

Διεθνές Συνέδριο για την Ανοικτή & εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευση

Τόμ. 12, Αρ. 3 (2023)

ICODL2023

Πρακτικά του 12ου Συνεδρίου

για την Ανοικτή & εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευση
Η εξ αποστάσεως και συμβατική εκπαίδευση στην ψηφιακή εποχή

Αθήνα, 24 έως 26 Νοεμβρίου 2023

Τόμος 3

ΕΠΙΜΕΛΕΙΑ

Αντώνης Λιοναράκης

Ευαγγελία Μανούσου

ISBN 978-618-5335-21-2
ISBN SET 978-618-82258-5-5Σχολή Ανθρωπιστικών Επιστημών,
Ελληνικό Ανοικτό ΠανεπιστήμιοΕλληνικό Δίκτυο
Ανοικτής & εξ Αποστάσεως ΕκπαίδευσηςDiscovering the Collaborative Filtering (CF)
Recommender System for Resource Selection in a
Moodle Learning Environment

Theodora Kouvara, Vassilios Verykios

doi: [10.12681/icodl.5638](https://doi.org/10.12681/icodl.5638)

Copyright © 2024, Theodora Kouvara, Vassilios Verykios

Άδεια χρήσης [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

Discovering the Collaborative Filtering (CF) Recommender System for Resource Selection in a Moodle Learning Environment

Theodora K. Kouvara

e-CoMet Lab
Hellenic Open University, Greece
tkouvara@eap.gr

Vasileios S. Verykios

Hellenic Open University
School of Science and Technology, Greece
verykios@eap.gr

Abstract

This paper investigates the feasibility and potential benefits of implementing a Collaborative Filtering (CF) Recommender System within a Moodle Learning Environment. With the rapid proliferation of e-learning platforms, the integration of sophisticated recommender systems is becoming increasingly critical to mitigate the challenges associated with resource discovery. The CF system capitalizes on the collective intelligence encapsulated in user interactions and preferences to provide personalized resource recommendations. This paper elucidates a comprehensive use case scenario of deploying user-based collaborative filtering algorithms within the Moodle infrastructure, with a specific emphasis on the memory-based process. Furthermore, the study delineates the potential implications of assimilating a CF system, including the facilitation of personalized learning, enhancement of user engagement, optimization of resource discovery, and promotion of inclusive learning. Future research trajectories encompass refining the underlying algorithms, addressing ethical and privacy considerations, amalgamating with other emergent technologies, assessing system effectiveness, and optimizing user interface and user experience.

Keywords: Collaborative Filtering, Recommender System, Moodle Learning Environment, Personalized Learning, E-Learning Infrastructure.

Introduction

The rapid advancement of e-learning platforms in the digital era has revolutionized the delivery of education, offering students worldwide personalized and flexible learning experiences (Ally, 2020; Rosenberg, 2020). Moodle, a popular learning

management system, has emerged as a versatile virtual environment where educators can seamlessly share resources, facilitate interactive discussions, and monitor student progress (Moodle, 2023). However, the abundance of learning materials available on Moodle often overwhelms students, making it challenging for them to identify the most relevant resources tailored to their specific needs and preferences (Henriquez-Nunez, Parra, Brijaldo, & Carrillo-Ramos, 2023). This predicament highlights the necessity of incorporating advanced recommender systems to alleviate the burden of resource discovery.

In this paper, we delve into the potential of Collaborative Filtering (CF) techniques as a viable solution for resource recommendation in the Moodle learning environment. CF leverages the collective wisdom encoded in users' interactions and preferences to enhance the learning journey by delivering personalized resource suggestions (Baidada, Mansouri, & Poirier, 2021). Our primary objective is to present a detailed use case scenario of the implementation of user-based collaborative filtering algorithms within the Moodle ecosystem, specifically focusing on the memory-based process. We aim to provide a comprehensive description of how these algorithms operate and conduct a thorough examination of their potential impact on students' learning outcomes.

This paper restricts its focus to the application of Collaborative Filtering (CF) within the Moodle Learning Environment, excluding a detailed discussion on other recommender systems or learning management systems. It places emphasis on the application of CF algorithms in Moodle, rather than their technical implementation details. Importantly, it is acknowledged that the actual deployment and efficacy of these systems can diverge considerably due to various factors, including the unique characteristics of learners, the nature of the educational content, and the comprehensive design of the e-learning platform.

Subsequently, the paper offers an exhaustive exploration of recommender systems in e-learning settings. It sets out with a detailed overview of recommender systems, underscoring their roles, importance, and common classifications.

Furthermore, an analysis is conducted on a specific case: the application of a Collaborative Filtering (CF) Recommender System in a Moodle Learning Environment. In this context, the advantages of such a system are highlighted, particularly its ability to provide personalized resource recommendations in line with individual learner preferences and academic achievements. The discussion concludes with an in-depth portrayal of the CF component, accentuating its critical role in the recommendation process.

Recommender Systems Overview

Recommender systems, a specialized subset of information filtering systems, are designed to predict user preferences or ratings for various products or services. These systems employ data analysis techniques to generate personalized recommendations, drawing from a user's historical behavior, preferences, and the behavior of similar users. The primary objective of these systems is to enhance user experience and elevate engagement levels across various domains. By offering tailored recommendations, recommender systems facilitate users in discovering new products or content that might otherwise remain undiscovered. As a result, these systems have found extensive application in a wide array of internet applications, including but not limited to e-commerce, social networks, web search, news personalization, targeted advertising, and e-learning environments (Obeid, Lahoud, El Khoury, & Champin, 2018; Zhang, Yao, Sun, & Tay, 2019).

The application of recommender systems within e-learning contexts in higher education has been an active area of research. The trend of publications in this field has seen a steady increase over the past 15 years, peaking in 2017. The Relative Growth Rate (RGR) decreased from 2.02 in 2008 to 0.06 in 2021, while the Doubling Time (DT) increased steadily until 2010, followed by a significant surge in 2017. The countries leading in productivity in this field are China, Spain, and the United States. The most cited article in this field is "Collaborative filtering adapted to RS of e-learning" published in 2009 with 209 citations, followed by "Recommender system for predicting student performance" published in 2010 with 178 citations (Fernández-García, Rodríguez-Echeverría, Preciado, Manzano, & Sánchez-Figueroa, 2020; Maphosa, & Maphosa, 2023).

Recommender systems are characterized by two key components: (1) the learners, who possess unique, often hard-to-define attributes such as their knowledge level, and (2) the recommendations that the system provides to the learners. These recommendations, which can significantly influence knowledge acquisition, encompass aspects such as learning activities, educational content, and assessment units. Recommender systems can be broadly classified into three categories (Medina, & Martinell, 2019):

1. **Collaborative Filtering (CF):** This technique predicts a user's interests by collecting preferences from a multitude of users. The fundamental assumption is that if two users concur on one issue, they are likely to concur on others as well. CF is bifurcated into two sub-categories:
 - a) **Memory-based:** The recommendation is directly based on previous ratings in the stored matrix that describes user-item relations.
 - b) **Model-based:** This assumes that an underlying model (hypothesis) governs how users rate items.
2. **Content-Based Filtering (CBF):** These systems recommend items by comparing the content of the items to a user profile. The content of each item is represented as a set of descriptors or terms, typically the words that occur in a document. The user profile is constructed by analyzing the content of items with which the user has interacted.
3. **Hybrid Approaches:** Hybrid recommender systems amalgamate the collaborative and content-based approaches to capitalize on the strengths of both techniques. They can be implemented in several ways: by making predictions separately and then combining them; by adding content-based capabilities to a collaborative approach (and vice versa); or by unifying the approaches into one model.

Related Work

The surge in research concerning AI-based recommendation systems underscores the growing significance of technological advancements in e-learning environments. These studies propose that such systems could substantially augment pedagogical processes by accommodating individual learners' styles and preferences (Essa, Celik &

Human-Hendricks, 2023; Ilić, Mikić, Kopanja & Vesin, 2023; Khanal, Prasad, Alsadoon & Maag, 2020; Tarus, Niu & Khadidja, 2017).

Murtaza et al. (2022) proposed a comprehensive framework for AI-Based personalized e-learning. This framework, encompassing modules for data, adaptive learning, adaptable learning, recommendation, content, and assessment delivery, provides a thorough understanding of the system's requirements, methodologies, challenges, and future research directions.

Rahayu, Ferdiana & Kusumawardani (2022) discussed a novel recommendation system that amalgamates content-based and collaborative filtering techniques. The system employs machine learning and reinforcement learning algorithms to continuously customize recommendations based on user feedback. Similarly, Annabathuni (2023) presented a pairwise association rule-based recommendation algorithm that constructs a model of collective user preferences at both item and category levels.

The effectiveness of these systems in guiding learners to suitable learning materials has been confirmed (Tarus, Niu & Khadidja, 2017). However, to ensure personalized recommendations, it is crucial to consider learner attributes such as learning style, skill level, and study level. Riad, Gouraguine, Qbadou & Aoula (2023) developed an adaptation approach based on the learner's motivation level, which used a content-based filtering technique and machine learning, revealing the enhancement of students' learning levels. Similarly, Zhou, Ye, and Liu (2023) integrated a collaborative filtering algorithm and a knowledge map to facilitate Personalized Learning Paths (PLPs), resulting in improved academic achievement and reduced learning anxiety, especially among lower knowledge level students.

Imran, Belghis-Zadeh, Chang, Kinshuk, & Graf, (2016) introduced a Personalized Learning Object Recommender System (PLORS) that provided learners with recommendations on the most beneficial learning objects within a course based on learners' profiles and similarities with other learners. Further, Joseph and Abraham (2019) proposed an Adaptive e-Learning System (AeLS) using the Felder-Silverman Learning Style Model. The system's performance mirrored traditional classroom

methods, suggesting the potential of adaptive learning systems in enhancing learning efficacy.

Shi, Y., & Yang, X. (2020) demonstrated the effectiveness of CF in a personalized matching system for management teaching resources. They developed a user interest model and a personalized recommendation algorithm based on CF. The system was able to effectively recommend personalized teaching resources to each user, thereby enhancing their learning interest and improving teaching quality. The learners expressed high satisfaction with the personalized matching system, indicating the potential of CF in enhancing community-based learning experiences. Finally, Sharma, Gopalani, & Meena (2017) and Khan, Mansha, Khan & Bashir, (2017) discussed the effectiveness of CF in online recommendation systems, which could be applied to recommend high-rated forums or learning resources in a community-based learning environment.

The future of e-learning recommender systems could entail formative assessments tailored to user interactions, community-based learning opportunities based on high user ratings for forums, inclusive learning environments catering to diverse styles, language proficiency, and cultural inclusivity, and the promotion of self-regulated learning for fostering autonomous learners.

This accumulated knowledge forms the theoretical framework that elucidates the crucial role of AI-based recommendation systems in fostering inclusive, engaging, and personalized e-learning environments. The evidence suggests that employing these systems can lead to enhanced learner engagement, improved learning outcomes, and efficient resource allocation. The key challenge lies in the continued exploration and refinement of these systems to further optimize their potential in diverse learning contexts."

Case Analysis

CF System for Learning Resources in Moodle

In this study, we propose to adopt a Collaborative Filtering (CF) Recommender System, an approach that capitalizes on harnessing the learning preferences and behavioral patterns of users with analogous academic interests. This approach is supported by

the work of De Medio et al. (2020), who developed MoodleREC, a recommendation system for creating courses using the Moodle e-learning platform that also uses collaborative filtering to provide personalized course recommendations. Through this rich user-generated data, the system acquires the capability to offer bespoke educational resource recommendations. These recommendations are informed by resources that have amassed commendable reviews or high ratings from users with similar predilections. The successful integration of this collaborative filtering method necessitates the deployment of advanced methodologies like memory-based nearest neighbor algorithms and model-based matrix factorization.

The implementation of this recommender system in this study is designed to confer substantial benefits to learners engaged in the Moodle course. It aims to furnish tailored recommendations in line with each learner's distinct learning styles, preferences, and academic accomplishments. The system facilitates learners in the discovery and utilization of pertinent educational resources, inclusive of various tools, multimedia materials, and more, with the ultimate objective of enriching their learning experience and bolstering knowledge comprehension. This aligns with the work of Vera and González (2022), who discussed the use of Python and Moodle for creating educational resource recommender systems.

By employing this recommender system, learners within the Moodle course will benefit from tailored recommendations that align with their learning style, preferences, and performance. The system will assist learners in discovering and accessing relevant learning resources, such as tools, videos, and other materials, ultimately enhancing their learning experience and knowledge acquisition. It is important to ensure transparency, explainability, and adherence to privacy and ethical guidelines while providing these recommendations.

Collaborative Filtering (CF) Component

The Collaborative Filtering (CF) component involves a rating system that allows users to evaluate and give feedback on the learning resources, facilitating the recommendation process. Table 1 elucidates the corresponding values, graphical representations, and their respective textual interpretations in the context of this rating system:

- **Value 5:** This is the highest rating that can be given to a resource, graphically represented by a filled rating bar, signifying 'Excellent.' This indicates that the user found the resource extremely useful, informative, and engaging.
- **Value 4:** This rating, represented by nearly a fully filled rating bar, is labeled as 'Very Good.' The resource has met most of the user's needs and expectations, providing valuable information or tools.
- **Value 3:** A 'Good' rating, represented by a half-filled rating bar, signifies that the resource is satisfactory and meets some, but not all, of the user's needs or expectations.
- **Value 2:** A 'Fair' rating, represented by a partially filled rating bar, suggests that the resource may have been useful to some extent, but there is considerable room for improvement.
- **Value 1:** The lowest rating, graphically represented by an unfilled or barely filled rating bar, is labeled as 'Poor.' This indicates that the user found the resource unhelpful or insufficient in meeting their needs or expectations.

Table 1: User Rating Scale for Learning Resources in Collaborative Filtering System

Value	Graphic representation	Textual representation
5	★★★★★	Excellent
4	★★★★☆	Very Good
3	★★★☆☆	Good
2	★★☆☆☆	Fair
1	★☆☆☆☆	Poor

By integrating this rating system into the Collaborative Filtering component, the recommender system can effectively use these user-provided ratings to generate more accurate and relevant recommendations for other users with similar learning preferences and behaviors.

In this study, we propose to adopt a Collaborative Filtering (CF) Recommender System, an approach that capitalizes on harnessing the learning preferences and behavioral patterns of users with analogous academic interests. Through this rich user-generated data, the system acquires the capability to offer bespoke educational resource recommendations. These recommendations are informed by resources that have amassed commendable reviews or high ratings from users with similar preferences. The successful integration of this collaborative filtering method necessitates the deployment of advanced methodologies like memory-based nearest neighbor algorithms and model-based matrix factorization.

The implementation of this recommender system in this study is designed to confer substantial benefits to learners engaged in the Moodle course. It aims to furnish tailored recommendations in line with each learner's distinct learning styles, preferences, and academic accomplishments. The system facilitates learners in the discovery and utilization of pertinent educational resources, inclusive of various tools, multimedia materials, and more, with the ultimate objective of enriching their learning experience and bolstering knowledge comprehension.





By employing this recommender system, learners within the Moodle course will benefit from tailored recommendations that align with their learning style, preferences, and performance. The system will assist learners in discovering and accessing relevant learning resources, such as tools, videos, and other materials, ultimately enhancing their learning experience and knowledge acquisition. It is important to ensure transparency, explainability, and adherence to privacy and ethical guidelines while providing these recommendations.

1.1. Memory-based Process

User-based collaborative systems in Moodle leverage memory-based processes to provide personalized learning experiences. These systems use historical data to make recommendations, a process that is often referred to as collaborative filtering (Sharma & Bedi, 2017). The underlying principle is that if two users agreed in the past, they will likely agree in the future (Zafarani, Abbasi, Liu & Draft, 2014). The User-Item Matrix, is fundamental to the memory-based collaborative filtering (CF) process, providing an

insightful visualization of the interaction between users and various items - in this case, books, videos, audios, and forum posts.

Table 2: User-Item Matrix

 Item 1: Book	 Item 2: Video	 Item 3: Audio	 Item 4: Forum	
User A	★★★★	★★★★★	0	★★
User B	0	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
User C	★★	0	★★★★	0
User D	★★	★★★	★★★	★★
User E	★	★★★★★	★★	★★★

In the matrix (Table 2), rows are assigned to users (A through E) and columns correspond to different items. The matrix values signify the explicit ratings users have given to each item, with zero representing absence of a rating. For instance, User A has expressed high preference for the book and video, rating them at 4 and 5 respectively, and lesser preference for the forum with a rating of 2. The absence of a rating for the audio suggests that User A did not evaluate this item.

User B, on the other hand, provided ratings for the video, audio, and forum, with scores of 3, 4, and 5 respectively, indicating a strong preference for forum posts. The lack of a rating for the book suggests User B did not evaluate this resource. User C provided feedback for only the book and audio, scoring them 2 and 4 respectively, leaving the video and forum unrated.

This matrix offers valuable information for the CF process to generate personalized recommendations by adopting a 'user-item' approach. For example, if User A and User B exhibit similar preferences for books and videos, the system might recommend User A explore an audio or forum post, which User B has rated highly.

In addition to personalized recommendations, the matrix also aids in establishing a preference ranking for each user. For instance, User A's highest-rated item is the video, suggesting a preference for video-based resources, while User B seems to prefer forum posts based on their highest rating. This ranking process can further refine the recommendation system, tailoring the suggestions to each user's distinct preference hierarchy.

1.1.1. User-based collaborative filtering in Memory-based Process

In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the User-based Collaborative Filtering in Memory-based Process, we'll delve into the mathematics that underpin the algorithm. This mathematical framework forms the crux of the process, and understanding it will facilitate a clear comprehension of how the system predicts ratings and generates recommendations.

To do this, we will introduce relevant mathematical symbols, equations, and variables.

The objective here is to ensure a lucid understanding of the mathematical foundations of the User-based Collaborative Filtering algorithm.

As follows, we will present each step of the algorithmic process, breaking down the mathematical procedures into understandable parts. We will also go through the intricacies of the algorithm, explaining how the mathematics involved allows the system to predict ratings and generate appropriate recommendations for each user based on the preferences and behaviors of similar users.

The user currently under consideration shall be referred to as 'U'. To calculate the similarity score between U and all other users, we can use a mathematical method such as cosine similarity or Pearson correlation. Denote the similarity score between U_A and user U_B as $\text{sim}(U_A, U_B)$, where U represents any other user in the system. These similarity scores represent the weights assigned to each user, with higher weights indicating greater similarity.

Cosine similarity:

$$\text{sim}(U_u, U_v) = \cos(U_u, U_v) = \frac{U_u \cdot U_v}{\|U_u\| \|U_v\|} = \frac{\sum_i r_{u,i} r_{v,i}}{\sqrt{\sum_i r_{u,i}^2} \sqrt{\sum_i r_{v,i}^2}}.$$

Pearson correlation:

$$sim(U_u, U_v) = \frac{\sum_i (r_{u,i} - \bar{r}_u)(r_{v,i} - \bar{r}_v)}{\sqrt{\sum_i (r_{u,i} - \bar{r}_u)^2} \sqrt{\sum_i (r_{v,i} - \bar{r}_v)^2}}$$

1. Cosine similarity between User A and User B:

We compute:

- the dot product of their ratings vectors:

$$(4 \times 0) + (5 \times 3) + (0 \times 4) + (2 \times 5) = 0 + 15 + 0 + 10 = 25$$

- the magnitude of User A's ratings vector:

$$\sqrt{16 + 25 + 4} = \sqrt{45} = 6.71$$

- the magnitude of User B's ratings vector:

$$\sqrt{9 + 16 + 25} = \sqrt{50} = 7.07$$

- the cosine similarity:

$$25 / (6.71 \times 7.07) \approx \mathbf{0.558}$$

2. Cosine similarity between User A and User C:

We compute:

- the dot product of their ratings vectors:

$$(4 \times 2) + (5 \times 0) + (0 \times 4) + (2 \times 0) = 8$$

- the magnitude of User A's ratings vector:

$$\sqrt{16 + 25 + 4} = \sqrt{45} = 6.71$$

- the magnitude of User C's ratings vector:

$$\sqrt{4 + 9 + 9 + 4} = \sqrt{50} = 7.07$$

- the cosine similarity:

$$8 / (6.71 \times 7.07) \approx \mathbf{0.282}$$

3. Cosine similarity between User A and User D:

We compute:

- the dot product of their ratings vectors: $(4 \times 2) + (5 \times 3) + (0 \times 3) + (2 \times 2) = 27$

- the magnitude of User A's ratings vector:

$$\sqrt{16 + 25 + 4} = \sqrt{45} = 6.71$$

- the magnitude of User D's ratings vector:

$$\sqrt{4 + 9 + 9 + 4} = \sqrt{26} = 5.10$$

- the cosine similarity: $27 / (6.71 \times 5.10) = \mathbf{0.825}$

4. Cosine similarity between User A and User E:

We compute:

- the dot product of their ratings vectors:

$$(4 \times 1) + (5 \times 5) + (0 \times 2) + (2 \times 3) = 35$$

- the magnitude of User A's ratings vector:

$$\sqrt{16 + 25 + 4} = \sqrt{45} = 6.71$$

- the magnitude of User E's ratings vector:

$$\sqrt{1 + 25 + 4 + 9} = \sqrt{39} = 6.24$$

- the cosine similarity: $35 / (6.71 \times 6.24) = \mathbf{0.848}$

Once we have the similarity scores, we select a subset of users/items with the highest similarity weights as the neighbors. These neighbors are chosen based on their high similarity scores, indicating that they have similar preferences or characteristics to the current user/item.

Now, to compute User A's rating for Item 3 using user-based collaborative filtering, we can take the weighted average of the ratings of User E and User D for Item 3, where the weights are based on the similarity between User A and the respective neighbors. Since User E and User D are the two most similar neighbors to User A, we will use their ratings to estimate User A rating for Item 3.





The similarity values are as follows:

- $\text{sim}(\text{User A}, \text{User E}) = 0.848$
- $\text{sim}(\text{User A}, \text{User D}) = 0.825$

In the context of user-based collaborative filtering (CF), Table 3 represents a collection of similar users based on their previous ratings for items. The underlying principle of user-based CF is that users who have exhibited similar preferences in the past are likely to rate future items in a similar manner.

In the Table 3, we have used different shades of a color to represent the similarity of each User with User A. Between User A and User E, who have a closer similarity (0.848), we have assigned the same color. As the similarity decreases, the color fades.

Table 3: User-based CF – Similar users

Neighbors of User A	 Item 1: Book	 Item 2: Video	 Item 3: Audio	 Item 4: Forum
User A	4	5	0	2
User B	0	3	4	5
User C	2	0	4	-
User D	2	3	3	2
User E	1	5	2	3

To Calculate User A rating for Audio, we use the following:

$$r_{u,i} = \bar{r}_u + \frac{\sum_{v \in N(u)} sim(u,v)(r_{v,i} - \bar{r}_v)}{\sum_{v \in N(u)} sim(u,v)}$$

Firstly, to calculate the average rating for each user, we summed up the ratings for each item and divided it by the number of rated items. Here is the calculation for each user:

User A:

$$\underline{r_A} = (4+5+1)/3 = 3.67$$

User B:

$$\underline{r_B} = (3 + 4 + 5)/3 = 4$$

User C:

$$\underline{r_C} = (2 + 4) / 2 = 3$$

User D:

$$\underline{r_D} = (2 + 3 + 3 + 2) / 4 = 2.5$$

User E:

$$\underline{r_E} = (1 + 5 + 2 + 3) / 4 = 2.75$$

Now, let calculate the estimated rating for Audio (Item 3):

- Estimated Rating for Audio:

$$[\text{sim}(U_A, U_E) \times r(U_E, I_{\text{Audio}}) + \text{Sim}(U_A, U_D) \times r(U_D, I_{\text{Audio}})] / [\text{sim}(U_A, U_E) + \text{sim}(U_A, U_D)]$$

As the ratings for Item 3 are as follows:

- Rating(User E, Item 3) = 2
- Rating(User D, Item 3) = 3

$$\text{The Estimated Rating for Item 3} = (0.848 \times 2 + 0.825 \times 3) / (0.848 + 0.825) = (1.696 + 2.475) / 1.673 = 4.17$$

Therefore, the estimated rating for User A's rating for Audio (Item 3) computed from user-based collaborative filtering is approximately 4.17.

Our exploration underscores the substantial potential of integrating a Collaborative Filtering (CF) system within a Moodle learning environment. Drawing from our observations, we put forth a pedagogical framework that capitalizes on the strengths of the CF system to augment online learning experiences.

This framework is not merely theoretical; it is a practical and actionable blueprint that educators, administrators and instructional designers can utilize to tailor their Moodle environments. By doing so, they can create more personalized, adaptive, and inclusive online learning experiences that cater to diverse learning styles and preferences.

Implications and Future Directions

The integration of a Collaborative Filtering (CF) Recommender System within a Moodle learning environment, as discussed in this paper, carries significant implications for the future of online learning. It offers a promising pathway to enhance the personalization and adaptability of e-learning platforms, thereby improving the learning experience for students.

- **Personalized Learning:** The CF system's ability to provide tailored recommendations based on individual learning styles, preferences, and academic accomplishments can significantly enhance personalized learning. This approach can help students discover and utilize relevant educational resources, thereby enriching their learning experience and bolstering knowledge comprehension.
- **Enhanced Engagement:** By offering tailored recommendations, the CF system can potentially increase student engagement. By guiding students to resources that align with their interests and learning styles, they are more likely to engage with the material, leading to improved learning outcomes.
- **Efficient Resource Discovery:** The CF system can alleviate the burden of resource discovery, making it easier for students to find relevant learning materials. This can save students time and effort, allowing them to focus more on learning.
- **Inclusive Learning:** The CF system can cater to diverse learning styles and preferences, fostering an inclusive learning environment. By considering individual learner attributes such as learning style, skill level, and study level, the system can provide recommendations that cater to each learner's unique needs.

Looking ahead, there are several potential directions for future research and development:

- **Refinement of Algorithms:** While the CF system shows promise, there is room for further refinement of the algorithms used to generate recommendations. Future research could explore other recommendation algorithms or hybrid approaches that combine the strengths of multiple techniques.
- **Ethical and Privacy Considerations:** As with any system that collects and uses user data, there are important ethical and privacy considerations. Future work should explore ways to ensure transparency, explainability, and adherence to privacy and ethical guidelines in the implementation of these systems.

- **Integration with Other Technologies:** The CF system could be integrated with other emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and natural language processing, to further enhance its capabilities.
- **Evaluation and Assessment:** Further empirical studies are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the CF system in different learning contexts. This could involve longitudinal studies that track student performance and engagement over time, as well as comparative studies that compare the CF system with other recommendation systems.
- **User Interface and Experience:** Future work could also explore how the user interface and experience of the CF system can be optimized to make it more user-friendly and intuitive for students.

Conclusions

Incorporating a Collaborative Filtering (CF) Recommender System into a Moodle learning environment holds substantial potential for advancing online education. It fosters personalization and adaptability in e-learning platforms, thereby enriching the student learning experience.

The CF system's capacity to offer customized recommendations, based on individual learning styles, preferences, and academic achievements, significantly bolsters personalized learning. It aids students in identifying and utilizing relevant educational resources, enhancing their learning journey and knowledge acquisition. By providing tailored recommendations, the CF system can boost student engagement, leading to improved learning outcomes. The CF system simplifies the process of resource discovery, saving students' time and effort, and allowing them to concentrate more on learning. It also promotes an inclusive learning environment by catering to diverse learning styles and preferences.

Future research and development should focus on refining the algorithms used in the CF system, exploring other recommendation algorithms or hybrid approaches, and addressing ethical and privacy considerations. The integration of emerging technologies like AI, machine learning, and natural language processing can further enhance the CF system's capabilities. Empirical studies are needed to evaluate the

effectiveness of these systems in various learning contexts, and efforts should be made to optimize the user interface and experience.

In conclusion, while the adoption of a CF Recommender System in a Moodle learning environment offers promising opportunities for enhancing online learning, it also presents challenges that require ongoing research and development. By persistently exploring and refining these systems, we can strive to create more personalized, adaptive, and inclusive online learning experiences.

References

- Ally, M. (2020). Foundations of educational theory for online learning. In M. Ally (Ed.), *Theory and practice of online learning* (pp. 21-40). Athabasca University Press.
- Annabathuni, S. C. (2023). *Mitigating the Cold-Start Problem by Leveraging Category Level Associations* (Doctoral dissertation), Concordia University Montréal, Québec, Canada.
- Baidada, M., Mansouri, K., & Poirier, F. (2021). Development of an automatic process for recommending well adapted educational resources in an e-learning environment. In *2020 6th IEEE Congress on Information Science and Technology (CIST)* (pp. 231-235). IEEE.
- De Medio, C., Limongelli, C., Sciarrone, F., & Temperini, M. (2020). MoodleREC: A recommendation system for creating courses using the Moodle e-learning platform. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 104, 106-168.
- Essa, S. G., Celik, T., & Human-Hendricks, N. (2023). Personalised Adaptive Learning Technologies Based on Machine Learning Techniques to Identify Learning Styles: A Systematic Literature Review. *IEEE Access*. Retrieved from: <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/10124747>
- Fernández-García, A. J., Rodríguez-Echeverría, R., Preciado, J. C., Manzano, J. M. C., & Sánchez-Figueroa, F. (2020). Creating a recommender system to support higher education students in the subject enrollment decision. *IEEE Access*. Retrieved from <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/9226409>
- Henriquez-Nunez, Y., Parra, C., Brijaldo, M., & Carrillo-Ramos, A. (2023). Adaptive Model for the Selection of Resources and Activities in a Virtual Learning Environment. In *Proceedings of the 15th International Conference on Computer Supported Education (CSEDU 2023) - Volume 1* (pp. 256-263). SCITEPRESS – Science and Technology Publications, Lda.
- Imran, H., Belghis-Zadeh, M., Chang, T. W., Kinshuk, & Graf, S. (2016). PLORS: a personalized learning object recommender system. *Vietnam Journal of Computer Science*, 3, 3-13.
- Ilić, M., Mikić, V., Kopanja, L., & Vesin, B. (2023). Intelligent techniques in e-learning: a literature review. *Artificial Intelligence Review*, 1-47.
- Joseph, L., & Abraham, S. (2019). Adaptive e-learning system for slow learners based on Felder-Silverman learning style model. In *Advanced Informatics for Computing Research: Third International Conference, ICAICR 2019*, Shimla, India, June 15–16, 2019, Revised Selected Papers, Part I 3 (pp. 123-135). Springer Singapore.

- Khanal, S. S., Prasad, P. W. C., Alsadoon, A., & Maag, A. (2020). A systematic review: machine learning based recommendation systems for e-learning. *Education and Information Technologies*, 25, 26-35
- Maphosa, V., & Maphosa, M. (2023). Fifteen years of recommender systems research in higher education: Current trends and future direction. *Applied Artificial Intelligence*, 37(1), 2175106.
- Medina, A. E. R., & Martinell, A. R. (2019, October). Recommender system in higher education: A preliminary study of state of the art. In *2019 XIV Latin American Conference on Learning Technologies (LACLO)* (pp. 231-236). IEEE.
- Moodle. (2023). *About Moodle*. Retrieved from: https://docs.moodle.org/402/en/About_Moodle
- Murtaza, M., Ahmed, Y., Shamsi, J. A., Sherwani, F., & Usman, M. (2022). AI-based personalized e-learning systems: Issues, challenges, and solutions. *IEEE Access*. Retrieved from: <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/9840390>
- Obeid, C., Lahoud, I., El Khoury, H., & Champin, P. A. (2018, April). Ontology-based recommender system in higher education. In *Companion proceedings of the the web conference 2018* (pp. 1031-1034).
- Rahayu, N. W., Ferdiana, R., & Kusumawardani, S. S. (2022). A systematic review of ontology use in E-Learning recommender system. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 3, 1-16.
- Riad, M., Gouraguine, S., Qbadou, M., & Aoula, E. S. (2023, May). Towards A New Adaptive E-learning System Based On Learner's Motivation And Machine Learning. In *2023 3rd International Conference on Innovative Research in Applied Science, Engineering and Technology (IRASET)* (pp. 1-6). IEEE.
- Rosenberg, M. J., & Foshay, R. (2007). E-learning: Strategies for delivering knowledge in the digital age. *Performance Improvement*, 41(5). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1002/pfi.4140410512>
- Sharma, C., & Bedi, P. (2017). CCFRS—community based collaborative filtering recommender system. *Journal of Intelligent & Fuzzy Systems*, 32(4), 2987-2995.
- Shi, Y., & Yang, X. (2020). A personalized matching system for management teaching resources based on collaborative filtering algorithm. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (IJET)*, 15(13), 207-220.
- Tarus, J., Niu, Z., & Khadidja, B. (2017). E-learning recommender system based on collaborative filtering and ontology. *International Journal of Computer and Information Engineering*, 11(2), 256-261.
- Vera, A. A., & González, C. M. (2022). Educational Resource Recommender Systems Using Python and Moodle. In *International Conference on Computational Science and Its Applications* (pp. 15-30). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Zafarani, R., Abbasi, M. A., Liu, H., & Draft, C. (2014). Information diffusion in social media. In *Social Media Mining: An Introduction*, 179-214.
- Zhang, S., Yao, L., Sun, A., & Tay, Y. (2019). Deep learning based recommender system: A survey and new perspectives. *ACM computing surveys (CSUR)*, 52(1), 1-38.
- Zhou, Y., Ye, X., & Liu, Q. (2023). Personalized Learning Path Recommendation Based on Collaborative Filtering Algorithm and Knowledge Map. *IEEE Access*. Retrieved from: <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/10124747>