation from von B.

More

3 josephx23
Feb 23, 2009, 8:45pm

That's good to know - I was thinking of starting with her book on the Mass. What HUVB book ought one to read along with Mary in Redemption? Mary, the Church At its Source? The Threefold Garland?

More
HELP regarding Derek Walcott's poetry

Poetry Fool

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1 alceinwld
Sep 22, 2008, 6:14pm

I heard a poem by Derek Walcott with the line "drink it in." Is anyone familiar with it?

Also, if you are familiar with his poetry, what would you recommend as a good place to start reading some of his work?

Thanks!

Reply | More

2 EncompassedRunner
Edited: Sep 24, 2008, 3:44am

Though I only possess the few Derek Walcott poems that are in my copy of The Norton Anthology of Poetry: Fourth Edition, they are phenomenal, and one of his poems ("A Far Cry from Africa") moved me so much that I ended up tagging pleas re: the genocide in southern Sudan with the last 2 lines from the poem:

"...
How can I face such slaughter and be cool?
How can I turn from Africa and live?"

Though the "drink it in" phrase doesn't bring a particular poem to mind, I can suggest someone who might well recognize it: L. L. Barkat, who can be found on her blog SeedlingsInStone
The Northanger "horrid" novels

Gothic Literature

10 messages | ★ Star this topic | × Ignore topic | ▼ Jump to first unread (10 unread)

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1 Kell_Smurthwaite
Aug 16, 2007, 5:30am

Having read Northanger Abbey by Jane Austen earlier in the year, I thought it might be fun to tackle the "horrod" novels listed throughout the book (Catherine Morland is obsessed with reading Gothic novels). The books mentioned run as follows:

1. The Necromancer: or, The Tale of the Black Forest (1794) by 'Ludwig Flammenberg' (pseudonym for Carl Friedrich Kahlert; translated by Peter Teuthold)
2. Horrid Mysteries (1796) by the Marquis de Grosse (translated by P. Will)
3. Castle of Wolfenbach (1793) by Eliza Parsons
4. The Mysterious Warning, a German Tale (1796) by Eliza Parsons
5. Clermont, a Tale (1798) by Regina Maria Roche
6. Orphan of the Rhine (1798) by Eleanor Sleath
7. The Midnight Bell (1798) by Francis Lathom
8. The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794) by Ann Radcliffe
9. The Italian (1797) by Ann Radcliffe

Has anyone here read any of them? What did you think of them and which would you recommend to start with?
Sayers recommendations??

Inklings
7 messages | ★ Star this topic | × Ignore topic | ¶ Jump to bottom (0 unread)

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1 mom5mills First Message April 1, 2007, 4:05pm

The only Sayers I've ever read is her "Lost tools of Learning essay." Can anyone give me recommendations? What's a good one of hers to start with??
-Amanda

More

2 waiting4morning April 1, 2007, 7:02pm

Her Lord Peter Wimsey mystery series is what's she's best known for in fiction. Lord Peter is the detective, a WWI veteran suffering from post traumatic stress disorder with a penchant for the finer things in life: a well-tuned piano, rare books, and a glass of old brandy.

I really enjoy this series and re-read them every year or so. Lord Peter is a fabulous character and I just love the language of the writing.

The first in the series is Whose Body? followed by:

Clouds of Witness
Unnatural Death
The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club
Where to start with Georgette Heyer?

**Historical Fiction**

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1 kdcdavis  
Feb 8, 2011, 1:35am  

It has become clear to me that I should read Georgette Heyer's novels, but I'm a bit daunted. Where to begin? Any recommendations?

Reply  |  More

2 nhlsecord  
Feb 9, 2011, 9:48am  

I think **Powder and Patch** was her first one, it's a little different in tone from most of the others (I'm writing of her Regency Romances, I haven't read her mysteries). Try **The Toll Gate** and **Cousin Kate**, that will give you an idea of the romances, although they are much more than romances.

Reply  |  More

3 DevourerOfBooks  
Feb 9, 2011, 10:21am  

It depends on what you are most interested in. nhlsecord mentioned the romances. I've read one of them and can see why people like them, but I'm personally a big fan of her mysteries. She also wrote some actual historical fiction, but I have yet to sample any of that. My favorite of her mysteries that I have read so far is probably **Death in the Stocks**.
Eudora Welty Recommendation?

Deep South

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1 MrsFridayNext
Feb 29, 2008, 3:17pm

Hi y'all-

I am a Yankee looking to get my feet wet in Southern fiction. I have been meaning to read some Eudora Welty since forever, but, as with many classic authors, I am daunted by the sheer magnitude of her work, and at a loss for where to start. Can someone here suggest a good starting place? Is there any one Welty book or collection that you consider to be a must-read? I'm particularly interested in her because I've heard that she and Jane Austen share some similarities in their style of writing—do you find that to be more true of one work than another?

Any advice would be appreciated!

- margaret

Reply | More

2 leahmarjorie
Mar 8, 2008, 10:51am

The Optimist's Daughter is a wonderful read! It's very southern, gracefully written, has good symbolism, and she handles her themes so masterfully and insightfully. Basically, it is the story of a daughter coming to terms with her father's death. It details his last days in the hospital and the events surrounding the funeral and subsequent sorting out of the inheritance and
Selection Tasks

• **Select Best:** "I want to know what the best books on this topic are, I'm not (yet) interested in the rest"

• **Select Start:** "I want to know what books are good to start reading on this topic"

• **Select Next:** "I've read X, Y and Z want to know what books are good for further reading, to explore the topic"

• **Select Order:** "Given a set of books on this topic, I want to know what the best order is to read them in"
2. (Social) User Interactions
Interaction Types

• Cataloguing, reviewing, discussing
  • forms of citation analysis (i.e. bibliometrics)
  • each with its own characteristics
  • each has advantages and disadvantages

• General issue: crowd interactions tend be highly skewed, heavy users dominate, Harry Potter effect
Social Book Search Lab

• Amazon/LibraryThing collection: curated metadata + user tags and reviews for 2.8M books

• 45M catalogue entries by 170k users

• 11M Amazon reviews by 1.8M users

• 1.6M forum mentions by 16k users in 132k threads
User Catalogues

• Catalogue reveals connections between books (co-citation) and reading order (citation order)

• Advantage: many users, many transactions per user, very long tails

• Disadvantages: noisy, based on variety of interests (also temporally)
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Keywords</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<td>⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐</td>
<td>Sep 1, 2010</td>
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Book Reviews

- Review as mega-citation (Zuccala & Bod, 2012)
  - formal reviews in journals
  - Amazon/GoodReads reviews informal, written for variety of reasons
  - reviewing order proxy for reading order (again, noisy)
Rodney J. Szasz
Tokyo, Japan

Independent business person with lots of overseas living. I like reading History, Science, Philosophy, Religion and Mythology and general narratives and biographies explaining the history of Western Thought and Adventure Mountaineering Books.

Favorite Authors who shared my info: George Orwell, CS Forester, Ernest Hemingway and Tolstoy.

See more
Singapore Burning: Heroism And Surrender In World War II

Colin Smith has written a blockbuster of a book about a sadly neglected part of the Pacific War - The Singapore Malayan Campaign. In 80 days the Japanese defeated an army almost twice its size and ...

Rodney J. Szasz reviewed a product.

Downward Bound: A Mad! Guide to Rock Climbing (Mena...

I picked this up in some dusty corner of a used book shop... I glanced into it and, at the beginning, never really got what he was talking about or alluding to... as I a grew older, and started ol...

Rodney J. Szasz reviewed a product.
Forum Discussions

• Citations and co-citations in online discussions

• Advantages: contributions from multiple readers (crowd wisdom)

• Disadvantages: topic drift, game-like threads, sparse data

• Complexity: when are 2 mentions co-citations?

  • Levels: post, thread, user, discussion group, or a combination of these
The Age of Misrule Omnibus is the obvious choice, its cheap (ish) and Mark Chadbourn weaves a very striking tale, i've only read the first two but they provided very good reading, i'm waiting to savour the ending book soon.

I also believe Guy Gavriel Kays Fionavar Tapestry trilogy contains some Arthutian elements, the modern context being a group of Canadian students ripped into another world.

Yes, and in fact both of those are already mentioned. :)

The second Chadbourn trilogy is ok, not as good as the first. Haven't read the new one in this third group though.

Here's a possible whacky one I stumbled across tonight

Keeper of the King by P. N. Elrod and Nigel Bennett it seems.
Differences In Patterns

- Often co-cited in catalogues, rarely in discussions:
  - later books in series, books by same author, management books
  - discussions avoid obvious connections?
- Often co-cited in discussions, rarely in catalogues/reviews
  - nominees of Mann Booker & Orange prizes
  - literary praise leads to discussion, less to reading
3. System Support
Supporting Stages

• How can systems support complex search tasks?
  • look at what other users do, e.g. what they read, review, discuss and in which order

• Support different sub-tasks with different interfaces
  • multistage search systems (Huurdeman & Kamps, 2014)

• Disclaimer: the interface concepts you are about to see are very primitive!
Shortlists

• **Query by document**: paradigm using a document content as query

• What about **multiple documents** representing information need?

• Shortlist reduce **cognitive effort** of exploration and selection, improve **recommendation performance** (Schnabel et al. (2015))
Search By Shortlist

- Model relevance with **multiple example documents**

- **approach**: represent inf. need through overlapping terms/descriptors or citations (Boomerang effect, Larsen (2002))

- **challenge**: with rich user-generated content, how to select **useful overlapping terms**
Shortlist

Empty shortlist

Title: Portrait of Dr. Gachet: The Story of a Van Gogh Masterpiece, Modernism, Money, Politics, Collectors, Dealers, Taste, Greed, and Loss
Author: Cynthia Saltzman
ISBN: 0670862231

Title: The Shoes of Van Gogh: A Spiritual and Artistic Journey to the Ordinary
Author: Cliff Edwards
ISBN: 0824521420

Title: Strapless
Author: Deborah Davis
ISBN: 158542336X

Title: Van Gogh’s Table at the Auberge Ravoux: Recipes From the Artist’s Life
Author: Fred Leeman
ISBN: 1579651828

Title: The Lost Painting: The Quest for a Caravaggio Masterpiece
Author: Jonathan Harr
ISBN: 0375508015

Title: Letters of Vincent Van Gogh
No author provided
ISBN: 0684843005

Top tags: art history History van gogh non-fiction painting Post-Impressionism art 19th-century Biography artists

Top tags: art the sacred in art faith painting sp - reflections henri nouwen spirituality van gogh seeing God

Top tags: food cooking french Art Cookbook France gastronomy World Pantry

Top tags: History art history memoir Art autobiography letters translation dutch 19th-century Biography artists
| Title: Portrait of Dr. Gachet: The Story of a Van Gogh Masterpiece: Modernism, Money, Politics, Collectors, Dealers, Taste, Greed, and Loss  
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| Author: Deborah Davis  
| ISBN: 158642336X |

| Title: The Lost Painting: The Quest for a Caravaggio Masterpiece  
| Author: Jonathan Harr  
| ISBN: 0375508015 |

| Title: Lust for Life  
| Author: Irving Stone  
| ISBN: 0452262496 |

| Title: Lust for Life (Plume)  
| Author: Irving Stone  
| ISBN: 0452262496 |

| Title: Passion of Artemisia: CD  
| Author: Susan Vreeland  
| ISBN: 1565115260 |

| Title: The Passion of Artemisia  
| Author: Susan Vreeland  
| ISBN: 074726333X |

| Title: William Blake  
| Author: Marilyn Butler  
| ISBN: 0810967108 |

| Title: Artemisia: A Novel  
| Author: No author provided  
| ISBN: 0802138578 |
William Blake
Marilyn Butler
0810957108
Top tags: Art Poetry borrowed catalog robert fulghum museums milton English Poetry Literary Biography
Add to shortlist  Product Description  All tags

Artemisia: A Novel
No author provided
0802138578
Top tags: Italy Biography tbr art history artists women french artemisia gentileschi Biographical fiction novel
Add to shortlist  Product Description  All tags

Artemisia: The Story of a Battle for Greatness
No author provided
0099289393
Top tags: Italy Biography tbr art history artists women french artemisia gentileschi Biographical fiction novel
Add to shortlist  Product Description  All tags

The Irish Game: A True Story of Crime and Art
Matthew Hart
0452284619
Top tags: Ireland crime true crime art theft art history Irish mystery History Vermeer unread
Add to shortlist  Product Description  All tags

The Irish Game
Matthew Hart
0701177551
Top tags: Ireland crime true crime art theft art history Irish mystery History Vermeer unread
Add to shortlist  Product Description  All tags

Great French Paintings From The Barnes Foundation: Impressionist, Post-impressionist, and Early Modern
Barnes Foundation
0673762213
Top tags: painting Barnes Collection Art France French painters exhibition catalog Barnes Foundation nonfiction modernism art history
Add to shortlist  Product Description  All tags
Shortlist vs. Feedback

- Shortlist search similar to
  - query-by-document (but with multiple docs)
  - relevance feedback (but text query-independent)
  - recommendation (but ad hoc, interactive, focused)
  - list completion (but open-ended)
  - personalised IR (but not necessarily personalised)
Similar How?

• Single item has many aspects
  • user may not want exactly similar

• Multiple items may overlap in certain aspects
  • better reflection of relevant aspects?
  • show overlap to user, let her choose aspects
Compare Shortlist Items: Tag Overlap
Compare Shortlist Items: Amazon Category Overlap
Citation-Supported Search

- **Citation context**: non-topical aspects in reviews and discussions
- **Citation order**: proxy for reading order
- **Co-citation**: relationships between shortlist items and collection
Citation Context

• **Textual context of citations** can improve retrieval in scientific literature search (Ritchie et al., 2008)

• **Book reviews and user tags** also improve many book retrieval tasks (Koolen et al., 2012, Koolen, 2014)

• Reviews can **capture many aspects** that curated metadata rarely does:
  
  • style, humour, characterisation, recency, comprehensiveness, engagement
Revealing Reading Order

• Signals revealing reading order:
  • popularity, order of interaction, co-citation

• In what order do Steven Brust fans read his Taltos series?
Cocitations
4. Conclusions

- Many tasks beyond finding relevant items
  - shortlist search, selection tasks (reading order)
- Many interactions provide relevant information beyond topical aspects
  - can be summarised and aggregated in interesting ways to reveal relevant usage info
- Many ways to support complex search tasks
  - challenge to provide support in intuitive way that doesn’t lead to overly complex interfaces (reduce cognitive effort)
References (1/2)


- Huurdeman Hugo, Jaap Kamps. *From multistage information-seeking models to multistage search systems*. IIIX 2014


- Koolen, Marijn. *User reviews in the search index? that'll never work!* ECIR 2014.

References (2/2)

• Larsen, Birger. *Exploiting citation overlaps for information retrieval: Generating a boomerang effect from the network of scientific papers*. Scientometrics, Volume 54(2), 2002.

• Ritchie, Anna, Simone Teufel, Stephen Robertson. *Comparing citation contexts for information retrieval*. CIKM 2008


Thank You!

- Questions?
Multistage interface – **Browse**

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<td>Hitler's Sky Warriors: German Paratroopers in Action, 1939-1945</td>
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<td>Carl and Karin Larsson Creators of the Swedish Style</td>
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<td>The Pope's Daughter: The Extraordinary Life of Felice della Rovere</td>
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Multistage interface – Search view

No task has been specified

Browse Search Book-bag (0)

Everything

Filter by Topics
Nonfiction 351701
Literature & Fiction 340744
Children’s Books 228534
History 213660
Reference 190497
Professional & Technical 189348
Children’s Fiction or Nonfiction 182532
Religion & Spirituality 172018
Social Sciences 170581
United States 164751

Filter by User tags
Fiction 312990
Non-fiction 311246
Read 225682
Unread 218978
Own 176849
History 160878
Tbr 143190
Novel 126069
Paperback 119809
Reference 92816

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by Claire Paret

Product Description
In the most accessible and personal of his works, Deleuze examines-through a series of discussions with Claire Paret-such revealing topics as his own philosophical background and development, the central themes of his work, and some of his relationships, in particular his long association with the philosopher Félix Guattari.

The Steepwood Scandals Volume 7 (Mr Rushford's Honour AND An Unlikely Suitor)
by Meg Alexander; Nicola Cornick

Product Description

Publisher
Harlequin Mills & Boon
Published by
Harlequin Mills & Boon
ISBN
0263855015
Type
Paperback
Pages
501
Multistage interface – *Book-bag* view
Pennant Diagrams

Pennant diagram of descriptors related to the descriptor "Immigration and Emigration" in H. W. Wilson's Social Sciences Abstracts (Dialog file 142), July 2013.

White & Mayr, 2013
Pennants and Order

• Top left region are descriptors or books with low citation count but relatively high co-citation count
  • tend to be more specific subjects, less obvious connections

• Can pennant regions help determine reading order?
  • can they be used with multiple seeds?
  • how can this be usefully incorporated in interfaces?