Text Properties and Mark-up Languages

Statistical Properties of Text

- How is the frequency of different words distributed?
- How fast does vocabulary size grow with the size of a corpus?
- Such factors affect the performance of information retrieval and can be used to select appropriate term weights and other aspects of an IR system.

Word Frequency

- A few words are very common.
  - 2 most frequent words (e.g. “the”, “of”) can account for about 10% of word occurrences.
- Most words are very rare.
  - Half the words in a corpus appear only once, called *hapax legomena* (Greek for “read only once”)
- Called a “heavy tailed” distribution, since most of the probability mass is in the “tail”

Sample Word Frequency Data

(from B. Croft, UMass)

Frequent Word	Number of Occurrences	Percentage of Total
the	7,398,934	5.9
of	3,893,790	3.1
to	3,364,653	2.7
and	3,320,687	2.6
in	2,311,785	1.8
is	1,559,147	1.2
for	1,313,561	1.0
The	1,144,860	0.9
that	1,066,503	0.8
said	1,027,713	0.8

Frequencies from 336,310 documents in the 1GB TREC Volume 3 Corpus
125,720,891 total word occurrences; 508,209 unique words

Zipf’s Law

- Rank (r): The numerical position of a word in a list sorted by decreasing frequency (f).
- Zipf (1949) “discovered” that:

$$f \propto \frac{1}{r} \qquad f \cdot r = k \;\; \text{(for constant } k\text{)}$$

- If probability of word of rank r is p_r and N is the total number of word occurrences:

$$p_r = \frac{f}{N} = \frac{A}{r} \quad \text{for corpus indp. const. } A \approx 0.1$$

What does it mean?

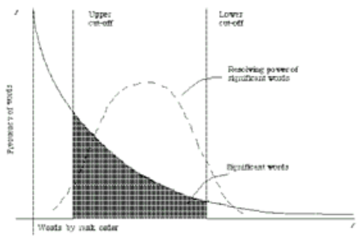
- Example: if the probability of a word X is ranked 10th by its frequency in a collection of *10,000* words is 0.01, then because of the relation

$$p_r = \frac{f}{N} = \frac{A}{r} \quad \text{for } A \approx 0.1$$

One can conclude that the $f = N{*}p_r = 10000 * 0.01 = 100$
Or rank $r = A/p_r = 0.1/0.01 = 10$

Zipf and Term Weighting

- Luhn (1958) suggested that both extremely common and extremely uncommon words were not very useful for indexing.



Predicting Occurrence Frequencies

- By Zipf, a word appearing $f(r)$ times has rank $r_n = AN/f(r)$
- Several words may occur n times, assume rank r_n applies to the last of these.
- Therefore, r_n words occur $f(r)$ or more times and r_{n+1} words occur $f(r+1)$ or more times.
- So, the number of words appearing **exactly** n times is:

$$I_n = r_n - r_{n+1} = \frac{AN}{n} - \frac{AN}{n+1} = \frac{AN}{n(n+1)}$$

Predicting Word Frequencies (cont)

- The frequency of a number one ranked word: $D = AN/1$
- Ratio of word with frequency n vs. most frequent word is:

$$\frac{I_n}{D} = \frac{1}{n(n+1)}$$

- Fraction of words appearing only once is therefore ½ of the most frequent words.

Occurrence Frequency Data

(from B. Croft, UMass)

Number of Occurrences (n)	Predicted Proportion of Occurrences 1/n(n+1)	Actual Proportion occurring n times I_n/D	Actual Number of Words occurring n times
1	.500	.402	204,357
2	.167	.132	67,082
3	.083	.069	35,083
4	.050	.046	23,271
5	.033	.032	16,332
6	.024	.024	12,421
7	.018	.019	9,766
8	.014	.016	8,200
9	.011	.014	6,907
10	.009	.012	5,893

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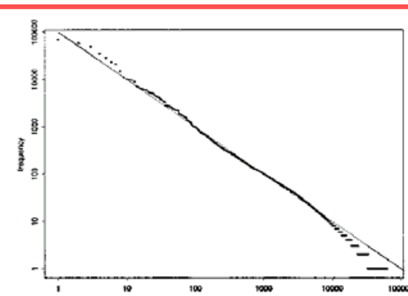
Does Real Data Fit Zipf's Law?

- A law of the form $y = kx^c$ is called a power law.
- Zipf's law is a power law with $c = -1$
- On a log-log plot, power laws give a straight line with slope c.

$$\log(y) = \log(kx^c) = \log k + c\log(x)$$

- Zipf is quite accurate except for very high and low rank.

Fit to Zipf for Brown Corpus



k = 100,000

Mandelbrot (1954) Correction

- The following more general form gives a bit better fit:

$$f = P(r+\rho)^{-B} \qquad \text{For constants } P, B, \rho$$

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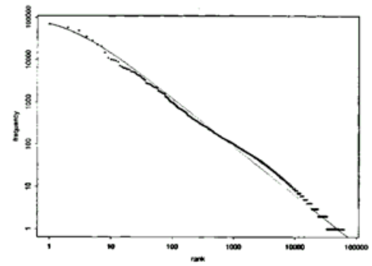
Mandelbrot Fit



Mandelbrot's function on Brown corpus
P = $10^{5.4}$, B = 1.15, ρ = 100

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Explanations for Zipf's Law

- Zipf's explanation was his "principle of least effort." Balance between speaker's desire for a small vocabulary and listener's desire for a large one.
- Debate (1955-61) between Mandelbrot and H. Simon over explanation.
- Li (1992) shows that just random typing of letters including a space will generate "words" with a Zipfian distribution.
  - http://www.nslij-genetics.org/wli/zipf/index.html/

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Zipf's Law Impact on IR

- Good News: Stopwords will account for a large fraction of text so eliminating them greatly reduces inverted-index storage costs.
- Bad News: For most words, gathering sufficient data for meaningful statistical analysis (e.g. for correlation analysis for query expansion) is difficult since they are extremely rare.

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Vocabulary Growth

- How does the size of the overall vocabulary (number of unique words) grow with the size of the corpus?
- This determines how the size of the inverted index will scale with the size of the corpus.
- Vocabulary not really upper-bounded due to proper names, typos, etc.

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Heaps' Law

- If V is the size of the vocabulary and the n is the length of the corpus in words:

$$V = Kn^{\beta} \quad \text{with constants } K,\ 0 < \beta < 1$$

- Typical constants:
  - $K \approx$ 10–100
  - $\beta \approx$ 0.4–0.6 (approx. square-root)

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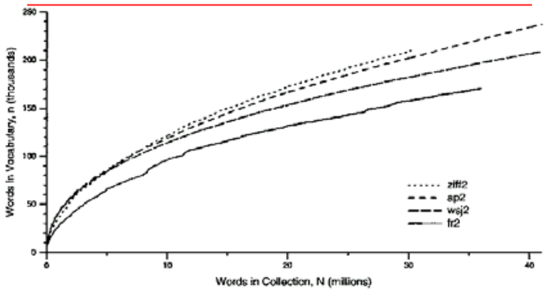
Heaps' Law Data



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Explanation for Heaps' Law

- Can be derived from Zipf's law by assuming documents are generated by randomly sampling words from a Zipfian distribution.

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Metadata

- Information about a document that may not be a part of the document itself (data about data).
- *Descriptive* metadata is external to the meaning of the document:
  - Author
  - Title
  - Source (book, magazine, newspaper, journal)
  - Date
  - ISBN
  - Publisher
  - Length

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Metadata (cont)

- *Semantic* metadata concerns the content:
  - Abstract
  - Keywords
  - Subject Codes
    - Library of Congress
    - Dewey Decimal
    - UMLS (Unified Medical Language System)
- Subject terms may come from specific *ontologies* (hierarchical taxonomies of standardized semantic terms).

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Web Metadata

- META tag in HTML
  - <META NAME="keywords" CONTENT="pets, cats, dogs">
- META "HTTP-EQUIV" attribute allows server or browser to access information:
  - <META HTTP-EQUIV="content-type" CONTENT="text/tml; charset=EUC-2">
  - <META HTTP-EQUIV="expires" CONTENT="Tue, 01 Jan 02">
  - <META HTTP-EQUIV="creation-date" CONTENT="23-Sep-01">

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Content Rating Metadata

- PICS (Platform for Internet Content Selection)
- Rating system to allow censoring based on sexual, violent, language etc. content.
  - <META HTTP-EQUIV="PICS-label" CONTENT="PG13: SEX, VIOLENCE">

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RDF

- Resource Description Framework.
- XML compatible metadata format.
- New standard for web metadata.
  - Content description
  - Collection description
  - Privacy information
  - Intellectual property rights (e.g. copyright)
  - Content ratings
  - Digital signatures for authority

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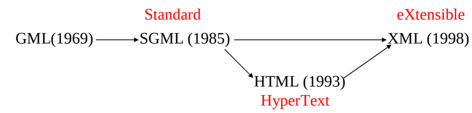
Markup Languages

- Language used to annotate documents with "tags" that indicate layout or semantic information.
- Most document languages (Word, RTF, Latex, HTML) primarily define *layout*.
- History of Generalized Markup Languages:



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Basic SGML Document Syntax

- Blocks of text surrounded by start and end tags.
  - <tagname attribute=value attribute=value …>
  - </tagname>
- Tagged blocks can be nested.
- In HTML end tag is not always necessary, but in XML it is.

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HTML

- Developed for hypertext on the web.
  - <a href="http://www.cs.utexas.edu">
- May include code such as Javascript in Dynamic HTML (DHTML).
- Separates layout somewhat by using style sheets (Cascade Style Sheets, CSS).
- However, primarily defines layout and formatting.

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XML

- Like SGML, a metalanguage for defining specific document languages.
- Simplification of original SGML for the web promoted by WWW Consortium (W3C).
- Fully separates semantic information and layout.
- Provides structured data (such as a relational DB) in a document format.
- Replacement for an explicit database schema.

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XML (cont)

- Allows *programs* to easily interpret information in a document, as opposed to HTML intended as layout language for formatting docs for human consumption.
- New tags are defined as needed.
- Structures can be nested arbitrarily deep.
- Separate (optional) *Document Type Definition* (DTD) defines tags and document grammar.

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XML Example

```
<person>
  <name> <firstname>John</firstname>
         <middlename/>
         <lastname>Doe</lastname>
  </name>
  <age> 38 </age>
  <email> jdoe@austin.rr.com</email>
</person>
```

<tag/> is shorthand for empty tag <tag></tag>
Tag names are case-sensitive (unlike HTML)
*A tagged piece of text is called an **element**.*

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XML Example with Attributes

```
<product type="food">
   <name language="Spanish">arroz con pollo</name>
   <price currency="peso">2.30</price>
</product>
```

Attribute values must be strings enclosed in quotes.
For a given tag, an attribute name can only appear once.

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XML Miscellaneous

- XML Document must start with a special tag.
  - <?XML VERSION="1.0">
- Tag "id" and "idref" attributes allows specifying graph-structured data as well as tree-structured data.

```
<state id="s2">
  <abbrev> TX</abbrev>
  <name>Texas</abbrev>
</state>
<city id="c2">
   <aircode> AUS </aircode>
   <name> Austin </name>
   <state idref="s2"/>
</city>
```

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Document Type Definition (DTD)

- Grammar or schema for defining the tags and structure of a particular document type.
- Allows defining structure of a document element using a regular expression.
- Expression defining an element can be recursive, allowing the expressive power of a context-free grammar.

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DTD Example

```
<!DOCTYPE db [
  <!ELEMENT db (person*)>
  <!ELEMENT person (name,age,(parent | guardian)?>
  <!ELEMENT name (#PCDATA)>
  <!ELEMENT age   (#PCDATA)>
  <!ELEMENT parent (person)>
  <!ELEMENT guardian (person)>
]>
```

*: 0 or more repetitions
?: 0 or 1 (optional)
| : alternation (or)
PCDATA: Parsed Character Data (may contain tags)

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Sample Valid Document for DTD

```
<db>
 <person>
   <name> <firstname>John</firstname> <lastname>Doe</lastname>
   </name>
   <age> 26 </age>
   <parent>
      <person>
        <name><firstname>Robert</firstname> <lastname>Doe</firstname>
        </name>
        <age> 55</age>
      </person>
   </parent>
 </person>
</db>
```

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DTD (cont)

- Tag attributes are also defined:

  <!ATTLIS name language CDATA #REQUIRED>

  <!ATTLIS price currency CDATA #IMPLIED>

  CDATA: Character data (string)

  IMPLIED: Optional

- Can define DTD in a separate file:

  <!DOCTYPE db SYSTEM "/u/doe/xml/db.dtd">

XSL (Extensible Style-sheet Language)

- Defines layout for XML documents.
- Defines how to translate XML into HTML.
- Define style sheet in document:
  - <?xml-stylesheet href="mystyle.css" type="text/css">

XML Standardized DTD's

- MathML: For mathematical formulae.
- SMIL (Synchronized Multimedia Integration Language): Scheduling language for web-based multi-media presentations.
- RDF (Resource Description Framework)
- TEI (Text Encoding Initiative): For literary works.
- NITF: For news articles.
- CML: For chemicals.
- AIML: For astronomical instruments.

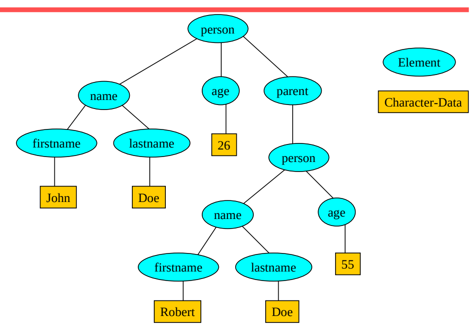
Parsing XML

- Process XML file into an internal data format for further processing.
- SAX (Simple API for XML): Reads the flow of XML text, detecting *events* (e.g. tag start and end) that are sent back to the application for processing.
- DOM (Document Object Model): Parses XML text into a tree-structured object-oriented data structure.

DOM

- XML document represented as a tree of Node objects (e.g. Java objects).
- Node class has subclasses:
  - Element
  - Attribute
  - CharacterData
- Node has methods:
  - getParentNode()
  - getChildNodes()

Sample DOM Tree



More Node Methods

- Element node
  - getTagName()
  - getAttributes()
  - getAttribute(String name)
- CharacterData node
  - getData()
- Also methods for adding and deleting nodes and text in the DOM tree, setting attributes, etc.

Apache Xerces XML Parser

- Parser for creating DOM trees for XML documents.
- Java version available at:
  - http://xerces.apache.org/xerces-j/
- Full Javadoc available at:
  - http://xerces.apache.org/xerces-j/api.html