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# An exploratory apparel product search interface adopting shopping psychology

**Eriko Koike**[1)] **Takayuki Itoh**[1)] (Member)

1) Ochanomizu University

{aco, itot} at itolab.is.ocha.ac.jp

## Abstract

Many people (especially women) tend to take a long time for shopping. From the results of our preliminary questionnaire, we conclude that many female students look many products to find the best product, while enjoying the shopping processes themselves. This paper presents a user interface for exploratory apparel product search inspired by the questionnaire results. Our study supposes that each product is assigned with a pre-defined keyword, and prepares icons associated to the combination of the keywords. The interface displays various icons in a display space to show the diversity of the products. The icons are generated in the preprocessing. They are designed specific to this study, as the overlay of images representing shapes, colors, and texture patterns of the products. When a user selects an interested icon, the interface switches the display to a set of images corresponding to the selected icon, such that the user can visually compare the similar products. It acts real shopping behavior because we often firstly look over the shops to understand the diversity of products, and then close up the particular groups of the products. The interface also estimates the preferences of users from their selection of icons, and applies an evolutionary computation algorithm which adjusts the selection of icons to their preferences. This paper introduces a user experiment to demonstrate the effectiveness of the presented interface, and discusses how the interface adopts to (especially women's) shopping psychology.

## 1. Introduction

Shopping is fun for many people. They, especially women, tend to take a long time for shopping. Economists mentioned [11] that following are major reasons of such long time for shopping:

[Reason 1:] Requirements of consumers are often ambiguous.

[Reason 2:] Curiosity of consumers is not limited to the target products which they want to buy at the moment. Many customers want to large number of products, not limited to ones they demanded.

[Reason 3:] Customers often want to continue finding their best product taking a long time.

[Reason 4:] Customers often enjoy shopping processes themselves.

We conducted preliminary questionnaire to female university students. We had a question "do you always select particular products to buy before visiting shops?", and 64% of the subjects answered "no". We then had a question "what do you do if you find your favorite products?", and 93% of the subjects answered "I will keep is as a candidate, but still continue to look for better products". We also had a question "what are major purposes of your shopping?", then 71% of the subjects answered "enjoy the shopping time" or 64% answered "refresh". From these results we conclude that many female students look many products to find the best product, while enjoying the shopping processes themselves.

This paper presents an exploratory apparel product shopping interface. Based on our questionnaire results and above mentioned analysis of economists, the presented system aims to satisfy the following three requirements:

[Requirement 1:] It does not always require exact query so that users can enjoy shopping with ambiguous needs.

[Requirement 2:] It firstly shows groups of similar products, and then focuses to individual products in the selected groups, as users often look over the inside of the shops first and then focuses to particular products while the real shopping.

[Requirement 3:] It repeats to display preferable numbers of various product categories reflecting the behavior of users' browsing processes, such that users can be interested in various products after looking at large number of products.

The system firstly displays various icons representing a certain combination of categories. The icons are generated in the preprocessing. They are designed specific to this study, as the overlay of images which represent shapes, colors, and texture patterns of the products. When a user selects an interested icon, the system displays images of individual products. Users can press "prefer" or "delete" buttons to input their preferences to particular products. They can display a set of preferred products so that they can decide which products to finally purchase. Users can also replace a set of icons to be displayed by pressing "renew" button. The system adequately selects a set of icons to be displayed in the next stage by applying an interactive evolutionary computation algorithm to reflect behavior of users. Users can freely look at various products based on their preferences or curious without making explicit queries. This system realizes "Exploratory Search" [17] which supports interactive search processes for users who have ambiguous requirements on shopping.

We already presented the processing flow of the presented system at an international conference as a short paper [19]. We provide additional figures, references and evaluation results in this paper. We also discuss the adaptation of this interface to women's shopping psychology [11].

## 2. Related Work

Various issues on on-line commerce business have been discussed as a result of recent evolution, and actually several survey papers on these issues have been published. For example, one of the survey papers [18] mentions that "personalization" and "positive experience" are important issues. On the other hand, development of on-line commerce systems based on women's shopping behavior or psychology has not been significantly discussed. Our study presented in this paper addresses these issues.

Recommendation is an important and effective technique for electric commerce and contents viewing. Collaborative filtering [1,9] is one of the most famous and commercially successful recommendation techniques. We agree that collaborative filtering would work well for apparel shopping or several other kinds of commerce rather than content- or knowledge-based recommendation techniques. However, it is doubtful for us that such recommendation systems are always satisfactory for apparel shopping. One reason is that lifecycle of apparel products tends to be short, and therefore cold start systems such as collaborative filtering do not always work well. Another reason is that customers may not want the systems to recommend the apparel products which were already recommended to other similar customers including their friends. Consequently, we concluded to develop a more visual and interactive system so that users can enjoy a long time for shopping, and the system can gradually learn preferences of the users while their enjoyable time.

Interactive evolutionary computing is an effective technique to quickly learn preferences of the users and reuse the acquired knowledge to various applications. For example, interactive genetic algorithm has been applied to online-shopping [7], collaborative filtering [3] and music recommendation [12]. On the other hand, in this study we preferred to apply the relevance feedback [17] with Rocchio's algorithm [13], because we expect this algorithm continuously recommends slightly different sets of apparel products over and over. We expect this behavior look similar to that we often look similar products over and over in our real shopping.

Icon synthesis is an important portion in this research, because we expect users enjoy shopping while selecting their interested icons. There have been several techniques for semantics-based icon synthesis [14] and feature-based icon synthesis [6]. Our icon creation policy is quite similar to [14]; however, it is more specific to product

keyword representation.

Rectangle placement problem is important for information visualization. Various visualization techniques actually applies rectangle packing, including tree visualization [5], graph visualization [10], and label placement [2]. The technique we applied for the icon layout [4] has been originally developed for graph visualization; it also has preferable properties for our design of icon layout.

## 3. Presented System

This section describes overview and processing flow of the presented technique. The technique firstly displays a set of icons as shown in Figure 1. Here, the icons represent certain combinations of keywords related to appearance and categories of products. Users can interchange the set of icons to be displayed by pressing "renew" button. Repetitively displaying the sets of adequate numbers of icons, users can enjoy the search of their preferable products, as they enjoy real shopping by looking at many products over and over.

We prefer to show icons rather than real product photographs in the initial display. This design policy relates to [Reason 1]. We aimed to stimulate abstract interests to particular product categories, not particular products themselves, in the initial display. It is especially effective when requirements of users are ambiguous and therefore abstract interfaces are more effective. It also relates to [Reason 4] because cute or funny icon design may stimulate enjoyableness of the users.

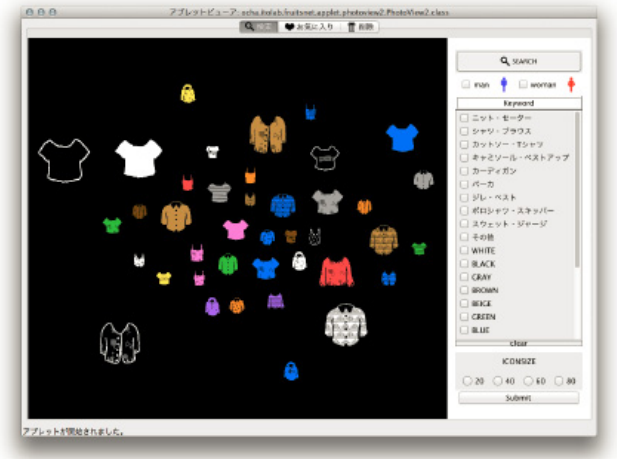

**Figure 1. Snapshot of our interface featuring icon display.**

Here, we suppose the combination of the above mentioned various keywords are also assigned to the all products. Our implementation divides all products into a certain number of groups according to the combinations of keywords, and associates icons to the product groups one-by-one. When a user clicks one of the icons, the technique switches to display images of individual products belonged to the particular group corresponding to the clicked icons, as shown in Figure 2. Users can focus to each of the images, and press "prefer" or "delete" button for the particular products.

The technique supports two display modes: "icon display mode" for overview of the variety of product groups shown in Figure 1, and "product display mode" focusing on particular groups shown in Figure 2. This policy is analogous to real shopping: we often look over the interior of shops to feel diversity of the products, and then focus on particular groups of products to compare the similarity. Figure 3 illustrates this mechanism. This design policy also satisfies [Requirement 1] and [Requirement 2] described in Section 1.

**Figure 2. Display of products corresponding to the selected icon.**


**Figure 3. Diversity and similarity of products in a shop.**

### 3.1 Icon creation

We suppose owners of this system prepare a set of icon images representing the combinations of predefined keywords. Figure 4 shows an example of icon creation process. The icon in this figure represents the combination of keywords, "T-shirt", "red", and "dot". This design policy brings unified impression through the application, and intuitive understanding of product groups corresponding to the combinations of the keywords. We suppose that keywords are defined mainly based on shapes, colors, and texture patterns of the products,

because many customers of apparel products mainly select the products based on their visual design.

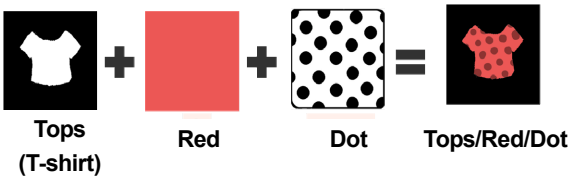


**Figure 4. Example of icon creation.**

## 3.2 Icon layout

This technique displays adequate number of icons in a display space as shown in Figure 1, where the icons are selected by an evolutionary computation algorithm described in Section 3.4. We expect users can be interested in wide range of products by looking at the variety of icons. On the other hand, we need to keep the number of displayed icons appropriately, because users may be confused or dithered if too many icons are displayed at the same time.

Our implementation represents the numbers of products corresponding to the icons by their sizes. Users can intuitively understand how many products are prepared in each of the product groups corresponding to the icons.

Here, we suppose the following three conditions for the naturally looking icon layout results:

1) Place similarly looking icons closer.
2) Optimize display space utility. (=Yield less gaps.)
3) Yield no overlaps among the icons.

Here, layout satisfying 1) is especially effective when users want to visually compare similar product categories. Meanwhile, conditions 2) and 3) are effective when users want to access to product categories as many as possible. Also, the condition 2) makes easier to satisfy [Requirement 3] described in Section 1 because the number of displayed icons can be controlled by optimization of display space utility.

To satisfy the above conditions for icon layout, our implementation applies a hybrid force-directed and space-filling algorithm [4], originally developed for graph visualization. The former part of the algorithm connects icons which common keywords are assigned by edges, and supposes attractive forces to the edges. It also supposes repulsive forces among icons which are not connected by the edges. As a result of iterative force calculation, similarly looking icons are closely placed in the display space. The latter part of the algorithm applies a rectangle packing technique so that display space utility is optimized while icons do not overlap each other.

## 3.3 User Interface

Our implementation features the following user interface widgets. Figure 5 shows a processing flow with the widgets.

[Selection of the number of icons:] We featured a menu to select the number of icons to be displayed.

[Selection of keywords:] The right side of the window shown in Figures 1 and 2 features a set of checkboxes to select various attributes including gender of the user, type, price, size, and category of the products. Evolutionary computation algorithm described in Section 3.4 selects icons matched to the user-selected keywords. If the user selects no keywords, the algorithm selects icons to be displayed from the every icons. Even if the user does not have any specific target products and therefore does not press any checkboxes, he/she can enjoy the shopping because the system shows arbitrary sets of the icons.

[Icon selection and product display:] When a user clicks a particular icon by pressing the left button of the mouse, the system displays a set of products in the group corresponding to the clicked icon, as shown in Figure 2. The user can return to the icon display by pressing "return" button featured at the top of the Figure 2.

["Prefer" and "Delete" buttons:] While displaying a set of icons as shown in Figure 1, users can select particular icons by pointing the cursor and pressing the right button of the mouse. Similarly, users can select particular products while displaying them as shown in Figure 2. Then, the system shows a small dialog window featuring "prefer" and "delete" buttons. When the user presses the "prefer" button, the icons those assigned keywords are similar to the selected products are preferentially displayed later. On the other hand, when the user presses the "delete" button, the icons those assigned keywords are similar to the selected products are not often displayed later. These buttons contribute to satisfy [Reason 3] because this mechanism makes easier to continue shopping while focusing on preferable product categories.

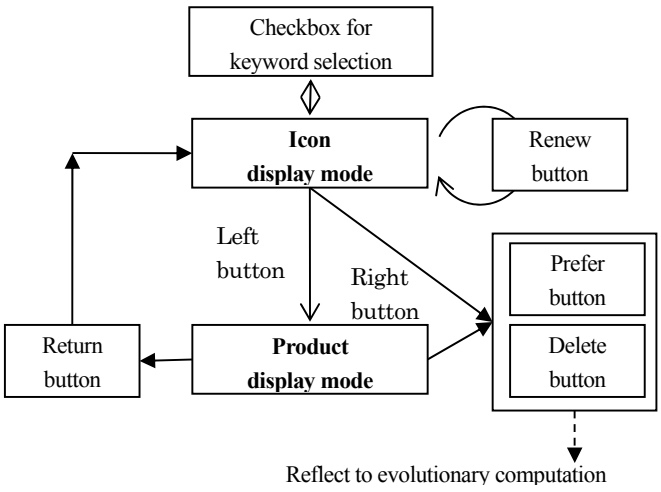


**Figure 5. Processing flow with user interface widgets.**

## 3.4 Icon selection algorithm

This system selectively displays a set of icons when a user presses "renew" button, as above mentioned. The displayed icons are automatically selected by the following algorithm. If a user has certain preferences to purchase items, the algorithm mainly selects the user-preferred icons while intensively selecting several other icons so

that users can be interested in other kinds of items. Meanwhile, the algorithm gradually learns preferences of users while displaying variety of icons, because users may confuse if icons are too randomly selected. Our technique applies an interactive evolutionary computation algorithm to select preferable sets of icons. This section calls previously displayed icons "seed icons", and selected icons to be displayed "derived icons". Moreover, this section formalizes the algorithm with the following variables:

- $n$ : Number of keywords.
- $m$ : Number of icons to be displayed simultaneously.
- $\mathbf{d} = \{d_1, ..., d_n\}$ : $n$-dimensional vector consisting of binary values representing the assignment of the keywords for a product. Here, $d_x = 1$ if the $x$-th keyword is assigned, otherwise $d_x = 0$.
- $\mathbf{e} = \{e_1, ..., e_n\}$ : $n$-dimensional vector consisting of binary values representing the assignment of the keywords for an icon. Here, $e_x = 1$ if the $x$-th keyword is assigned, otherwise $e_x = 0$.
- $\mathbf{q} = \{q_1, ..., q_n\}$ : $n$-dimensional vector representing the preference of a user for each keyword. This section calls this value "preference vector". Here, $\mathbf{q}_i$ denotes the value of the preference vector **q** when a user pressed "renew" button $i$ times.
- **A**: The set of icons currently displayed.
- **S**: The set of preferentially displayed icons.
- **C**: The set of seed icons.

The processing flow for the icon selection is described below. Here, Steps 1 to 6 are executed when a user presses "renew" button.

**Step 0:** Initialize the preference vector $\mathbf{q}_0$ by the following procedure.

- Reset values of $\mathbf{q}_0$ as 0 if it is for the first time for the user to use this system.
- Inherit the previous values if the user has a history of using this system.

**Step 1:** Let the set of seed icons **C** and icons currently displayed **A** empty.

If the user selected particular keywords: The system firstly select $m/3$ icons, and insert the selected icons to **S**. Also, the system add pre-defined values to the particular dimensions corresponding to the user-selected keywords of the preference vector **q.**

Selection of the icons to be registered in **A**:

- If $m_s$, the number of icons registered in **S** is smaller than $m$, the system registers all the icons in **S** to **A**. Then, the system randomly selects ($m$-$m_s$) icons and registers to **A**, such that the number of icons in **A** gets $m$.
- If $m_s$ is equal to $m$ or larger than $m$, the system randomly extracts $m$ icons from **S** and registers them to **A**.

**Step 2:** Display the icons registered in **A**. Users can freely click the icons, look at the groups of products corresponding to the clicked icons, and press "preferred" or "deleted" buttons for the displayed products.

**Step 3:** The system applies Rocchio's algorithm [13] which are originally applied for Relevance feedback. It renews the value of the preference vector $\mathbf{q}_i$ by applying the following equation, where $i$ denotes how many times the user pressed "renew" button.

$$\mathbf{q}_i = \mathbf{q}_{i-1} + \sum_{\mathbf{d}^+ \in D_i^+} \mathbf{d}^+ - \sum_{\mathbf{d}^- \in D_i^-} \mathbf{d}^- + \alpha \sum_{\mathbf{e}^+ \in E_i^+} \mathbf{e}^+$$

$D^+{}_i$ : Set of products which the user pressed "preferred" button after the user pressed "renew" button $i$ times.

$D^-{}_i$ : Set of products which the user pressed "deleted" button after the user pressed "renew" button $i$ times.

$E^+{}_i$ : Set of displayed after the user pressed "renew" button $i$ times.

$\alpha$ : Constant value ( $\alpha < 1.0$ )

The system preferentially selects the icons which similar sets of keywords are assigned as the products the user pressed "preferred" button, by renewing $\mathbf{q}_i$ by the following equation. Conversely, the system does not willingly selects the icons which similar sets of keywords are assigned as the products the user pressed "deleted" button.

**Step 4:** Insert the icons, those assigned keywords are entirely same as the products which user pressed "preferred" button, to the set of seed icons **C**.

**Step 5:** Specify $n_s$, the number of icons derived from a seed icon registered in **C**. Our current implementation specifies $n_s$ as a constant number proportional to the number of currently displayed icons in **A**.

**Step 6:** Execute the following procedure for each seed icon $c \in C$.

(1) Copy the $e_x$ value of $c$, and collect the set of keywords those corresponding values $e_x$ for $c$ is zero.

(2) Select the $y$-th keyword from the set of keywords collected in (1), and let $e_y = 1$. Here, let the possibility to select the $y$-th keyword as proportional to the corresponding value of the preference vector $q_y$. Then, let the values $e_z$ zero, if the $z$-th keyword or the $y$-th keyword selected in (1) is exclusively assigned to the icons.

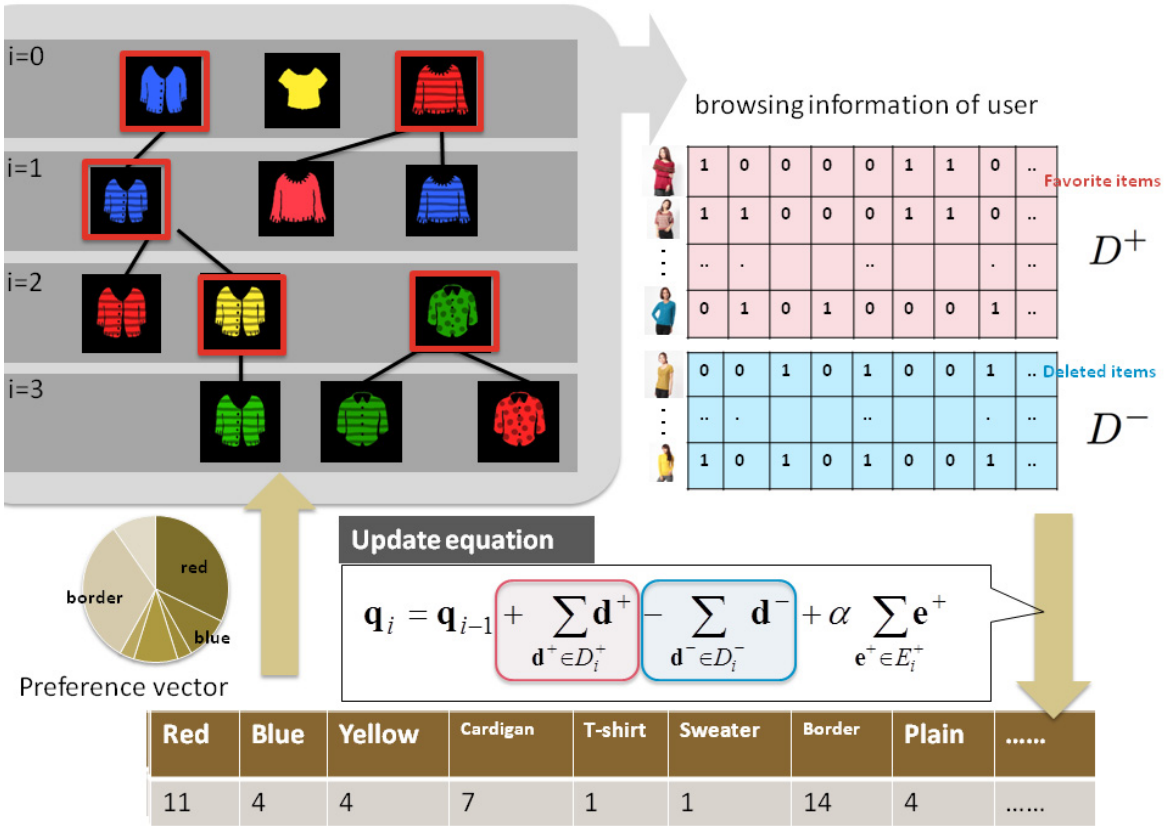


**Figure 6. Evolutional computation for icon selection.**

(3) Specify the icon corresponding to $e_z$ values specified in (2). This process specifies an icon which one of those assigned keywords is different from c. Register the specified icon to the set of derived icons S.

(4) Repeat (2) to (3) $n_s$ times, for each derived icon in **S**.

(5) Repeat (1) to (4) for each seed icon in **C**.

Figure 6 shows the overview of the presented icon selection algorithm. In the upper-left portion of Figure 6, icons bordered in red denote the seed icons, and icons in $i$=$k$+1, connected from the seed icons in $i$=$k$, denote the derived icons.

This algorithm preferentially selects icons those assigned keywords are common with the products which user pressed "prefer" button. This system repeats the selection of the next icons as the repetition of evolutionary computation processes. This process selects icons those one of the assigned keywords are different from currently displayed icons. This mechanism is close to the feeling of real shopping, because usually apparel shops arrange similar products closely. We continuously look at similar products which have different colors or textures in apparel shops. We expect this mechanism brings users the feeling close to the real shopping. The algorithm also contributes to satisfy [Reason 3] because this mechanism makes easier to continue shopping while focusing on preferable product categories.

On the other hand, this system often mixes small number of randomly selected icons, if $m_s$ is smaller than $m$ in Step 1. Keywords of the randomly selected icons are not always quite common with the keywords of the products which the user pressed "prefer" button. This mechanism contributes to mainly show users' preferred groups of products, while sometimes show wide variety of other types of products. We expect this mechanism makes users to satisfy their capricious curiosity to the variety of products, without losing their ambiguous preferences or targets.

## 4. Experiment

This section introduces our user experiments which demonstrate the effectiveness of the presented system. All participants of the experiments were female university students.

### 4.1 Effectiveness of user interfaces

We asked the participants to browse the presented system and an existing EC (electric commerce) Web site for 15 minutes respectively.

We did not specify any purposes of the test to the participants; we asked them to browse products as they preferred. We recorded their accesses, and counted the numbers of the browsed products. Also, we asked them to comment how they felt during the browsing of products. Section 4.3 introduces comments of the participants.

We aimed to design the user interface to make users browse large number of products, based on [Reason 2] in the first paragraph of Section 1. Therefore, we counted the numbers of products browsed by ten participants. Figure 7 shows the result where the x-axis denotes the number of browsed products, and the y-axis denotes the names of participants (described as A to J). This result denotes that many participants (especially A, E, F and I) browsed significantly larger number of products while using our system rather than using the existing Web site, as we aimed to develop the system so that users can enjoy to look at many products.

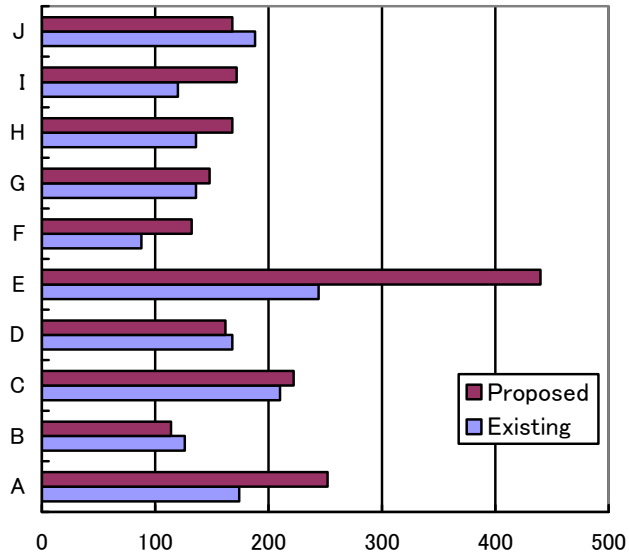


**Figure 7. Numbers of browsed products by the participants.**

We also counted the numbers of keywords assigned to at least one of the products which the participants pressed "prefer" button. Here, we aimed to design the user interface to make users browse variety of products without querying with specific keywords. Therefore we divided the numbers of keywords assigned to the preferred products by the number of keyword-related operations. Figure 8 shows the result, where the y-axis denotes the names of participants similar to Figure 7. This result denotes that the participants are interested in more variety of products while using the presented system rather than using the existing Web site.

Here, several participants (especially A and E) had great differences of results between proposed and existing systems in Figures 7 and 8. We suppose such differences can be observed when the purpose of product browsing is really ambiguous. In such situation, it may be difficult to query products with appropriate keywords while using the existing systems. On the other hand, the proposed system can show variety of product categories even if the targets of the users are ambiguous and therefore it is difficult to specify appropriate keywords. We suppose our system is especially effective in such cases.

Though this result demonstrates the effectiveness of the presented system that users were interested in variety of products, we need to discuss that the result might depend on preferences of icon design of the participants. We heard that several participants clicked particular icons because they felt these were cute. On the other hand, several participants skipped to click particular icons because they did not prefer colors of them. We found that icon design was an important factor for the effectiveness of the presented system, and needed to discuss how to customize the icon design based on preferences of users.

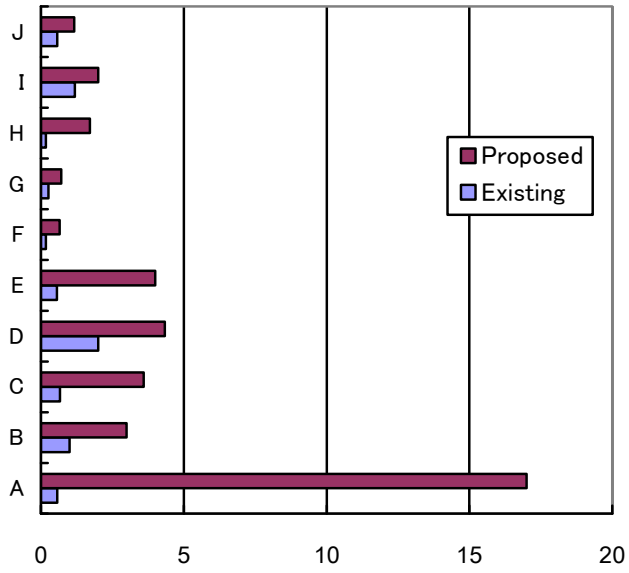


**Figure 8. Numbers of keywords assigned to at least one of the products which the participants pressed "prefer" button, divided by the number of keyword-related operations.**

## 4.2 Effectiveness of icon selection algorithm

Next, we prepared two versions of the presented system. One of them (version A) featured the icon selection algorithm as presented in this paper. The other (version B) featured a random icon selection mechanism. We evaluated if the presented icon selection algorithm worked as we expected to mainly show users' preferred products, while sometimes show wide variety of other types of products.

In this experiment we focused how participants were interested in products corresponding to the randomly selected icons, not the total number of preferred products, while playing with the presented system. Also, we focused how they found larger number of preferred products if they did not have any particular target products.

Experiment supposing particular targets.

We asked the participants to play with the two versions of the

presented system for 15 minutes respectively, after selecting several keywords. Also, we asked them to comment how they felt during the browsing of products.

Tables 1 and 2 shows the results of the five participants. In the tables, "person" denotes IDs of the participants, "renew" denotes the frequency of pressing "renew" button, "assigned" denotes the number of products which user-selected keywords are assigned and the participant pressed "prefer" button, and "other" denotes the number of products which no user-selected keywords are assigned and the participant pressed "prefer" button. This result denotes all the participants were interested in the products which no user-selected keywords were assigned, and pressed "prefer" button with some of the products, while playing with the version A. From this result, it is effective to display icons which no user-selected keywords are assigned, because the users may be interested in such unexpected products. On the other hand, the participant E pressed "prefer" button for five products which no user-selected keywords were assigned while using the version B. We need to discuss why our icon selection algorithm was not very effective for the participant E comparing with the random icon selection.

**Table 1 Frequency of renew and number of preferred products while using the version A of the presented system.**

| person | renew | assigned | other |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 3 | 6 | 3 |
| B | 1 | 12 | 2 |
| C | 2 | 12 | 1 |
| D | 3 | 21 | 3 |
| E | 5 | 3 | 4 |

**Table 2 Frequency of renew and number of preferred products while using the version B of the presented system.**

| person | renew | assigned | other |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| B | 1 | 17 | 0 |
| C | 2 | 10 | 0 |
| D | 4 | 18 | 0 |
| E | 6 | 7 | 5 |

Experiment without supposing particular targets.

We also asked the participants to play with the two versions of the presented system without selecting any keywords. Here, it is difficult for the presented system to precisely select user-preferred icons in a short experimental test without selecting any keywords, because this system is based on a cold start algorithm. Therefore, we asked them to firstly play with the two versions for 15 minutes. We recorded the preference vector $\mathbf{q}$, and then asked them to play with the two versions for 15 minutes again. The system loaded the preference vector when the participants started playing with it again.

We counted the numbers of products which the participants pressed "prefer" button. Figure 9 shows the ratio between the numbers of products which ten participants pressed "prefer" button and the numbers of browsed products, where the y-axis denotes the names of participants similar to Figures 7 and 8. This figure denotes that eight of the participants archived the larger ratios while using the version A. It demonstrates that users can find larger number of preferable products while applying the presented icon selection algorithm, even if users do not have particular target products and therefore they do not select any keywords.

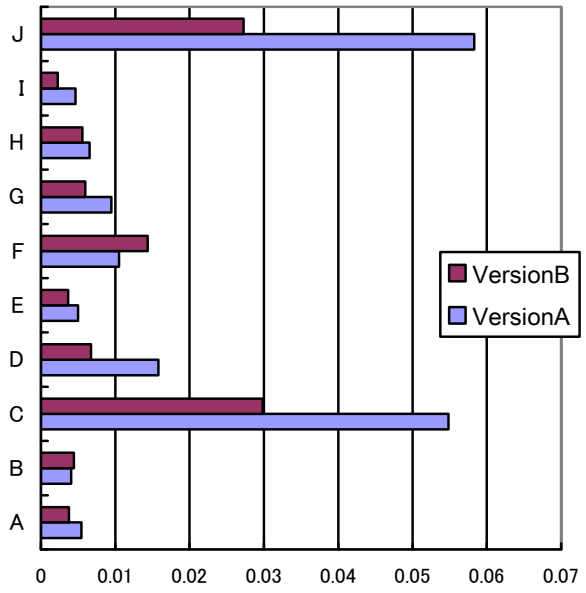


**Figure 9. Ratio of numbers of products which "prefer" button was pressed by the participants.**

## 4.3 Feedback

Several participants mentioned that they felt "I liked these products though I did not expect such ones", or "I was going to miss such attractive products" during the experiments. They enjoyed the unexpected discoveries and satisfactions while using the presented system. Or, another participant mentioned her experience that she firstly browsed green products based on her curiosity and then confirmed that she did not want the green ones. The presented system enables such behavior easier.

After the experiment introduced in Section 4.2, we received many positive comments for the version A. Many participants mentioned "I was not tired by this system because it suggested variety of products" or "the system motivated me to browse products we usually did not focus on." On the other hand, a participant mentioned "I was surprised because several icons I did not prefer were displayed". We would like to solve this problem by developing additional indication which suggests users to browse products corresponding to the icons selected by the algorithm which no user-selected keywords are assigned.

### 4.4 Discussion with Shopping Psychology

Our original motivation for this research was to satisfy the psychology of women's shopping activities. There have been many publications on women's shopping activities [6,11,15,16]. We especially remarked the conclusions described in [11] regarding characteristics of women's shopping, summarized as [Reason 1] to [Reason 4] introduced in Section 1.

The presented system aims to satisfy [Reason 1] and [Reason 2] by displaying various icons associated to various products in a single display space, and [Reason 3] by providing an interface to iteratively display sets of icons and select interested ones. We received many positive feedback from participants of the user experiments that they enjoyed to use this system, which corresponding to [Reason 4].

The reference [11] also mentions the following women's preferences:

[Reason 5] Many women tend to select products according to abstract imaginations rather than detailed pictures or specifications.

[Reason 6] Many women tend to prefer wide and planar designs rather than depth-effective 3D designs.

Our interface firstly shows abstract icons, not real pictures, which are expected to stimulate abstract imaginations, in a 2D display space. This design policy is close to [Reason 5] and [Reason 6].

The system presented in this paper does not limit the customers only to women; however, we expect the system is especially preferred by women based on the above discussion.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper presented an interactive exploratory search system featuring a relevance feedback algorithm, and its implementation for apparel shopping. Our study is inspired by the research of the psychology and behavior of women's shopping. The presented system firstly displays a variety of icons corresponding to the groups of similar apparel products, so that users can keep wide range of interests. It then displays the photographs of the products associated with the icons selected by the users. This two-step user interface is analogous to diversity and similarity of the products in a shop. This representation is close to our real shopping: we often look over the shops to understand the diversity of the products, and then close up to particular groups of similar products to narrow down the products we want to purchase. Moreover, the system automatically selects the icons to be displayed in the next stage, by applying a relevance feedback algorithm reflecting the behavior of users. Consequently, the system mainly suggests groups of products based on users' preferences, while it sometimes suggests other kinds of products to satisfy the capricious curiosity of the users. We also expect users can enjoy a long time to select their favorite products while the system quickly learn their preferences to solve the cold start problem of the recommendation systems.

This paper introduced experiences with female participants and apparel shopping, but the presented mechanism is not limited to female users and apparel products. We would like to have more experiences with male participants and other kinds of products.

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**小池 恵里子**

2013 年お茶の水女子大学理学部情報科学科卒業．2015 年お茶の水女子大学大学院人間文化創成科学研究科理学専攻情報科学コース博士前期課程修了．インタラクションと推薦アルゴリズムに興味をもつ．

**伊藤 貴之**

1990 年早稲田大学理工学部電子通信学科卒業．1992 年早稲田大学大学院理工学研究科電気工学専攻修士課程修了. 同年日本アイ・ビー・エム(株)入社．1997 年博士(工学)．2000 年米国カーネギーメロン大学客員研究員．2003年から2005年まで京都大学大学院情報学研究科COE研究員（客員助教授担当）．2005 年日本アイ・ビー・エム(株) 退職，お茶の水女子大学理学部情報科学科助教授．2011 年同大学教授，同大学シミュレーション科学教育研究センター長，ACM, IEEE Computer Society, 芸術科学会，他会員．