A Framework for Email Clustering and Automatic Answering Method  
(Formal Approach)  

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ABSTRACT- The mail-box consisting of number of emails in which many attributes or files are existing in a single email and hence they can be considered as a database. It is not easy to find out the important email or message quickly or within a stipulated time. So we are using clustering techniques for grouping similar emails. The attributes of an email like sender email id, receiver email id, subject, message body, sending time, attachments, cc, bcc, etc. are used for clustering the emails. Email classification can be applied to several different applications, including filtering messages based on priority, assigning messages to user-created folders, or identifying SPAM. In this project we are going to add certain extra features like clustering based on the subject of the email, priority of the person who sends the message, message body contents, date and time, size of the message and also add automatic answering feature for a received mail.

KEYWORDS- Automatic answering, Email Attributes, Email Clustering, String Matching.

I. INTRODUCTION  

The growth of the Internet has led to an explosion in e-mail traffic and in number of the users of e-mail service. At the same time, many large-scale e-mail service providers have appeared. They have hundreds of millions of subscribers and process billions of messages: for example, in May 2001, hotmail had over 100 million users and Yahoo! Mail, in March 1999, served 45 million users with 3.6 billion mail messages [1][2]. Thus email has been an efficient and popular communication mechanism as the number of Internet users increase. Therefore, email management is an important and growing problem for individuals and organizations because it is prone to misuse. So clustering is used to group different emails so that it can be represented in a well organized manner. Clustering shows similar emails exchanged between the users.

A. Email as a database  

Email is comprised of various types of attributes such as sender-id, receiver-id, subject, message body, cc, bcc, date and time, attachments etc. and when many emails come together in the mail-box it forms a large group of messages. So this can considered as a huge email database consisting of a large number of email records each with a number of attributes.

B. Email Mining  

Email mining is a process of discovering useful patterns from emails. Data mining is the process of discovering new patterns from large data sets involving methods from not only statistics and artificial intelligence but also from database management. Machine learning techniques are often used to identify previously unknown patterns as well as learning known patterns. There are number of applications of email mining today. Some of the interesting email mining applications are email categorization, summarization, automatic answering and spam filtering etc. Text mining is nothing but performing various searching functions, linguistic analysis and categorizations, applying various algorithms etc. to find the similarity in texts.

C. Clustering Email  

Clustering is a technique to create groups of similar email or objects according to user requirement and put it into different folders and when it is used in email mining it is called as email clustering. In email clustering subject-based folders can be automatically
constructed from a set of messages. In this case, the main aim is to acknowledge same clusters of emails from the mail-box give an appropriate name to each cluster and put them into their respective folders.

D. Algorithm

Indeed different text clustering methods require several steps of preprocessing of the data. First, any non-textual information such as HTML-tags and punctuation is removed from the documents. Then, stop words such as “I”, “am”, “and”, “ing”, “are”, “those”, “here” etc. were also removed. Then a term is generated. It is any sequence of characters separated from other terms by some delimiter. Also a term can either be a single word or can consist of several words. The terms are reduced to their basic form applying a stemming algorithm such as brute-force algorithm. Then after that term are then compared with terms of other emails to find any similarity. This is called as string matching and certain algorithms like Jaccard algorithm, Cosine algorithm etc. are also used for this. If there is any similarity found between the strings then they are clustered using K-means clustering algorithm.

1) Brute-Force Algorithm

Brute force algorithm was used for the purpose of removal of stop words. Here in this algorithm the stemmers employ a lookup table. In that lookup table there are some relations between root forms and inflected forms in other words it contains the stop words. To remove a stop word the table is explored and searched to find a matching word. If a matching word is found, the associated root form is returned. Brute force algorithm consumes a lot of storage because it has to store all the list of relations and root words in a table(relative to the work). The accuracy of the algorithm is only limited to the number of relations and root words already present in the table. Also in any given number of words in a particular language, like English, it is highly improbable to expect that all word forms can be captured and manually recorded by human action alone. So we are adding Suffix-stripping algorithm and making it a Hybrid approach for stop word removal. We are keeping certain specific words like “swim”, “swam” “run”, “ran” etc. in lookup table and for rest we are using suffix striping for removing the suffix part of the word.

Advantages: Brute force algorithm definitely overcomes some of the challenges faced by the other approaches. Not all stop word forms in a given language "follow the rules" appropriately. While "running" might be easy to stem to "run" in a suffix stripping approach, the alternate inflection, "ran", is not. Suffix stripping algorithms are unable to overcome this problem, and it results in increasing the number and complexity of the rules, but in brute force algorithms it requires storing a single extra relation between "run" and "ran". We improved the brute force algorithm by building it upon preliminary part-of-speech i.e. we added all possible suffixes and prefixes which will also be removed.

Before stop word removal:

```
yes i have the very same problem with this camera. it’s been in for repair twice. from my only option is to buy a new camera. i am very disappointed i just got this camera about 6 weeks ago and have lost what would have been great moments due to the poor focussing of the camera. some are clear, some are not and i am not happy to put a terrible camera to deal with. disappointed.
```

Total no. of words: 73

After stop word removal:

```
yes i have the very same problem with this camera. it’s been in for repair twice. from my only option is to buy a new camera. i am very disappointed i just got this camera about 6 weeks ago and have lost what would have been great moments due to the poor focussing of the camera. some are clear, some are not and i am not happy to put a terrible camera to deal with. disappointed.
```

Total no. of words: 58

2) Cosine Similarity Matching Algorithm

Cosine similarity is a measure of similarity between two vectors tables by measuring the cosine of the angle between them. The cosine of 0 is 1, and less than 1 for any other angle. The cosine of the angle between two vectors will determine if two vectors are pointing in the same direction or not. This is often used to compare documents in text mining. In addition, it is also used to measure cohesion within clusters in the field of Data Mining.

The cosine of two vectors is derived by using the Euclidean dot product formula:

\[
\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{b} = \| \mathbf{a} \| \| \mathbf{b} \| \cos \theta
\]

Suppose the two frequency vectors are \( \mathbf{A} \) and \( \mathbf{B} \), then the cosine similarity \( \theta \) is represented using a dot product and magnitude as

\[
\text{similarity} = \cos(\theta) = \frac{\mathbf{A} \cdot \mathbf{B}}{\| \mathbf{A} \| \| \mathbf{B} \|} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} A_i \times B_i}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n} (A_i)^2} \times \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n} (B_i)^2}}
\]

If the result is \(-1\) then it means that the given string is exactly opposite to the other string, if it is \(1\) it means that it is exactly the same and if it is \(0\) this indicates that it is totally dissimilar and in-between values indicating intermediate similarity or dissimilarity. The cosine similarity can be seen as a method of
normalizing document length during comparison. The angle between the two frequency vectors cannot be more than 90°.

3) **K-means Algorithm for Clustering**

Suppose a set of observations are given as \((x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n)\), where each observation is a \(d\)-dimensional real vector, \(k\)-means clustering aims to partition the \(n\) observations into \(k\) sets \((k \leq n)S = \{S_1, S_2, \ldots, S_k\}\) so as to minimize the within-cluster sum of squares (WCSS) the formula is as follows:

\[
\arg \min_s \sum_{i=1}^{k} \sum_{x_j \in S_i} \|x_j - \mu_i\|^2
\]

Where \(\mu_i\) is the mean of points in \(S_i\).

Regarding computational complexity, the \(k\)-means clustering problem is K-Means works in 4 basic steps:

1. Randomly choose \(K\) instances within the dataset and assign them as cluster centers
2. Assign the remaining instances to their closest cluster center
3. Find a new center for each cluster.
4. If the new cluster centers are identical to the previous ones, then the algorithm stops. Otherwise, repeat steps 2-4

This algorithm uses an iterative refinement technique. Due to its popularity the **\(k\)-means algorithm** is also referred to as Lloyd's algorithm mainly in the computer science community.

**Demonstration of the standard algorithm:**

1) Initially \(k=3\) was randomly selected from the data set (shown in color).

2) 3 clusters are created by associating every observation with the nearest mean.

3) The centroid of each of the \(k\) clusters becomes the new means.

3) Steps 2 and 3 are repeated until the clusters became more prominent.

II. EXISTING OR RELATED WORK

Early work [2] utilized email traffic to infer social networks for the purpose of discovering communities of shared interest. Email classification can be applied to several different applications, including filtering messages based on priority, assigning messages to user-created folders, or identifying SPAM, or classifying according to similarity of texts etc. One major consideration in the classification is that of how to represent the messages. Also Martin, Sewani, Nelson, Chen, and Joseph [13] proposed that classification can be used for identifying Spam messages.

The message can be represented generally in three types: unstructured, categorical and numeric data as described by [3]. Unstructured text in email consists of fields like the subject, message body, etc. They are used in classification using a bag-of-words approach.
Stemming as well as stop words removal techniques are useful in general text classification and hence are often used. In previous works Porter stemming algorithm was used for removing the stop words. Categorical text includes fields such as “to” and “from”. Categorical data differ from unstructured text fields in the manner that the type of data which is used in it is very well defined. These fields have been found to be very useful in automatic email classification.

At least two research studies relating to text classification have been performed on The Enron corpus[14]. One is the automatic categorization of e-mail into folders, done by the Computer Science Department of the University of Massachusetts [7]. It has also analyzed the graph in theoretical aspect as well as spectral analysis of Enron email data. It also analyzed the Enron email dataset to discover structure within the organization. The analysis is based on constructing the graph and studying its property [8]. The other research that has been conducted is the analysis of Social Network such as [9], [10], [11] and [12] Social network analysis techniques are nothing but the methods to calculate the degree distribution of each node in networks, network density, and centrality.

III. PROPOSED WORK

The overall approach can be explained using the diagram shown at figure-1. The approach can be divided into the four phases. The phases are pre-processing phase, Key-word matching phase, clustering determination phase and finally automatic answering phase.

A. Pre-Processing

The first step is the pre-processing step of the data which in the beginning is usually available in what is called “raw format”. The raw data can be imagined as a database and it is similar to the Enron Corpus database [1]. In order to mine into “raw” data and extract knowledge from it, it is necessary to transform it into a format that is more comprehensible to the machine learning algorithms. In pre-processing phase all the email data is prepared for clustering. All the important email attributes are retrieved by parsing the email documents. Most of the attributes are of text data type, so Brute-force stemming algorithm is used to eliminate the unwanted texts from the parsed attribute information. The pre-processing part also includes one effective representation technique of one email. Here object representation technique is used in this paper which holds all important attributes of an email.

In the last decade, people with the help of new and advanced email clients, have started to enter HTML code in order to enrich their plain text messages with different styles of text, different fonts, images, links etc. In fact, this is achieved by sending an HTML page as an attachment which every contemporary email client with a build-in web browser is able to present. In an email analysis procedure, HTML is most of the times not exploited to obtain knowledge and is removed using HTML parsers in order to keep the text contained in the HTML document. Sometimes HTML tags are used as characteristics (attributes) of the email.

The pre-processing includes parsing, stemming and email representation technique for parsed information. Parsing of email documents is required to retrieve various attributes information separately like subject, contents etc. Stemming is required to clean the text information available in email attributes. And finally one representation technique is required for effective representation of email documents, in which all the attributes associated with an email can be made accessible. After pre-processing the processed email dataset can be ready for the data mining operation.[19]
Another decision that has to be made is whether to treat words with common stem as one. In that case a vocabulary of stems is built and words like “program”, “programming”, “programmer” are treated and counted as one. A common pre-processing step is the removal of commonly used words (like articles, prepositions etc) which we call “stop-words”. These can be removed by using Brute-force algorithm. That could be effective in most applications because these are words that appear in natural language independently of topic. Hence, they lack discriminative power.

After removing the stop words by using the Brute-force stemming algorithm the refined data is stored in a proposed database which can be further used for the next steps i.e. keyword matching.

Figure-1 the overall clustering approach

C. Email Clustering

The third stage for the proposed technique is applying the clustering over the similarity information measured in second stage. Based upon the similarity information clustering algorithms can be applied to generate the email clusters. The clusters are created using K-means algorithm Euclidean method the similar emails are stored into one folder and give the appropriate name to that folder.

The growth of email usage has forced users to find ways to organize archive and manage their emails more efficiently. Many of them are organizing incoming messages into separate folders. For example: folders can be topic-oriented like “work”, “personal” and “funny”, people-specific like “John” and “Mary” or group-of-people-specific like “colleagues”, “family” and “friends”. Some users are archiving their messages according to importance and thus maintain folders like “urgent”, “for future reference”, “spam” etc. To achieve this, many users create some so-called rules to classify their mail. Those are heuristic rules searching for keywords in the message and then taking an action like moving or copying to a folder, deleting or forwarding the message etc.

if(sender="John Smith" OR sender="Mary Smith")
then (moveInto FAMILY)

if(body contains “call for papers”)
then((moveInto CFP)
(forwardTo “COLLEAGUES”))[19]

where FAMILY, and CFP are folders and COLLEAGUES is a group of people (practically a list of addresses the user has created for mass emailing).

D. Automatic Answering

This is the last phase and here the automated replies are formulated and decided for which group what message should be sent. Large companies usually maintain email centers (in conjunction with “call centers”) with employees committed to answer incoming messages. Those messages usually come from company clients and partners and many times address the same problems and queries. Automatic email answering is an effort to build mail centers or personalized software that will be able to Email Mining analyze an incoming message and then propose or even send an applicable answer.
IV. IMPLEMENTATION

The proposed algorithm is implemented using open source technologies and algorithm is applied over the popular email corpus database. Java [15] is selected as the programming languages and the other open source API’s (Application Programming Interfaces) to Support the other functionalities. My Eclipse [16] is used as a development IDE (Integrated Development Environment) for Java and library of other technologies are added as external jar (Java Archives) in the eclipse. MyEclipse is built upon the Eclipse platform [18] and integrates both proprietary and open source solutions into the development environment. JFreeChart [18] is an open-source framework for the programming language Java. It is an open source library available for Java that allows users to easily generate graphs and charts. It is particularly effective for when a user needs to regenerate graphs that change on a frequent basis. JFreeChart supports pie charts (2D and 3D), bar charts, line charts, scatter plots, time series charts, and high-low-open-close charts.

V. EXPERIMENTAL ANALYSIS

The inbox folder is selected for experiment. All the emails from the inbox are taken and are grouped into different clusters. To evaluate the accuracy of the proposed email clustering and finding the similarity of interest in discussion after pre-processing the Enron Email dataset[14], applying the clustering techniques to cluster the Emails and Users, the cluster is represented in the graphical form. Here we have assigned numbers to clusters and no. of emails in a particular cluster is shown in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster No.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Emails</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4 Tabular representation of no. of emails

![Figure 5 graphical representation]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sender_id</th>
<th>reciever_id</th>
<th>subject</th>
<th>message_body</th>
<th>size of message</th>
<th>date &amp; time</th>
<th>auto_answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:rites@gmail.com">rites@gmail.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:admission@vit.ac.in">admission@vit.ac.in</a></td>
<td>admission procedure for mtech.</td>
<td>respected, sir i so much interested for mtech. sir please kindly tell me the procedure to take admission</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>12/10/2010 &amp; 8:30 a.m</td>
<td>ok, you will check our college website <a href="http://www.vit.ac.in">www.vit.ac.in</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:rajesh@gmail.com">rajesh@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>please suggest me for mtech</td>
<td>to take admission in mtech.</td>
<td>dear, sir chikun from bhubaneswar want to take admission into mtech. sir can u help me how take dear, sir i interested for higher study and i want to join your college for mtech. sir can u guide me about placement status for btech. sir please tell me about placement percentage.</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>14/7/2010 &amp; 10.20 a.m</td>
<td>ok, you will check our college website <a href="http://www.vit.ac.in.">www.vit.ac.in.</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:chikun@yahoo.com">chikun@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:admission@vit.ac.in">admission@vit.ac.in</a></td>
<td>what is the admission process for mtech.</td>
<td>me what do to take admission respected, sir i karthik from orissa bhubaneswar interested to know about placement status for btech. sir please tell me about placement percentage.</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>28/10/2010 &amp; 12.30 p.m</td>
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<td>250</td>
<td>10/10/2010 &amp; 2.00 a.m</td>
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<td>275</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:m_sinha@vit.ac.in">m_sinha@vit.ac.in</a></td>
<td>applying for the post of assistant professor</td>
<td>Dear sir, i ramesh bhatt want to apply for the post of assistant professor i send my resume through this attachment. sir please check ur mail.</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>24/10/2010 &amp; 12.30 p.m</td>
<td>ok, you will check our college website <a href="http://www.vit.ac.in">www.vit.ac.in</a>.</td>
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<td>assistant professor in your college</td>
<td>hello, sir i smrutirekha sahu so much interested for the post of assistant professor. i send my resume to your mail id: sir please check it.</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>5/10/2010 &amp; 7.30 a.m</td>
<td>ok, you will check our college website <a href="http://www.vit.ac.in.">www.vit.ac.in.</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:m_sinha@vit.ac.in">m_sinha@vit.ac.in</a></td>
<td>apply for assistant professor in software technology</td>
<td>hello,sir i himanshu pradhan want to apply for the post of assistant professor i send my resume.sir please reply me</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>21/10/2010 &amp; 8.30 a.m</td>
<td>ok, you will check our college website <a href="http://www.vit.ac.in">www.vit.ac.in</a>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6 Sample data after clustering**

**VI. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE**

We have tested our Approach on popular Email dataset and very interesting results have been found. To evaluate the accuracy of the proposed email clustering and finding the similarity of interest in discussion after pre-processing the Email dataset, applying the clustering techniques to cluster the Emails and Users, the cluster is represented in the graphical form for different threshold values, threshold value specifies the no. of times the Email user has used a particular word. Also an automatic answering concept was implemented.

An email clustering Approach is proposed and implemented to show text similarities. The proposed technique shows the email attributes and how the text similarities are used to cluster the users. The proposed technique is implemented using open source technology such as java and an email dataset is selected for the experiment. The future scope of the work could be incorporating the similarity of the email attachments applying the proposed email similarity function for the more email mining operations like thread summarization and finding similarity between images in attachments.
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