Web of lies? Historical knowledge on the Internet

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Abstract

Scholars in history (as well as other fields in the humanities) have generally taken a dim view of the state of knowledge on the Web, pointing to the many inaccuracies on Web pages written by amateurs. A new software agent called H-Bot scans the Web for historical facts, and shows how the Web may indeed include many such inaccuracies—while at the same time being extremely accurate when assessed as a whole through statistical means that are alien to the discipline of history. These mathematical methods and other algorithms drawn from the computational sciences also suggest new techniques for historical research and new approaches to teaching history in an age in which an increasingly significant portion of the past has been digitized.

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The internet has become a cultural, economical and life changing technological phenomenon. Enough can not be said about this incredible technology. However, the internet is not one single invention; it is a simple idea that has evolved throughout the decades into something bigger than us all. While the internet was. For instance during this 10 year period, the internet grew from about 150 computer hosts on the net to a staggering 200,000 computers by the end of 1989. As the internet took off, the technology and potential known as the internet was finally being fulfilled. The Early 1980's. Scholars in history (as well as other fields in the humanities) have generally taken a dim view of the state of knowledge on the Web, pointing to the many inaccuracies on Web pages written by amateurs. A new software agent called H-Bot scans the Web for historical facts, and shows how the Web may indeed include many such inaccuracies—while at the same time being extremely accurate when assessed as a whole through statistical means that are alien to the discipline of history. These mathematical methods and other algorithms drawn from the computational sciences also suggest new techniques for hi...