UCF DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

Distinguished Speaker

EFFICIENTLY SEARCHING AMONG SENSITIVE CONTENT

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In the field of information retrieval, we take it as our goal to help people find what they want to see, but in this talk I will argue that it is high time that we also begin to think seriously about a complementary problem: preventing people from finding things that they should not see. Back when information was scarce, we could do this just by just omitting things that should not be found from the index used by the information retrieval system. Today, however, it is increasingly common to find important information (that should be found) intermixed with sensitive information that needs to be protected for one reason or another (personal privacy, commercial interests, national security, ...). I'll begin the talk by presenting some of our recent work on one current application of these ideas, the protection of privileged content when sharing evidence among the parties to a lawsuit. This task, referred to as "discovery" or (when the content is born-digital) "e-discovery," follows a search-then-segregate process that was originally developed for paper records. I'll then compare that approach with the obvious alternative: segregate-then-search, which is presently the process used to review classified records for public release after some period (e.g., 25 years). Both approaches suffer from high latency (on the order of months) and high cost, and are thus suitable only for settings in which the information to be found is expected to have high value. With that as background, I will then look to the future to sketch out how more responsive and affordable alternatives might be crafted, and what technical challenges would need to be addressed to make those alternative approaches both possible and practical.

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Douglas Oard is a Professor at the University of Maryland, College Park, with joint appointments in the College of Information Studies (Maryland's iSchool) and the University of Maryland Institute for Advanced Computer Studies (UMIACS). He is on sabbatical this year at the University of South Florida. Dr. Oard earned his Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Maryland. His research interests center around the use of emerging technologies to support information seeking by end users. Additional information is available at http://terpconnect.umd.edu/~oard/

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