

# Table Retrieval and Generation

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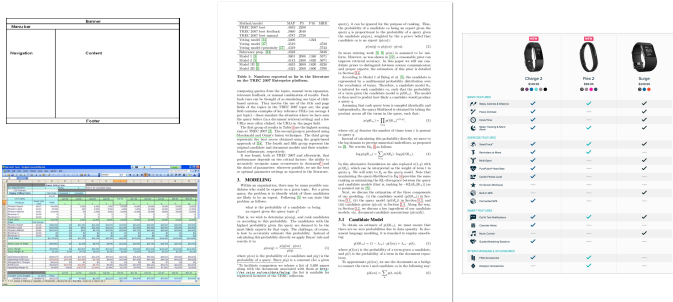
SIGIR'18 workshop on Data Search (DATA:SEARCH'18) | Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA, July 2018

## JOIN WORK WITH



Shuo Zhang  
@imsure318

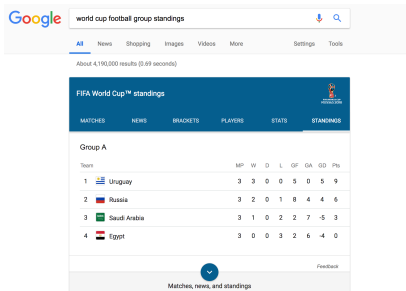
## TABLES ARE EVERYWHERE



## MOTIVATION



## MOTIVATION



## IN THIS TALK

- Three retrieval tasks, with tables as results
- Ad hoc table retrieval
- Query-by-table
- On-the-fly table generation

## THE ANATOMY OF A RELATIONAL (ENTITY-FOCUSED) TABLE

Formula 1 constructors' statistics 2016

Constructor	Engine	Country	Base	...
Ferrari	Ferrari	Italy	Italy	
Force India	Mercedes	India	UK	
Haas	Ferrari	US	US & UK	
Manor	Mercedes	UK	UK	
...				

## THE ANATOMY OF A RELATIONAL (ENTITY-FOCUSED) TABLE

Table caption — Formula 1 constructors' statistics 2016

Constructor	Engine	Country	Base	...
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Haas	Ferrari	US	US & UK	
Manor	Mercedes	UK	UK	
...				

## THE ANATOMY OF A RELATIONAL (ENTITY-FOCUSED) TABLE

Core column (subject column)

Formula 1 constructors' statistics 2016

Constructor	Engine	Country	Base	...
Ferrari	Ferrari	Italy	Italy	
Force India	Mercedes	India	UK	
Haas	Ferrari	US	US & UK	
Manor	Mercedes	UK	UK	
...				

We assume that these entities are recognized and disambiguated, i.e., linked to a knowledge base

## THE ANATOMY OF A RELATIONAL (ENTITY-FOCUSED) TABLE

Heading column labels (table schema)

Formula 1 constructors' statistics 2016

Constructor	Engine	Country	Base	...
Ferrari	Ferrari	Italy	Italy	
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Haas	Ferrari	US	US & UK	
Manor	Mercedes	UK	UK	
...				

# AD HOC TABLE RETRIEVAL

S. Zhang and K. Balog, *Ad Hoc Table Retrieval using Semantic Similarity*.  
In: *The Web Conference 2018 (WWW '18)*

# TASK

- *Ad hoc table retrieval*:
- Given a keyword query as input, return a ranked list of tables from a table corpus

Singapore

[Singapore - Wikipedia: Economic Statistics - Recent Years](#)  
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singapore

Year	GDP Nominal (Billion)	GDP Nominal Per Capita	GDP Real (Billion)	GNI Nominal (Billion)	GNI Nominal Per Capita
2011	\$8346.353	\$866.616	\$8342.371	\$8338.452	\$865.292
2012	\$8362.232	\$866.205	\$8355.460	\$8351.765	\$865.216
2013	\$8376.200	\$870.047	\$8354.582	\$8356.616	\$867.402

[Singapore - Wikipedia: Language used most frequently at home](#)  
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singapore

Language	Color in Figure	Percent
English	Blue	55.9%
Malay	Yellow	14.9%
Malay	Red	10.7%

[Show more \(9 rows total\)](#)

# APPROACHES

- Unsupervised methods
  - Build a document-based representation for each table, then employ conventional document retrieval methods
- Supervised methods
  - Describe query-table pairs using a set of features, then employ supervised machine learning ("learning-to-rank")
  - **Contribution #1**: new state-of-the-art, using a rich set of features
  - **Contribution #2**: new set of semantic matching features

# UNSUPERVISED METHODS

- Single-field document representation
  - All table content, no structure
- Multi-field document representation
  - Separate document fields for embedding document's title, section title, table caption, table body, and table headings

# SUPERVISED METHODS

- Three groups of features
- **Query features**
  - #query terms, query IDF scores
- **Table features**
  - Table properties: #rows, #cols, #empty cells, etc.
  - Embedding document: link structure, number of tables, etc.
- **Query-table features**
  - Query terms found in different table elements, LM score, etc.
  - Our novel semantic matching features

# FEATURES

Query features	
QLEN	Number of query terms
IDF <sub>f</sub>	Sum of query IDF scores in field <i>f</i>
Table features	
#rows	The number of rows in the table
#cols	The number of columns in the table
#of NULLs in table	The number of empty table cells
PMI	The Jaccard-based schema coherency score
inLinks	Number of in-links to the page embedding the table
outLinks	Number of out-links from the page embedding the table
pageViews	Number of page views
tableImportance	Inverse of number of tables on the page
tablePageFraction	Ratio of table size to page size
Query-table features	
#hitsLC	Total query term frequency in the leftmost column cells
#hitsSLC	Total query term frequency in second-to-leftmost column cells
#hitsB	Total query term frequency in the table body
qInPgTitle	Ratio of the number of query tokens found in page title to total number of tokens
qInTableTitle	Ratio of the number of query tokens found in table title to total number of tokens
yRank	Rank of the table's Wikipedia page in Web search engine results for the query
MLM similarity	Language modeling score between query and multi-field document repr. of the table

# SEMANTIC MATCHING

- Main objective: go beyond term-based matching
- Three components:
  1. Content extraction
  2. Semantic representations
  3. Similarity measures

# SEMANTIC MATCHING 1. CONTENT EXTRACTION

- The "raw" content of a query/table is represented as a set of terms, which can be words or entities



# SEMANTIC MATCHING 1. CONTENT EXTRACTION

- The "raw" content of a query/table is represented as a set of terms, which can be words or entities



### Entity-based:

- Top-k ranked entities from a knowledge base

- Entities in the core table column
- Top-k ranked entities using the embedding document/section title as a query

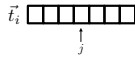
# SEMANTIC MATCHING 2. SEMANTIC REPRESENTATIONS

- Each of the raw terms is mapped to a semantic vector representation



## SEMANTIC REPRESENTATIONS

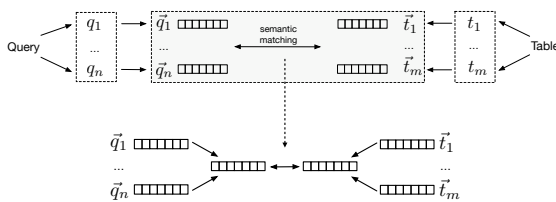
- Bag-of-concepts (sparse discrete vectors)
  - **Bag-of-entities**
    - Each vector element corresponds to an entity
    - $\vec{t}_{i[j]}$  is 1 if there exists a link between entities  $i$  and  $j$  in the KB
  - **Bag-of-categories**
    - Each vector element corresponds to a Wikipedia category
    - $\vec{t}_{i[j]}$  is 1 if entity  $i$  is assigned to Wikipedia category  $j$
- Embeddings (dense continuous vectors)
  - **Word embeddings**
    - Word2Vec (300 dimensions, trained on Google news)
  - **Graph embeddings**
    - RDF2vec (200 dimensions, trained on DBpedia)



## SEMANTIC MATCHING 3. SIMILARITY MEASURES

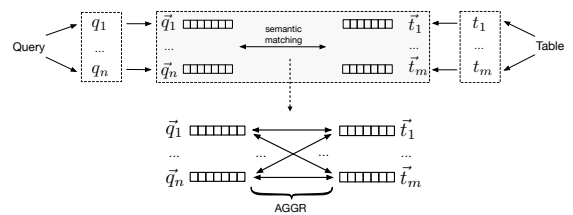


## SEMANTIC MATCHING EARLY FUSION MATCHING STRATEGY



**Early:** Take the centroid of semantic vectors and compute their cosine similarity

## SEMANTIC MATCHING LATE FUSION MATCHING STRATEGY



**Late:** Compute all pairwise similarities between the query and table semantic vectors, then aggregate those pairwise similarity scores (sum, avg, or max)

## EXPERIMENTAL EVALUATION

- Table corpus
  - WikiTables corpus<sup>1</sup>: 1.6M tables extracted from Wikipedia
- Knowledge base
  - DBpedia (2015-10): 4.6M entities with an English abstract
- Queries
  - Sampled from two sources<sup>2,3</sup>
- Rank-based evaluation
  - NDCG@5, 10, 15, 20

QS-1	QS-2
video games	asian countries currency
us cities	laptops cpu
kings of africa	food calories
economy gdp	guitars manufacturer

<sup>1</sup> Bhagavatula et al. TableL: Entity Linking in Web Tables. In: ISWC '15.  
<sup>2</sup> Cafarella et al. Data Integration for the Relational Web. Proc. of VLDB Endow. (2009)  
<sup>3</sup> Venetis et al. Recovering Semantics of Tables on the Web. Proc. of VLDB Endow. (2011)

## RELEVANCE ASSESSMENTS

- Collected via crowdsourcing
  - Pooling to depth 20, 3120 query-table pairs in total
- Assessors are presented with the following scenario
  - "Imagine that your task is to create a new table on the query topic"
- A table is ...
  - **Non-relevant (0):** if it is unclear what it is about or it about a different topic
  - **Relevant (1):** if some cells or values could be used from it
  - **Highly relevant (2):** if large blocks or several values could be used from it

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- **RQ1:** Can semantic matching improve retrieval performance?
- **RQ2:** Which of the semantic representations is the most effective?
- **RQ3:** Which of the similarity measures performs best?

## RESULTS: RQ1

	NDCG@10	NDCG@20
Single-field document ranking	0.4344	0.5254
Multi-field document ranking	0.4860	0.5473
WebTable <sup>1</sup>	0.2992	0.3726
WikiTable <sup>2</sup>	0.4766	0.5206
LTR baseline	0.5456	0.6031
<b>STR (LTR + semantic matching)</b>	<b>0.6293</b>	<b>0.6825</b>

- Can semantic matching improve retrieval performance?
- Yes. STR achieves substantial and significant improvements over LTR.

## RESULTS: RQ2

Sem. Repr.	Early	Late-max	Late-sum	Late-avg	ALL
Bag-of-entities	0.6754 (+11.99%)	0.6407 (+6.23%) <sup>†</sup>	0.6697 (+11.04%) <sup>‡</sup>	0.6733 (+11.64%) <sup>‡</sup>	<b>0.6696 (+11.03%)<sup>‡</sup></b>
Bag-of-categories	0.6287 (-4.19%)	0.6245 (+3.55%)	0.6315 (+4.71%) <sup>†</sup>	0.6240 (+3.47%)	0.6149 (+1.96%)
Word embeddings	0.6181 (-2.49%)	0.6328 (+4.92%)	0.6371 (+5.64%) <sup>†</sup>	0.6485 (+7.53%) <sup>†</sup>	0.6588 (+9.24%) <sup>†</sup>
Graph embeddings	0.6326 (+4.89%)	0.6142 (+1.84%)	0.6223 (+3.18%)	0.6316 (+4.73%)	0.6340 (+5.12%)
ALL	0.6736 (+11.69%) <sup>†</sup>	0.6631 (+9.95%) <sup>†</sup>	0.6831 (+13.26%) <sup>‡</sup>	0.6809 (+12.90%) <sup>‡</sup>	0.6825 (13.17%) <sup>‡</sup>

- Which of the semantic representations is the most effective?
- Bag-of-entities.

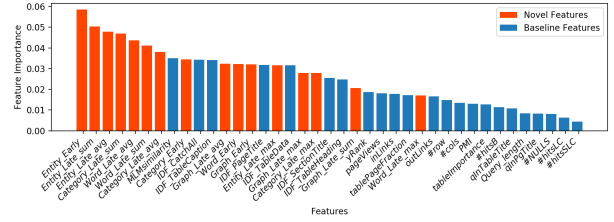
<sup>1</sup> Cafarella et al. WebTables: Exploring the Power of Tables on the Web. Proc. of VLDB Endow. (2008)  
<sup>2</sup> Bhagavatula et al. Methods for Exploring and Mining Tables on Wikipedia. In: IDEA '13.

## RESULTS: RQ3

Sem. Repr.	Early	Late-max	Late-sum	Late-avg	ALL
Bag-of-entities	0.6754 (+11.99%)	0.6407 (+6.23%) <sup>†</sup>	0.6697 (+11.04%) <sup>‡</sup>	0.6733 (+11.64%) <sup>‡</sup>	0.6696 (+11.03%) <sup>‡</sup>
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- Which of the similarity measures performs best?
- Late-sum and Late-avg (but it also depends on the representation)

## FEATURE ANALYSIS



## QUERY-BY-TABLE

Currently under peer review

## ON-THE-FLY TABLE GENERATION

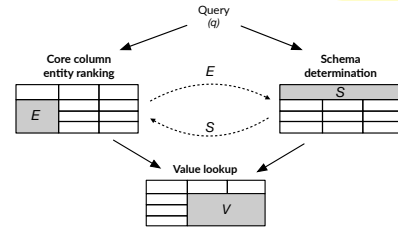
S. Zhang and K. Balog. *On-the-fly Table Generation*. In: 41st International ACM SIGIR Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval (SIGIR '18)

## TASK

- On-the-fly table generation:**
  - Answer a free text query with a relational table, where
    - the core column lists all relevant entities;
    - columns correspond to attributes of those entities;
    - cells contain the values of the corresponding entity attributes.

## APPROACH

Core column entity ranking and schema determination could potentially mutually reinforce each other.



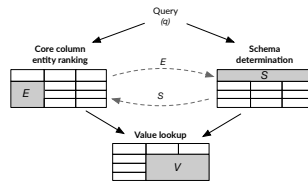
## ALGORITHM

### Algorithm 1: Iterative Table Generation

**Data:**  $q$ , a keyword query  
**Result:**  $T = (E, S, V)$ , a result table

```

1 begin
2    $E^0 \leftarrow \text{rankEntities}(q, 1)$ ;
3    $S^0 \leftarrow \text{rankLabels}(q, 1)$ ;
4    $t \leftarrow 0$ ;
5   while terminate do
6      $t \leftarrow t + 1$ ;
7      $E^t \leftarrow \text{rankEntities}(q, S^{t-1})$ ;
8      $S^t \leftarrow \text{rankLabels}(q, E^{t-1})$ ;
9   end
10   $V \leftarrow \text{lookupValues}(E^t, S^t)$ ;
11  return  $(E^t, S^t, V)$ 
12 end
  
```



## KNOWLEDGE BASE ENTRY



## CORE COLUMN ENTITY RANKING

$$\text{score}_t(e, q) = \sum_i w_i \phi_i(e, q, S^{t-1})$$

Feature	Iter. (t)
<b>Term-based matching</b>	
$\phi_1: LM(q, e_a)$	$\geq 0$
<b>Deep semantic matching</b>	
$\phi_2: DRRM.TKS(q, e_d)$	$\geq 0$
$\phi_3: DRRM.TKS(q, e_p)$	$\geq 0$
$\phi_4: DRRM.TKS(s, e_d)$	$\geq 1$
$\phi_5: DRRM.TKS(s, e_p)$	$\geq 1$
$\phi_6: DRRM.TKS(q \oplus s, e_d \oplus e_p)$	$\geq 1$
<b>Entity-schema compatibility</b>	
$\phi_7: ESC(S, e)$	$\geq 1$

## CORE COLUMN ENTITY RANKING FEATURES

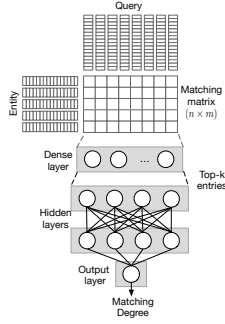
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$\phi_7: ESC(S, e)$	$\geq 1$

Entity's relevance to the query computed using language modeling

## CORE COLUMN ENTITY RANKING FEATURES

Feature	Iter. (t)
<i>Term-based matching</i>	
$\phi_1: LM(q, e_a)$	$\geq 0$
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<i>Entity-schema compatibility</i>	
$\phi_7: ESC(S, e)$	$\geq 1$

s is the concatenation of all schema labels in S  
 $\oplus$  is the string concatenation operator



## CORE COLUMN ENTITY RANKING FEATURES

Feature	Iter. (t)
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<i>Entity-schema compatibility</i>	
$\phi_7: ESC(S, e)$	$\geq 1$

Compatibility matrix:

$$C_{ij} = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } match_{KB}(e_i, s_j) \vee match_{TC}(e_i, s_j) \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Entity-schema compatibility score:

$$ESC(S, e_i) = \frac{1}{|S|} \sum_j C_{ij}$$

## SCHEMA DETERMINATION

$$score_t(s, q) = \sum_i w_i \phi_i(s, q, E^{t-1})$$

Feature	Iter. (t)
<i>Column population</i>	
$\phi_1: P(s q)$	$\geq 0$
$\phi_2: P(s q, E)$	$\geq 1$
<i>Deep semantic matching</i>	
$\phi_3: DRRM\_TKS(s, q)$	$\geq 0$
<i>Attribute retrieval</i>	
$\phi_4: AR(s, E)$	$\geq 1$
<i>Entity-schema compatibility</i>	
$\phi_5: ESC(s, E)$	$\geq 1$

## SCHEMA DETERMINATION FEATURES

Feature	Iter. (t)
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$\phi_4: AR(s, E)$	$\geq 1$
<i>Entity-schema compatibility</i>	
$\phi_5: ESC(s, E)$	$\geq 1$

$$P(s|q) = \sum_{T \in \mathcal{T}} P(s|T) P(T|q)$$

Table's relevance to the query

$$P(s|T) = \begin{cases} 1, & \max_{s' \in T_2} dist(s, s') \geq \gamma \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Schema label likelihood

## SCHEMA DETERMINATION FEATURES

Feature	Iter. (t)
<i>Column population</i>	
$\phi_1: P(s q)$	$\geq 0$
$\phi_2: P(s q, E)$	$\geq 1$
<i>Deep semantic matching</i>	
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<i>Attribute retrieval</i>	
$\phi_4: AR(s, E)$	$\geq 1$
<i>Entity-schema compatibility</i>	
$\phi_5: ESC(s, E)$	$\geq 1$

$$P(s|q, E) = \sum_T P(s|T) P(T|q, E)$$

Schema label likelihood

Table's relevance to the query  
 $P(T|q, E) \propto P(T|E) P(T|q)$

## SCHEMA DETERMINATION FEATURES

Feature	Iter. (t)
<i>Column population</i>	
$\phi_1: P(s q)$	$\geq 0$
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<i>Entity-schema compatibility</i>	
$\phi_5: ESC(s, E)$	$\geq 1$

$$AR(s, E) = \frac{1}{|E|} \sum_{e \in E} (match(s, e, T) + drel(d, e) + sh(s, e) + kb(s, e))$$

Similarity between entity e and schema label s with respect to T

Relevance of the document containing the table

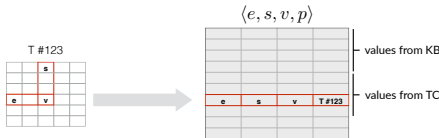
Whether s is a property of e in the KB

#hits returned by a web search engine to the query "[s] of [e]" above threshold

Kopliks et al. Towards a Framework for Attribute Retrieval. In: CIKM '11.

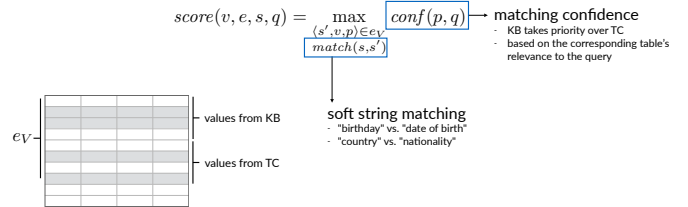
## VALUE LOOKUP

- A catalog of possible entity attribute-value pairs
- Entity, schema label, value, provenance quadruples



## VALUE LOOKUP

- Finding a cell's value is a lookup in that catalog



## EXPERIMENTAL EVALUATION

## EXPERIMENTAL SETUP

- Table corpus
  - WikiTables corpus: 1.6M tables extracted from Wikipedia
- Knowledge base
  - DBpedia (2015-10): 4.6M entities with an English abstract
- Two query sets
- Rank-based metrics
  - NDCG for core column entity ranking and schema determination
  - MAP/MRR for value lookup

## QUERY SET 1 (QS-1)

- List queries from the DBpedia-Entity v2 collection<sup>1</sup> (119)
  - "all cars that are produced in Germany"
  - "permanent members of the UN Security Council"
  - "Airlines that currently use Boeing 747 planes"
- Core column entity ranking
  - Highly relevant entities from the collection
- Schema determination
  - Crowdsourcing, 3-point relevance scale, 7k query-label pairs
- Value lookup
  - Crowdsourcing, 25 queries sample, 14k cell values

<sup>1</sup> Hasbi et al. DBpedia-Entity v2: A Test Collection for Entity Search. In: SIGIR '17.

## QUERY SET 2 (QS-2)

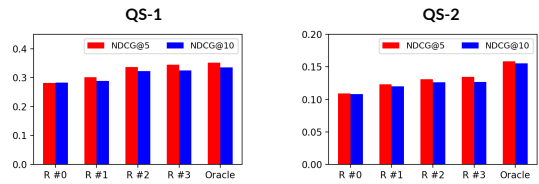
- Entity-relationship queries from the RELink Query Collection<sup>1</sup> (600)
  - Queries are answered by entity tuples (pairs or triplets)
  - That is, each query is answered by a table with 2 or 3 columns (including the core entity column)
  - Queries and relevance judgments are obtained automatically from Wikipedia lists that contain relational tables
  - Human annotators were asked to formulate the corresponding information need as a natural language query
    - "find peaks above 6000m in the mountains of Peru"
    - "Which countries and cities have accredited armenian ambassadors?"
    - "Which anti-aircraft guns were used in ships during war periods and what country produced them?"

<sup>1</sup> Saleiro et al. RELink: A Research Framework and Test Collection for Entity-Relationship Retrieval. In: SIGIR '17.

### CORE COLUMN ENTITY RANKING (QUERY-BASED)

	QS-1		QS-2	
	NDCG@5	NDCG@10	NDCG@5	NDCG@10
LM	0.2419	0.2591	0.0708	0.0823
DRRM_TKS (e <sub>a</sub> )	0.2015	0.2028	0.0501	0.0540
DRRM_TKS (e <sub>p</sub> )	0.1780	0.1808	<b>0.1089</b>	<b>0.1083</b>
Combined	<b>0.2821</b>	<b>0.2834</b>	0.0852	0.0920

### CORE COLUMN ENTITY RANKING (SCHEMA-ASSISTED)

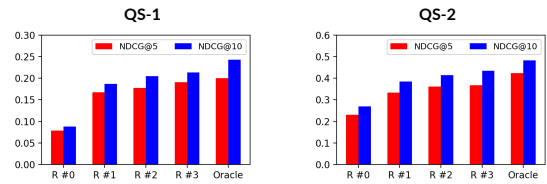


- R #0: without schema information (query only)
- R #1-#3: with automatic schema determination (top 10)
- Oracle: with ground truth schema

### SCHEMA DETERMINATION (QUERY-BASED)

	QS-1		QS-2	
	NDCG@5	NDCG@10	NDCG@5	NDCG@10
CP	0.0561	0.0675	0.1770	0.2092
DRRM_TKS	0.0380	0.0427	0.0920	0.1415
Combined	<b>0.0786</b>	<b>0.0878</b>	<b>0.2310</b>	<b>0.2695</b>

### SCHEMA DETERMINATION (ENTITY-ASSISTED)



- R #0: without entity information (query only)
- R #1-#3: with automatic core column entity ranking (top 10)
- Oracle: with ground truth entities

### RESULTS VALUE LOOKUP

	QS-1		QS-2	
	MAP	MRR	MAP	MRR
Knowledge base	0.7759	0.7990	0.0745	0.0745
Table corpus	0.1614	0.1746	<b>0.9564</b>	<b>0.9564</b>
Combined	<b>0.9270</b>	<b>0.9427</b>	<b>0.9564</b>	<b>0.9564</b>

### EXAMPLE

"Towns in the Republic of Ireland in 2006 Census Records"

	Names	County	Country	Other countries	Notes
Cork City and Suburbs					
Belturbet	Cork City and Suburbs				
Kildare	Belturbet	Cork City and Suburbs			
Population_County_Labels	Kildare	Belturbet	Cork City and Suburbs	Cork	Ireland
List_of_settlements_in_Ireland	Roscommon	Thomastown	Thomastown	Kilkenny	Ireland
Round #0	Athy	Roscommon	Belturbet	Cavan	Ireland
Round #1	Kildare	Kildare	Kildare	Ireland	7,538
Round #2	Roscommon	Roscommon	Ireland	5,017	Also administrative
Round #3					

### ANALYSIS

		QS-1			QS-2		
		↑	↓	-	↑	↓	-
QS-1	Round #0 vs. #1	43	38	38	52	7	60
	Round #0 vs. #2	50	30	39	61	5	53
	Round #0 vs. #3	49	26	44	59	2	58
QS-2	Round #0 vs. #1	166	82	346	386	56	158
	Round #0 vs. #2	173	74	347	388	86	126
	Round #0 vs. #3	173	72	349	403	103	94

### SUMMARY

- Answering queries with relational tables, summarizing entities and their attributes
- Retrieving existing tables from a table corpus
- Generating a table on-the-fly
- Future work
  - Moving from homogeneous Wikipedia tables to other types of tables (scientific tables, Web tables)
  - Value lookup with conflicting values; verifying cell values
  - Result snippets for table search results
  - ...

**QUESTIONS?**

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