

RDF

Some problems

Technical Issues

RDF relies on custom-written topic-specific software to answer specific user queries

In practice, users with no programming experience will have questions for which no software is available.

RDF solves the data model problem

In practice, the data model problem is the easiest part to solve of any data mining project. RDF doesn't address the difficult parts (user interface design, domain-specific query logic, trust determination) at all.

RDF relies on the data being in RDF

In practice, writing query software to use RDF wouldn't be particularly easier than writing software for other data formats like CSV, JSON, or direct database access.

RDF's general solution relies on the user drilling down through a data model to find information

In practice, experience in recent years has shown that there is so much data that users would be overwhelmed if they had to interact with it all directly.

Social Issues

RDF relies on providers making their data available

In practice, data providers want to monetize their data and thus many won't release much of their data online in a reusable form or with a license allowing reuse.

RDF relies on the data being accurate

Most authors are incapable of writing even simple HTML pages correctly, so expecting them to write RDFa pages correctly is naïve. Yet RDF relies on data being accurate to get accurate results. Thus search engines could not use author-provided unverified RDF to generate results.

Spam

A lot of the value of the Web is in finding data that your trusted sources didn't know about.

Custom software cannot have the resources to perform spam-fighting, and so would in practice be unable to crawl for finding this kind of data.

RDF relies on the custom software drawing conclusions about what data is trust-worthy or not

In practice, trusted sites are frequently subject to spamming attacks. Since custom software cannot have the resources to perform spam-fighting, such software would be inherently subject to spammy data.

Scale issues

RDF only addresses structured data

In practice, most user-generated data on the Web is free-form (blog entries, forum posts, wiki articles...).

RDF can only access freeform data if the data is manually annotated

In practice, experience has shown that it is extremely difficult to get users to annotate their data.

Cost

RDF research is a large effort

We are paying the opportunity cost of not spending these resources on broader, long-term solutions to data-mining and user queries, such as artificial intelligence.