CATI: An Active Learning System for Event Detection on Mibroblogs' Large Datasets

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Abstract: Today, there are plenty of tools and techniques to perform text- or image-based classification of large datasets, targeting different levels of user expertise and abstraction. Specialists usually collaborate in projects by creating ground truth datasets and do not always have deep knowledge in Information Retrieval. This article presents a full platform for assisted binary classification of very large textual and text and image composed documents. Our goal is to enable human users to classify collections of several hundred thousand documents in an assisted way, within a humanly acceptable number of clicks. We propose a graphical user interface, based on several classification assistants: text- and image-based event detection, Active Learning (AL), search engine and rich visual metaphors to visualize the results. We also propose a novel query strategy in the context of Active Learning, considering the top unlabeled bi-grams and duplicated (e.g. re-tweeted) content in the target corpus to classify. These contributions are supported not only by a tool whose code is freely accessible but also by an evaluation of the impact of using the aforementioned methods on the number of clicks needed to reach a stable level of accuracy.

1 INTRODUCTION

Classifying documents is the well-known process of assigning one or multiple categories to documents according to their content (which may be of diverse nature, e.g. textual, visual, multimedia). There are plenty of tools and techniques to perform such classification -especially when dealing with large dataconceived within a wide range of levels of abstraction. There are very flexible and low-level frameworks and libraries to create classification solutions, like Mallet (McCallum, 2002), Apache openNLP¹, GENSIM (Řehůřek and Sojka, 2011), spaCy (Honnibal and Montani, 2017) or NLTK (Hardeniya et al., 2016), to be used with well-known languages like R, Python or Java. These solutions are nevertheless only for those who have some background in software development or who are willing to go first through a learning stage, which may turn out time-consuming.

Moreover, whereas users without knowledge in

^c https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0445-6905 ¹ https://opennlp.apache.org have a technological background but a deep understanding of the domain problem to solve, NLP experts usually need help from such domain specialists when building ground truth training corpora, for instance, when annotating clinical documents (Gobbel Dr et al., 2014). This need can be also be justified by projects like IDENUM², which integrates the interests of partners from the industry and the academia, the Social and the Computer Sciences, to generate tools for analyzing the use of urban digital data to describe and characterize documentation and archiving practices of an urban territory. The challenge, then, is to provide the means to overcome the gap between domain experts and data scientists.

Natural Language Processing (NLP) may not always

Generically speaking, there are user-centered tools that let end users –people who do not necessarily know about software development– to build their own solutions through mechanisms with a high level of abstraction and allowing them to be independent of a developer. This kind of tools allows users to handle their data in different ways, providing them the freedom to

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choose among different functionalities they can apply to the data or different values for their parameters. This is what Lieberman (Lieberman et al., 2006) calls Parameterization.

There are different Parametrization applications facilitating data scientists the classification and annotation of large document collections (see Section 3). However, very few empower users to build their own classified corpora in the domain of microblogs targetting events, by categorizing the documents using an event detection process based on textual and visual content, and their results may not always match a big amount of documents in the dataset. For instance, with MABED (Guille and Favre, 2014) the users can detect events based on textual features, but they must specify how many events the algorithm should be intended to detect, which may not cover the full amount of events and documents and it is hard to determine when having little information about a large -and probably unknown- dataset. In contexts like this, annotating the remaining documents can be expensive.

The general task of annotating big datasets might be expensive and time-consuming to perform for a human in a non-assisted way, and sometimes there is no training set to train a model and automatically classify the data, or there is one but the available labels are scarce. Fortunately, there is a sub-field of artificial intelligence and machine learning aimed at building classifiers through incremental enhancements and requiring only minimal supervision; it is called Active Learning (AL) (Settles, 2009). It can start from scratch by selecting the "N" most informative instances (usually called sample queries) from a fully unclassified dataset and asking an oracle (an entity, usually a human) to label them with a category, moving these labeled instances into the training set, after the first set of labeling, a first classification model is trained. The full process is repeated until a stopping criterion is met (e.g. max number of iterations or labeled data, exhausted labeling budget, etc.). This way, assisting users to carry out a classification can be beneficial. And it is even if the initial classified data is imbalanced. In this sense, Miller et al. (Miller et al., 2018) demonstrated that Active Learning with an Uncertainty Sampling strategy performs better in such conditions.

In this work, we propose:

- A system assisting users (with no or little knowledge in data science and classification) in the construction of an annotated corpus, while trying to minimize the user efforts
- An interactive visual interface to conduct the AL based assisted classification.
- A preliminary study comparing two query selec-

tion strategies for AL, one of which is a slight variation of the Uncertainty Sampling method adapted to microblogging: it considers top content duplication (e.g. re-tweets) and the presence of top bi-grams. The goal is to minimize the required number of clicks to classify the dataset.

This article is organized as follows: Section 2 introduces our approach, the event detection methods used, the AL model we adopted, and our supporting tool; Section 3 presents the state-of-the-art; Section 4 reports a study on the use of our tool; and Section 5 presents the conclusions and perspectives of our work.

2 OUR APPROACH

This work aims to provide end users with the means to produce a classified data set from a corpus of timestamped documents, eventually accompanied with images. To do so, we propose a pipeline of methods to classify the documents in 3 stages. Fig.1 shows an overview of the proposed method. The first phase comprises identifying an initial subset of documents with which the user feels confident to annotate. This can be carried out in different ways. For example, a simple way would be to carry out two searches: one with a word closely related and another very little related to the event the user is intended to identify in the dataset. Another way could be using an eventdetection method and use textual, time and image features if available (Firas Odeh, 2018), to get a list of event-related clusters, or event-related image clusters. The second phase consists in annotating the subsets of the previous stage, generating an initial classification of the documents (with very light user intervention) based on the pre-processed features (detected events, image clusters, query results). As the classified documents usually represent a small part of the dataset, the third phase assists the user through AL in the classification of the remaining documents.



Figure 1: Overall flow of the proposed pipeline.

We call our system "CATI" (Classification Assistée de Textes et Images) and it is available online, as well as its documentation and demonstration videos ³. It uses methods described in (Guille and

³CATI's documentation, videos and source code: https://bitbucket.org/idenum/cati/wiki/Home

Favre, 2014) and (Firas Odeh, 2018). It is important to note that we tested the system on tweets, but it can be used on any time-stamped text documents that eventually have associated images, like news articles. Although the evaluation of this article describes the methods and modules of the system that allow carrying out an initial classification through event detection, the classification strategy can vary and it represents an extension point. For example, if you want to classify documents based on certain keywords that express certain emotions (happiness, hate, etc.), the platform is currently endowed with a search module supporting features such as search by n-grams, image clusters and duplicated content (e.g. re-tweets). The current experiments were carried out on classification criteria that are well suited for event and image-based initial classification. Using the search engine and ngram based extensions enable the creation of the initial classification sets for other types of binary clustering criteria as well.

2.1 Phase 1: Preprocessing Methods

In this stage of the pipeline, we propose obtaining quickly subsets of documents that will be later classified as positive or negative. Since the objective is to have an initial classification, there must be both positive and negative documents.

One strategy is through event detection. In fact, in this regard, we used two methods that were evaluated with tweets (Guille and Favre, 2014; Firas Odeh, 2018); while the first focuses on a classification based on textual features and uses anomaly detection on word frequency to extract events, the latter also relies on image similarity among the ones associated with different tweets. MABED++(Firas Odeh, 2018) improves MABED (Guille and Favre, 2014) in two aspects: it considers the images associated to the tweets during the event detection process using a very fast almost identical image search method (Gaillard and Egyed-Zsigmond, 2017) and it enables to retrieve documents (tweets) related to a detected event. Such events are a possible target for our initial classification. An example of one of these events is presented in Fig.2-a. MABED++ also clusters the tweets with images based on the image content. This is to say that for each event cluster, there are sub-clusters of images that the users may also use as the initial classification. Fig.2-b presents one of these image clusters in our platform.

Other strategies could be achieved by using the functionalities associated to our search form: each time the user searches for some keywords, the platform not only presents the individual documents that match the search criteria but also some extra sections that try to provide more insights on the data set and enable the classification with one click of large document subsets:

- N-grams. It is possible to visualize a pie-cloud with the top n-grams ranking. Each cake presents an n-gram and is divided according to the percentage of documents labeled as positive, negative or unclassified (as in Fig.2-d). By clicking on each bi-gram, the user can access and classify all its related documents. It is also possible to filter the n-grams under a certain category, and the end user could make use of such feature to request just those that remain to classify.
- **Image Clusters.** A second section presents the image clusters detected with MABED++. But in this case, we are not presenting them in relation to an event but to a specific search criteria.
- **Duplicated Content.** A third session presents a ranking on top duplicated-content documents. In the domain of this work, most of this content may be re-tweets.

It is worth mentioning that the user can trigger a full-match query, that is, a query with no keywords, in order to get the top n-grams, image clusters and re-tweets of the whole dataset.

2.2 Phase 2: Initial Classification

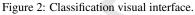
In this phase, the user should annotate the clusters obtained in the previous phase to have an initial amount of documents for both categories: positive and negative. These documents will be used later for the training of the AL process. The visual interface to carry out the initial classification using the events is presented in Fig.2.

Regarding the event detection strategy, the events are presented on a timeline with a list of associated words (a) and image clusters (b). A full event or an image cluster can be classified by clicking on the "Confirmed" or the "Negative" button. This is to say, not more than a single click for each cluster is required. However, in some cases the descriptive image of a cluster may not be very descriptive and it may be necessary to retrieve (with an extra click) the related tweets to make a decision based on their textual content.

Each item on the top duplicated content (c) can be classified with a single click, while each n-gram (d) can be classified with two clicks.

We also reused the extra sections of our search form (the n-grams visualization, the duplicated content presentation) on the tweets related to an event. The main motivation of these frames is to be able to understand in general terms the predominant content of the event in order to make a decision regarding its full classification.





2.3 Phase 3: Active Learning (AL) Process

One of the most important aspects of AL is the way to select the most informative instances to be presented to the oracle for manual classification. There are many methods to do so, usually referred to as "Query Learning Strategies" (Settles, 2009). For instance, the Uncertainty Sampling learning strategy takes the instances for which it is least certain how to label, ignoring the instances it is already confident about. Then, it makes the decision based on the confidence of a measure of uncertainty, like the lower predicted label's distance to the hyperplane, to sort all the documents and to get the top queries.

In this work, we propose some modifications to the Uncertainty method with the aim of taking advantage of the bi-grams we generated for each document and of the duplicated content that, on Twitter, is usually due to retweets. Our method is sorting the query samples according to three weighted scores instead of the single one (the distance to the hyperplane in Uncertainty Sampling). We calculate three scores for each of the query samples: 1) the distance to the hyperplane, 2) the position of the document if it is on the top-duplicated-documents ranking, 3) the first position of any of the document's bi-grams if present on the top-bi-grams ranking. The rankings "2" and "3" are retrieved based on the unlabeled documents in the dataset. Our method allows assigning different weights of the 3 different scores as input parameter we call "configuration" to each combination. Our goal is to verify if some of such configuration produce better results in terms of interactions than the original method.

In all the cases, we used a LinearSVC model and vectorized the bi-grams field of the documents with a TF-IDF vectorizer by SKLearn⁴. However, this approach could be used with other models, since although some strategies have particular requirements for the model, any classification model can be usually used to perform AL (Miller et al., 2018).

Regarding the user interface, the process is presented to the users in a separate section where they can choose the query strategy through tabs. The process is supported with a carousel (Fig.3), and users should loop through the steps (a) and (b) until they achieve a classification they consider satisfactory. In the first step, they are presented with the predictions for the selected documents as queries (Fig.3(a)). If any prediction is wrong, the user can toggle its value. Then, the model is re-trained and the new classification is presented in step (b), so the user can analyze the results and make a decision.

3 RELATED WORK

Concerning document annotation and classification, GATE (General Architecture for Text Engineering) (Cunningham et al., 2011) is a big family of tools for developing software components for Natural Language Processing (NLP). The problem is that nontechnical users depend, at some point, on NLP experts to develop or combine some components (e.g. data structures and algorithms). There are also some approaches specialized in micro-blogs content, like TwitIE (Bontcheva et al., 2013), a NLP pipeline which extends the general-purpose information extraction pipeline of GATE to deal with micro-blog text. This work is similar to our work since it deals with content from microblogs. However, carrying it out requires a higher level of knowledge for users to operate with GATE. In addition, event detection and image-based clusters are not natively included.

⁴https://scikit-learn.org

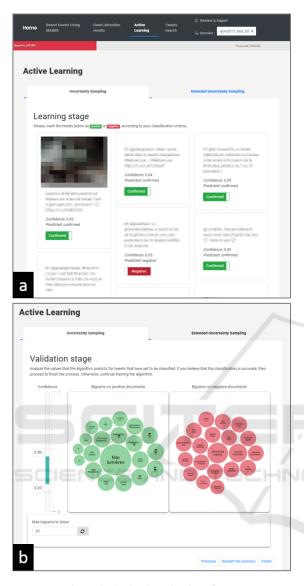


Figure 3: Active learning interface.

From a user-centered and general-purpose point of view, MonkeyLearn ⁵ is an online Machine Learning platform for Text Analysis allowing users to process different kinds of documents (e.g. tweets, chats) and create and test their models through a graphical interface. We have not found documentation on the design of the models to contrast our work, but at least we can differentiate in that our work also uses the images associated with the documents to cluster them and into related documents, and that the user can easily apply different classification methods to the same dataset. Our method implements in addition, a non supervised event detection method in the preprocessing phase.

NLPReViz (Trivedi et al., 2018) is an annotation tool in the medical field that reduces the time to create an annotated corpus by interactively and continuously improving the accuracy of its predictive model by involving the user in the process. CATI is not tied to a single domain; it enables the user to massively label a whole class of documents associated with a certain image, event, n-gram or simply with all the results retrieved from a search.

In the context of event detection, Katragadda et al.(Katragadda et al., 2016) propose a topic evolution model to quickly detect events from Twitter streaming in real-time. They conducted an experiment where tweets were collected in micro-batches of a minute each. The detection of the start of an event is achieved by comparing a term frequency over the most recent time periods to the historical frequencies of the same term. The result of this stage is the generation of a co-occurrences graph, that later is pruned to reduce the number of nodes, and clustered with a voltage based clustering algorithm. Finally, some clusters are eliminated in this step and the resulting clusters represent the collection of detected events.

Cai et al.(Cai et al., 2015) present a model for event detection called STM-TwitterLDA (Spatio-Temporal Multimodal TwitterLDA), which mainly differentiates from TwitterLDA in the target distribution they use to model the topic (location-specific vs user-specific), and the number of features they consider. One of their main contributions is the consideration of images as a feature; they take into account the visual properties of the images associated to a tweet (they apply convolutional neural network to represent images as text, but first they filter some images: the ones representing "stop words" (cartoons, landscapes, diagrams or text-based screenshots) and "general words" (noisy images). They just keep "specific images", which are the ones meant to visually describe the event.

Spina et al. (Spina et al., 2015) analyze the effectiveness of active learning for entity filtering in the social media; which is, extracting topics, conversations, and trends around a concrete entity. They used a linear Support Vector Machine and different sampling methods (random, uncertainty and density sampling) to compare their results. They retrain the model after every single query labeled by the user. The authors find out that using uncertainty sampling is effective and the strategy that works best for this task (among the ones they used).

Regarding AL and microblogging, Hu et al. (Hu et al., 2013) model textual content to incorporate social network information to later analyze whether the social relations can improve the active learning results

⁵https://monkeylearn.com/

on such a networked data. They propose two query sampling methods: a global one, aimed at labeling highly representative documents in a network to propagate the information through a big number of nodes in a whole network; or a local one, aimed at finding the most representative local documents from withingroup connections rather than between-group (global) connections. In the evaluation, the authors use a Support Vector Machine classifier and compare different query strategies, as Random Sampling, Uncertainty Sampling or Query by Committee against two of their methods with a global or local selection strategy. In contrast, we do not directly consider the relationships between users in the AL process.

A recent approach by Makki et al. (Makki et al., 2018) proposes a user-driven approach for the retrieval of Twitter content through AL strategies. The aim is to improve the searching in social media by supporting the exploration of potentially relevant tweets. They propose starting with an initial unsupervised retrieval (extracting discriminative features using tf-idf) with no user intervention and then a second component applies 4 AL query sampling strategies comprising the highest similarity to a debate, similar content (not exactly the same), frequent hashtags and post replies. In contrast, our starting clusters represent events or images, not used in this approach, and our sampling strategies consider exactly duplicated documents and bigrams as well.

4 EVALUATION

In this section we present a preliminary experiment on a dataset of tweets targeting the event "Fête des Lumières"⁶.

4.1 Dataset(s) Description

The dataset used in this study was created by collecting the tweets associated with the "Lyon" keyword from December 01, 2017 to December 13, 2017 using the Twitter Streaming API⁷. The sample contains 169 774 tweets that were manually classified by 3 users, who determined whether the tweets were related to the "Fête des Lumières" (FDL) event or not. They determined that there were 23 999 positive tweets and the remaining ones were negative. Concerning the images, there are 8818 tweets associated with –at least– one image.

4.2 Scenarios and Initial Classification

We evaluated our method in 2 scenarios consisting of two ways of classifying an initial amount of tweets to later use their labels in the AL process. In both cases, we used the pre-processing results concerning event detection and image based clustering. We started by performing the event detection process returning the top 10 events. The method we used (Guille and Favre, 2014) is based on anomaly detection in word frequencies over time. It detects events in an unsupervised manner and describes them by a list of representative keywords. These words may not have a clear sense in some cases as you may notice it on Table 1, but the detected events reflect the content of the data set. We also fixed the parameters to default for the image duplicated finder algorithm (Gaillard and Egyed-Zsigmond, 2017). Therefore, all our scenarios start from the same base of 10 events listed in Table 1 and the same image clusters. We then proceeded to classify the associated tweets in a different way each: in one case we fully annotate two events, one positive and one negative, and in the second case we classify all of them. In Table 1 you can observe the main keyword(s) describing the event, the number of image clusters and the number of related tweets.

The criteria for the classification of the eventbased scenarios:

- Scenario 1. The user classifies elements attached to 2 events among the detected ones: one as positive and the other as negative. First, the user was asked to classify the first listed event s/he considers it fully contains positive or negative tweets. The system enables the classification of all the tweets attached to an event as positive or negative with one click. In our data set, 16560 tweets were annotated In this case, the 8th event in Table 1 was annotated as positive (with 16560 tweets), while the 3rd one was classified as negative (10006 tweets).
- Scenario 2. The user classifies all the events detected. At least, one of the events must be marked as positive. In this case, the 8th event was the only positive, and the remaining events were annotated as negative. A total of 16560 tweets were classified as positive, while 49195 as negative.

In all the cases, the user can consider the event's main words, the related words, the main image for each cluster and also the main bi-grams in the top-20 bi-grams to make a decision on the category to choose.

The initial classification in both scenarios resulted in partially classified datasets. Table 2 shows both scenarios with their description, the number of clicks

⁶http://www.fetedeslumieres.lyon.fr ⁷https://developer.twitter.com/

ID	Main keyword	Image cluster count	Tweet count 24343	
1	cancelled, france, market, security, christmas, budget	344		
2	bir, yedi, milyon, dolar, gente, apoya, psc	5	6805	
3	bruselas, ladrones, banda, boicoteando, gente, apoya, psc, el, sepa, mientras, marcha 90		10006	
4	toda	0	4040	
5	ramoncotarelo	82	9821	
6	basu	82	9819	
7	esta	90	9998	
8	lumières, fête	412	16560	
9	yağhaz	46	7039	
10	actufoot	27	5371	

Table 1: Detected events (2017).

spent on the initial classification, the percentage of classified documents (P) in the dataset after the initial classification, the percentage of positives on P, and the initial accuracy and precision at the beginning of the process. This precision and accuracy are calculated on the results of a classifier trained with the initially classified elements over the remaining unclassified ones. We can notice that for this dataset, the precision is already very high.

4.3 Assisted Classification with Active Learning

After conducting the initial classification for each scenario, we run the AL algorithm with two sampling methods. The former will be referred to as method "A" and the latter as method "B". The method "A" is the control method (using Uncertainty Sampling) and it was executed only once for each scenario, while the method "B" is the experimental method and was executed 21 times covering all possible combinations of weights (for the position on the distance to the hyperplane, the top duplicated content, and the top bigrams), using all multiples of 0.2 between 0 and 1. We pick the configuration with the lower average and standard deviation of clicks that better fit both scenarios: "80.0.20". This is to say that the weight on the score on the duplicated content was ignored, and just a 20% on the score in regard to the top bigrams. In both cases, the experimental and the control methods, the number of query samples the user should validate in each loop was 20, but as we provide them with their predicted value already assigned in the interface, we just counted the clicks required to correct them -if required-. We also fixed the number of top-elements in the rankings of bi-grams and duplicated content, which was 500.

One of the goals of this experiment was to analyze if there is an impact on the number of clicks, accuracy and precision of the AL process when resorting a certain amount of samples got by the Uncertainty Sampling method by considering the presence of top bi-grams and duplicated content (in the sampling strategy) on them. This, with the aim of choosing those documents with the lower certitude of prediction but, at the same time, with the higher impact on the descriptions of the documents still remaining to annotate. Table 3 presents the results on the control method (Uncertainty Sampling using the distance to the hyperplane) on both scenarios. For each scenario, it presents the "Min. Δ accuracy reached at loop": the number of the first loop after which the accuracy varied less than Min. Δ , followed by the number of required clicks in the AL process until such point. Then, it shows the same information concerning the "Min. Δ precision reached at loop". Finally, it reports the achieved accuracy and precision, as well as the number of required clicks for the whole AL process, achieved at loop #100.

Results concerning the 100 loops on accuracy (b, d) and precision (a, c) are presented in relation to the number of clicks in Fig.4 and Fig.5 for Scenario 1, and in Fig.6 and Fig.7 for Scenario 2. The graphs allow observing if the results of the control method overcome the results of our experimental method.

As you can observe in the Figure, the experimental method improves –in a small percentage– the results of the control method concerning accuracy in both scenarios, and precision just in the second scenario. The precision of the first scenario is not completely overcome, but after 150 clicks it has similar results as the control method, and it ends up with almost the same precision on the loop 100 (0,997 on the experimental method, vs 0,9968 on the control method), achieved with 244 clicks less than the control method.

Table 2: Initial classification.									
Sce-	Description	Initial	% of dataset	% of positives	Initial	Initial			
nario		clicks	classified (P)	on P	accuracy	precision			
1	2 events	9	20.95	45.73	0.861	0.971			
2	All events	21	38.75	25.19	0.907	0.907			
	0.894	0.982							

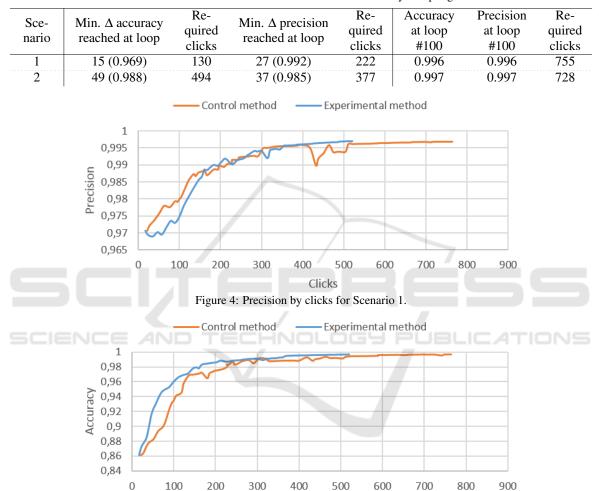
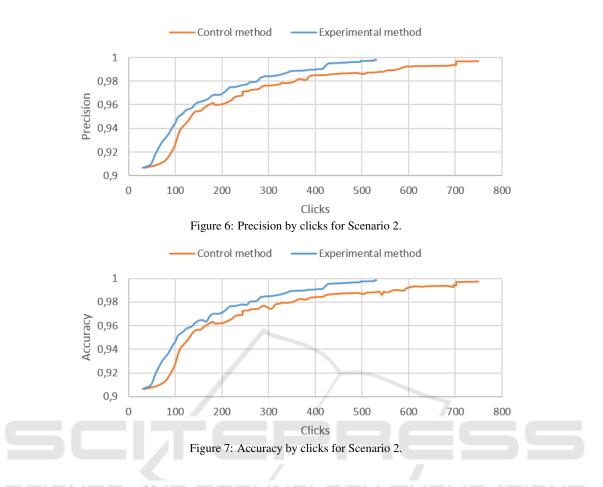


Table 3: Results on the scenarios with the Uncertainty Sampling.

Figure 5: Accuracy by clicks for Scenario 1.

Clicks

Regarding the number of clicks, the number is improved for both scenarios. This is to say that the total number of good predictions is better in the experimental method than in the control method, since the extra clicks are from the interaction to correct the annotation on the 20 samples on each loop. The total number of required clicks for Scenario 1 using the experimental method (at loop 100) is 520 against 764 of the control method; while in Scenario 1 there were 530 clicks required for the experimental method and 749 for the control method. And given the improved values on accuracy on both scenarios and on precision in one scenario, as well as the avoided of significant peaks in all the cases, it would be beneficial for the end users to choose the experimental method to classify their datasets.



5 CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER WORK

This article presents a pipeline and a supporting platform for assisting end users in the classification of large datasets. The process is carried out in 3 phases, in which different methods can be used. The first phase concerns preprocessing methods to cluster an initial amount of clicks and we carried it out by considering the documents' textual content and the image content; the second phase comprises an initially assisted annotation and we did it following two different scenarios; the last phase is the AL based classification refinement. For evaluation purposes, we introduced a new sampling strategy that includes the ranking of duplicate content and frequent bi-grams in the final query selection process. The evaluation shows that CATI can help classify a (very) large dataset of timestamped documents, eventually containing also images, within a reasonable number of clicks.

Concerning the proposed sampling strategy, although the use of bigrams and duplicate content has little influence on the accuracy and precision when selecting the best samples, but it could allow an improvement in the number of required clicks on the process. It remains to check the effect of duplicate content if after each user interaction we move not only the classified document but all the documents with exactly the same or similar content to the training set, avoiding also the possibility of asking the user to classify the "same content" on different loops.

Evaluating CATI in more scenarios, with more datasets, other models and features for AL is part of our future work. Providing new visual metaphors to validate the results and extending the initial classification strategies is also a short term perspective. At the time of writing this article, we are developing two new classifiers: a first one based on the geo-location of the documents (if any), and a second one based on temporal features.

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