



Interactive Visualization of People's Daily

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Abstract. As the number of documents grows larger and larger, it becomes more and more difficult for people to make sense of it all. People's Daily is the official newspaper of Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, which has a decisive guiding role for the Chinese mainland politics in different periods. In this paper, we develop an interactive visual analytic system to represent 1,365,802 documents of People's Daily from 1946 to 2003, in order to help analysts examine them more quickly and dig out potential information more efficiently. It is an easy-to-use system, which provides four distinct views of document visualization, including document view, calendar view, storyline view and query view. Besides, abundant human-centered interactions and text visualization techniques are adopted to improve user experiences. Experiments verify the usability of the system. Some discoveries about the change and development in Chinese society are found by using the system.

Keywords: Interaction · Text visualization · People's Daily
Data mining

1 Introduction

Information visualization is the study of transforming data, information and knowledge into interactive visual representations [1]. For large collection of data, information visualization is a good method for data overview and mining. The visualization system has been widely used in many fields, such as chemistry [2], engineering [3], public service [4].

People's Daily is the official newspaper of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee. On July 1 in 1946, Chairman Mao personally wrote the Chinese headline for People's Daily. In 1992, People's Daily was named as one of the top ten newspapers in the world by UNESCO. As the mouthpiece of CCP and Chinese government, People's Daily does not only actively promote the policy advocacy of CCP and Chinese government and disseminate information in all fields at home and abroad, but also record the change and development in Chinese society. In addition to providing the outside world with direct information

about the CPC's policies and opinions, the editorial of People's Daily reflects the views of the CPC Central Committee on the handling of the incidents.

Because People's Daily has a decisive guiding role for the Chinese mainland politics in different periods, many political watchers at home and abroad usually go through the essays in People's Daily to find the true meaning of the CPC Central Committee's wishes and some of Chinese unique political messages. So in this paper, we download the documents of People's Daily from 1946 to 2003 and dig out more useful information about CCP, Chinese government and society through the visualization research.

The objective of our research is to build an interactive visual analytic system to help investigators better review, analyze, understand and explore data. The challenge is how to clearly show the huge document collection and effectively explore the data to find the insightful patterns. We design the system from four distinct perspectives, called views, including document view, calendar view, storyline view and query view. The four views cooperate to provide various analytic tasks in different levels of data, and combine with convenient interactions to offer a more easy-to-use tool. In these views, some text visualization techniques are adopted to the system, such as summarizing a single document, showing the words and topics, creating storylines.

The main contributions include:

- An interactive visual analytic system is developed to investigate the data of People's Daily from four distinct views. Human-centered interactions and text visualization techniques are appropriately adopted to increase the usability of the system and improve user experiences.
- Some discoveries about the change and development in Chinese society from 1946 to 2003 are found by using the proposed system.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 gives related work. Section 3 shows the data collection and processing. Section 4 describes the design of four visualization views in the system. Section 5 illustrates the experimental results. Section 6 finally draws the conclusions and future work planned for the system.

2 Related Work

2.1 Text Visualization

Text visualization techniques regarding their design goals can be largely divided into five categories: revealing content, exploring document corpus, visualizing document similarity, visualizing sentiments and emotions of the text, and analyzing various domain-specific rich-text corpus [5]. Visualizing the content of a text document, a few documents, and even hundreds of thousands of documents is essential for overview of large text data, which is one of the most important tasks in text visualization. From the different levels of details, showing content of documents can be from the following aspects: summarizing a single document,

showing the words and topics, detecting events, and creating storylines [5]. Many studies on exploring document corpus are query-based techniques so that users can retrieve the data based on their interests [6].

In this paper, some of these visualization techniques are adopted for our proposed interactive system, such as summarizing a single document, showing the words and topics, creating storylines, query-based document exploring.

2.2 Interactive Visualization System

The interactive visualization system has been used to many different fields, such as chemistry [2], engineering [3]. A visual analytic system Jigsaw represents documents and their entities visually from multiple coordinated views [13]. Shi et al. presents an interactive visual system for exploring complex flow patterns of Public Bicycle System [4]. A system architecture called Reactive Vega provides the robust and comprehensive treatment of declarative visual and interaction design for data visualization [14].

In this paper, we present an interactive visual analytic system to explore the change and development in Chinese society from People’s Daily data.

3 Data Collection and Processing

We download 1,365,802 documents in People’s Daily from May 1946 to December 2003 from the website [7]. Each document is textual, in Chinese natural language, and in loose narrative format. News, stories and reports are the main types of the documents with a few paragraphs.

We organize these documents in Json files according to the published time, and each Json file uses published month as its name, such as ‘194605.json’, includes all the documents published in this month. Each data item in the Json file contains four parts: url, title, published time and original content. There are 692 Json files in total.

The number of documents in each year is shown in Table 1. From the statistics, we can see that there are tens of thousands of documents a year on average. In other words, there are dozens of documents or more than a hundred documents a day on average. So the data is a very comprehensive source on historical events.

For Chinese texts, word segmentation is the first step for text analysis. We use Jieba (Chinese for ‘to stutter’) toolkit for Chinese text segmentation [8]. The algorithm is to generate a directed acyclic graph (DAG) composed of all possible Chinese words in the sentence, then by using the dynamic programming to find the maximum probability path to find the maximum segmentation based on word frequency combination. For unregistered words, an HMM model based model and Viterbi algorithm are built based on Chinese word formation.

Besides, the keywords are automatically extracted, and the documents to be extracted can be any combinations of the downloaded documents, such documents in one day or one year. The TF-IDF based keyword extraction algorithm [15] is adopted in this system.

Table 1. The number of documents in each year.

Year	#	Year	#	Year	#	Year	#	Year	#	Year	#
1946	5954	1956	23821	1966	12538	1976	12583	1986	34345	1996	38688
1947	10773	1957	25374	1967	9461	1977	12991	1987	33397	1997	35645
1948	8247	1958	28074	1968	9364	1978	13603	1988	34298	1998	35799
1949	19023	1959	23993	1969	10342	1979	17779	1989	31074	1999	36463
1950	20169	1960	23929	1970	11762	1980	27708	1990	32783	2000	36399
1951	14504	1961	22608	1971	10908	1981	28898	1991	34774	2001	37248
1952	13397	1962	17887	1972	14537	1982	28934	1992	38446	2002	36431
1953	12820	1963	16047	1973	15029	1983	31889	1993	37562	2003	44955
1954	14035	1964	17028	1974	12984	1984	32440	1994	35321		
1955	15659	1965	16724	1975	13543	1985	35024	1995	39791		

4 System Design and Implementation

4.1 Overview

The interactive visual analytic system is a web based system to represent documents visually in order to help analysts learn about the content more effectively. The system visualizes the data from different aspects through various distinct views as follows.

- **Document view.** Document view is a single document summarization. Users can select one document, the system gives the word cloud and keywords automatically extracted from the document.
- **Calendar view.** Calendar view presents a quick overview of documents in one year or one month.
- **Storyline view.** Storyline view demonstrates the keywords in time series to explore the process of the events.
- **Query view.** Query view provides a word-based document search function.

Specially, the four views focus on the data in different levels and cooperate to provide various analytic tasks. Convenient interactions are combined with these four perspectives to provide a more easy-to-use tool for obtaining a more comprehensive understanding of data. The detail for each view and interactions will be described in the following subsections.

4.2 Document View

The document view, shown in Fig. 1, is a single document summarization. There are four parts in the document view interface. The left part is the selection area, users select one day, then the document list shows all the documents published in that day. After users select one document, three visualization perspectives of

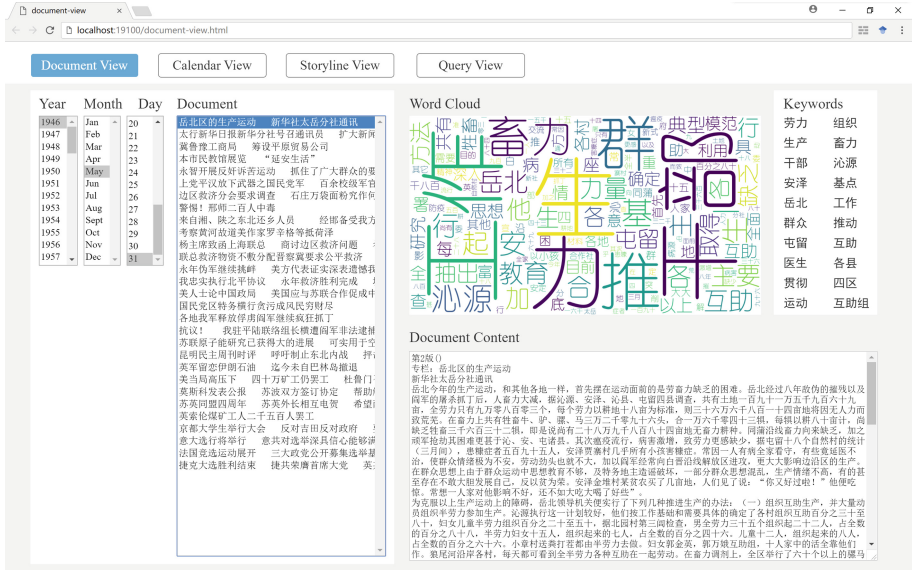


Fig. 1. The document view.

a document (word cloud, keywords and original content) are illustrated on the right parts.

Word cloud [9] is one of the most popular and intuitive techniques for word visualization, which shows a bag of words with different sizes and colors that summarize the content of the input document and packed together without any overlap. The higher the frequency of a word is, the larger its font size is. Color is used to distinguish different words for easy recognition. There are different types of word cloud based on various packing methods, such as Wordle [10], Radcloud [11]. In this paper, we use the word cloud toolkit [12], which is a little word cloud generator in Python. The input of the word cloud toolkit is the segmentation results by the Jieba toolkit [8].

The part of keywords provides a more intuitive view of the document. 20 Keywords are automatically extracted from the document content by the TF-IDF based keyword extraction algorithm [15].

The visualization results cannot replace the documents. If the users find the interests from Word Cloud and keywords, in most cases they want to read the original document content carefully to learn more about it. So we present the document content in the right corner.

In the word cloud part, users can zoom in or zoom out to review the details. If users hover over a keyword, all of this keyword in the original content are highlighted to give users an intuitive view.

4.3 Calendar View

The calendar view, illustrated in Fig. 2, presents a quick overview of documents in one year or one month. The style of the selector on the interface is a familiar calendar showing years and month. The users can click the year, then the selected year is highlighted and the right part shows the word cloud and keywords generated by all the documents in this year. Besides, if the year on the left selection area is double clicked, the month selector is shown. Then users can select one month, the right part shows the word cloud and keywords generated by all the documents in this month. Besides, users can select more than one year and one month, and combine years and months anyway. As same as in the document view, users can zoom in or zoom out to review the details in Word Cloud part.



Fig. 2. The calendar view.

In Fig. 2, the year 1967 is selected, the word cloud and keywords are generated by all the documents published in 1967. The word ‘Chairman Mao’ is in the biggest size and also the top one keyword. Besides, from ‘Zedong Mao’, ‘Revolutionaries’ and ‘the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution’ in Word Cloud and Keywords, we can infer to the ear of Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China. Chairman Mao got started the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution from May, 1966 to October, 1966, which was the most volatile and disastrous stage in China. In People’s Daily in 1967, the words ‘Zedong Mao’ and ‘Revolutionaries’ occurred frequently, which illustrated that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution became the very important political event in China.

The calendar view provides a very quick and easy-to-understand method to find potential interests. To achieve this purpose, users can only choose by years and month as the unit in this view. If users are interested with keywords of one year or one month, they can jump to the document view to review the detail. Furthermore, if users want to customize any time period, the storyline view provides this function.

4.4 Storyline View

The document view and calendar view give the whole view for any time periods. Sometimes, users want to explore the process of the events. For this purpose, the storyline view is designed, shown in Fig. 3, which demonstrates the keywords in time series. Users can customize the time period and select the analytic target. The analytic target can be the title, the content or the both. This view supports different scales of keyword visualization, such as year, month or day. The users can zoom in or zoom out to switch to different scales. Under the time point in the storyline visualization, top 20 keywords extracted from the document titles or contents based on the selected analytic target in the given time period are shown.

One keyword can be selected by hovering over it, then the bottom box immediately shows all the document titles in which the analytic target contains the keyword. Users can double click the item in the bottom box, then the word cloud, the keywords and the original document content are popped up in a floating window. When the mouse clicks the storyline view window, the floating window disappears.

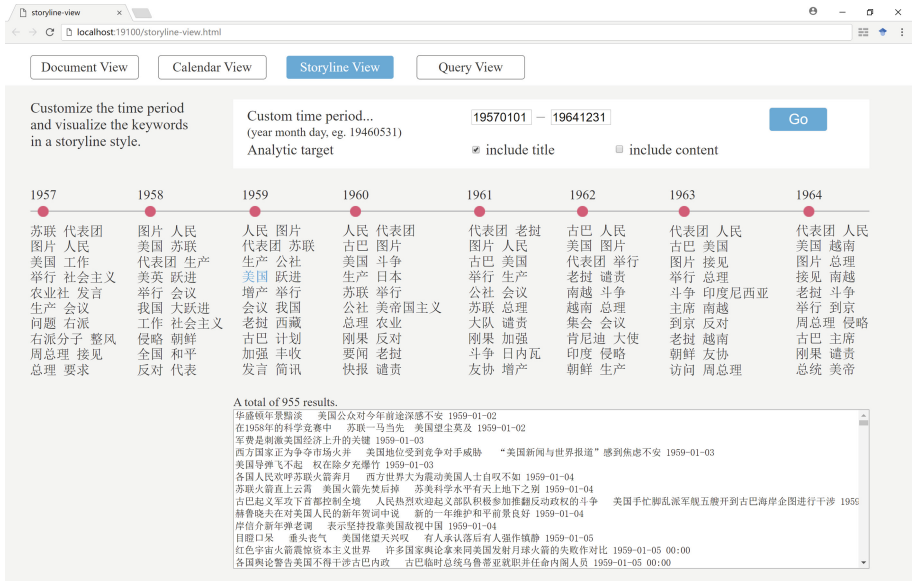


Fig. 3. The storyline view.

For example, in Fig. 3, the time period is set from Jan. 1, 1957 to Dec. 31, 1964. The analytic target only includes titles. The keywords of the eight years are shown in the storyline. The storyline results show the keywords by unit ‘year’ as the visualization scale first based on the selected time period and the space on the interface. Users can zoom in the storyline area to review the details. By hovering over the keyword ‘United States’ under the year 1959, there are a total of 955 documents which contain the keyword. The bottom box shows the titles and published dates of all the 955 documents.

4.5 Query View

The query view, shown in Fig. 4, provides a word-based document search function. The search options contain time period, sort type and search target. The time period can be anytime and custom range. Any time is from May 1946 to December 2003. The search results are sorted by relevance or by date specified by the sort type. The search target sets the search range, including titles or contents. The search result demonstrates the document title, the published date and part of the content. For each result, users can view the original document content by clicking the title whose font color is a little dark blue.

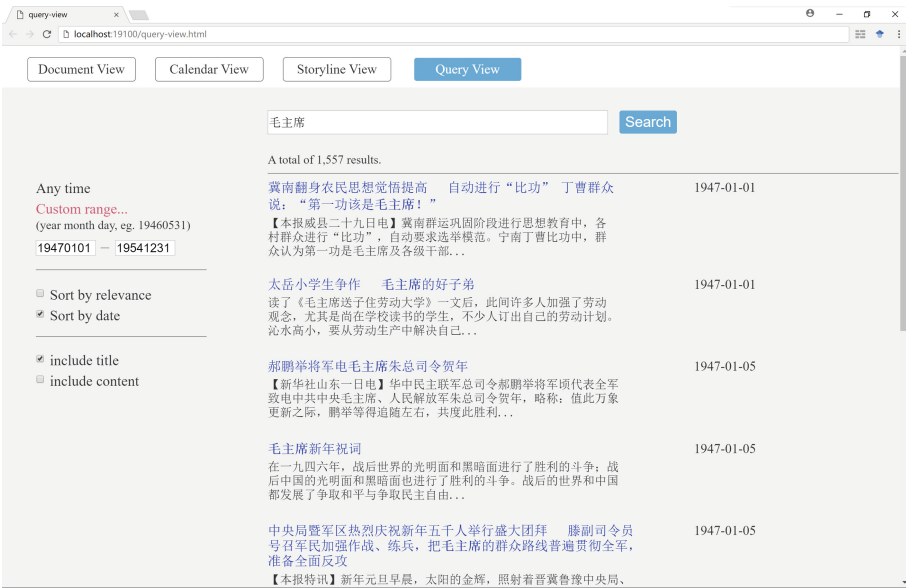


Fig. 4. The query view.

For example, in Fig. 4, the search item is ‘Chairman Mao’, the time period is from Jan. 1, 1947 to Dec. 31, 1954, the search results are sorted by date and the search target only includes titles. There are 1,557 search results, which are listed in the main area of the interface.

5 Experiments

In the experiments, we invited a few teachers and students in China School of History and Civilization to use the system. We just tell them the link of the system and let them to find the interest point. In addition to testing the functionality of the system, we want to test the ease use of the system, so we do not demonstrate the function and operations. Using the proposed system, many CCP and Chinese government policies toward the political, economy, culture and so on from 1946 to 2003 are found.

5.1 Case Study 1: Chinese Economic Policy Analysis

The first case is an example of Chinese economic policy analysis by using the document view of the visualization system.



Fig. 5. The word clouds of two documents. The top one corresponds to the document published in Feb. 2, 1958. The bottom one corresponds to the document published in Nov. 26, 1992.

Two typical documents are chosen. The first one is ‘new problems arising from the great leap forward in agricultural production’ published in Feb. 2, 1958. The second one is ‘the operation of the market mechanism to all parts of the country merchants’ published in Nov. 26, 1992. The word clouds of the two documents are shown in Fig. 5.

From the top word cloud in Fig. 5, we find that the word ‘Agricultural Cooperation’ is the interest point. The Agricultural Cooperation from 1956 to 1958

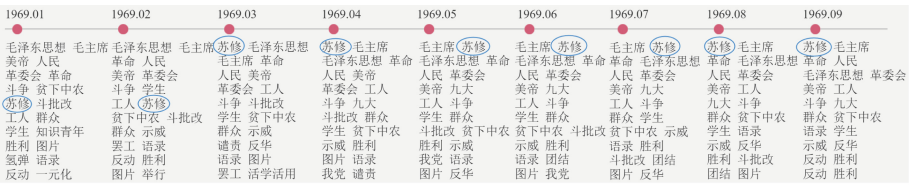
was a part of Chinese socialist system of public ownership and the Planned Economy, in which agricultural lands, machines and other production materials belong to the agricultural collectives. Most of the Agricultural Unions profits is taken away by government. The personal consumption of farms are allocated according to his work.

From the bottom word cloud in Fig. 5, we find that there were many enterprises from the rural areas of China which sought to attract the capital investment in Beijing in 1992. This phenomenon tells us that the rural areas were included into the system of Socialist Market Economy at this time. But, in 1950s there was not any enterprises in the rural areas, because CCP and Chinese government implemented the Agricultural Cooperation Policy and prohibited the Market Economy. So, we can see the changing of CCP and Chinese government in economic policies and the rural areas from 1950s to 1990s by the two documents.

5.2 Case Study 2: Foreign Policy Analysis

The second case is an example of foreign policy analysis by using the storyline view.

From the storyline view, we find the keyword ‘Suxiu’ from January to December of 1969. Figure 6(a) is a screenshot of the storyline from January to September of 1969, users can zoom in and zoom out to switch to different visualization scales. ‘Suxiu’ literally is Soviet Revisionism, which refers to that Nikita Khrushchev criticized Stalins doctrine and put pressure on China in 1960s after he became the Premier of the Soviet Union. Since then, the relationship between Soviet Union and China has deteriorated, and the Socialist Alliance has ruptured. So Soviet Union was called ‘Suxiu’ in People’s Daily in 1960s, by which we can find the change of relationship between Soviet Union and China.



(a) The storyline from January to September of 1969



(b) The storyline from April to December of 1971

Fig. 6. The storylines.

From the storyline view shown in (b) of Fig. 6, we find the keyword 'Pingpong' from April to December in 1971. From April 10 to 17 in 1971, American Pingpong team was invited to China, which was the first official activity between America and China after the establishment of People's Republic of China and considered as symbol of ice breaker. After then, America and China have established the formal diplomatic relation. So we can find the important events of international relations and the change of international relations by the keywords in these storylines.

6 Conclusion

In this paper, we build an interactive visualization system for exploring the text data of People's Daily. First, we download 1,365,802 textual documents in People's Daily from May 1946 to December 2003. Then, we design the visualization system from different aspects through four distinct views. Convenient interactions are combined with these four perspectives to provide a more easy-to-use tool. Finally, experiments verify the usability of the system. By using the system, some history events about the change and development in Chinese society from 1946 to 2003 are shown clearly.

In the future research, more computational linguistics analysis techniques can be applied to the system. For example, the topics of the documents are automatically extracted and analysts can digest the development from different perspectives such as politics, economics, military and culture. Besides, the pictures in these documents can be collected and image processing techniques are adopted to enrich the analysis. All of the above are fruitful fields for future work.

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