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CENTER FOR BUSINESS ANALYTICS

CASE STUDY

Using online reviews for competitive analysis

Online review sites such as TripAdvisor provide consumers with unprecedented power to 1) find products and services that meet specific needs and 2) provide feedback to suppliers. Our concern in this project is with the online review site as a feedback channel. It is common to see suppliers respond to individual reviews in an effort to reinforce positive experiences or make amends for bad ones. In this project, we expand the suppliers' sights beyond their own reviews to those of the competition, our goal being to use the online review archive as a source of competitive intelligence.

Accessing reviews for competitive intelligence through a review site's interface is impractical since such interfaces are designed for manual processing of one supplier at a time. A competitive analysis must come from an automated system that relies upon text mining tools to summarize an archive of reviews spanning multiple suppliers and to identify relationships. Modern visualization technologies are also required to present results in meaningful ways.

The term *social media analytics* is often used to describe the tasks and technologies listed above, and several carefully-crafted models of social media analytics have been published recently. In this project, we show the design and application of ReviewMap, an integrated text mining and visualization system that is consistent with [Fan & Gordon, 2014]. The ReviewMap experiences presented here provide a basis for evaluating

- the capabilities of text mining tools to support realistic analyses and
- the requirements these tools demand of the user.