

Music Retrieval Based on Social Tags: A Case Study

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Abstract

Social tags are free text labels applied by a community of users, usually for organizational purposes. Users can label music with any tag they want, but the more a particular tag was applied, the more it is considered relevant to the music in question. For large enough communities of users, this leads to very rich and complex metadata. More and more MIR researchers are devoting time to this emerging high-volume source of textual metadata. However, there still remain many open questions with respect to the practical application of social tags in the context of music search engines. We try to answer some of these questions by sharing insights that we obtained from the “Multi Tag Search” on Last.fm’s Playground.¹ Our main findings are that users really like to search for music using tags, that they often use more than just a single tag in their queries, and that they most commonly, but certainly not only, search by style and genre tags.

¹<http://playground.last.fm>