

BibTip Goes Into Business

KIT Recommender Service for Library Catalogs Enters Business as Spin-off



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Finding without searching: The BibTip recommender system extends library catalogs by recommendations generated from statistical evaluations of the user behavior. Now, this web-based recommender service developed by the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) has entered business as an independent spin-off.

BibTip is the result of a project on "Recommender systems for meta library catalogs" funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation). The partners of this project, the university library and the KIT Institute for Information Systems and Management (IISM) have now signed a cooperation agreement with the new spin-off BibTip in order to further develop and extend the recommender service.

"I am very pleased that we have succeeded in finding an organization structure for BibTip that will allow for long-term work beyond the time horizon of jobs of limited duration", says the managing director of the library, Christoph-Hubert Schütte. BibTip will continue to cooperate closely with the Chair of Information Services and Electronic Markets of Professor Dr. Andreas Geyer-Schulz at the IISM in order to use latest research results. The recommender service spin-off is a typical example of successful innovation at the KIT.

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A recommender service is a system that determines and recommends objects similar to a given object. It is known that online shops use recommender services ("clients having bought A have also bought B"). BibTip is a behavior-based recommender system working in an anonymized manner. It observes the behavior of users of online catalogs (OPACs), evaluates it statistically, and automatically generates recommendations. "Combinations of searched titles are of decisive importance to the recommendations", explains the founder of the BibTip company, Marcus Spiering. The algorithms used were developed at the IISM. The library of Universität Karlsruhe has been using BibTip in its online catalog since 2003 and acquired extensive know-how with respect to catalog-specific statistical configuration and preliminary data processing for the calculation of recommendations.

Meanwhile, BibTip is being used in library catalogs all over the world. Among the users are the German National Library, the Bavarian State Library, the Baden State Library, the Württemberg State Library, and the Boston College Libraries. BibTip is also used by a number of university libraries in Germany and abroad.

The Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) is the merger of the Forschungszentrum Karlsruhe, member of the Helmholtz Association, and the Universität Karlsruhe. This merger will give rise to an institution of internationally excellent research and teaching in natural and engineering sciences. In total, the KIT has 8000 employees and an annual budget of 700 million Euros. The KIT focuses on the knowledge triangle of research – teaching – innovation.

The Karlsruhe institution is a leading European energy research center and plays a visible role in nanosciences worldwide. KIT sets new standards in teaching and promotion of young scientists and attracts top scientists from all over the world. Moreover, KIT is a leading innovation partner of industry.

This press release is available on the internet under www.kit.edu.