

Effects of Expertise Differences

in Synchronous Social Q&A

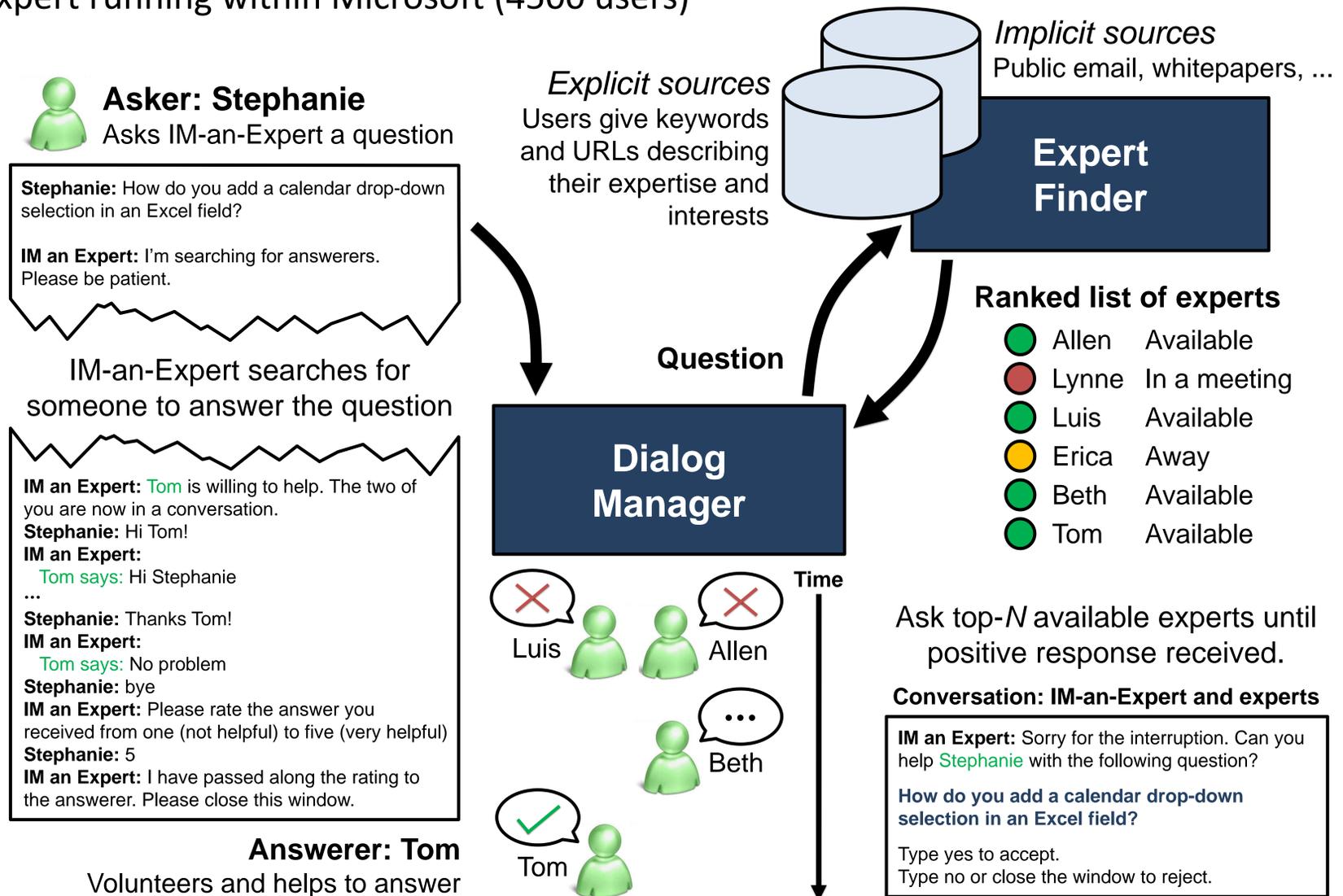
Microsoft®
Research

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Takeaway: Domain expertise is useful, but has diminishing returns...

Synchronous Social Question Answering

- Synchronous social Q&A systems connect askers and answerers for real-time IM-based dialog
- IM-an-Expert running within Microsoft (4500 users)



Experiments

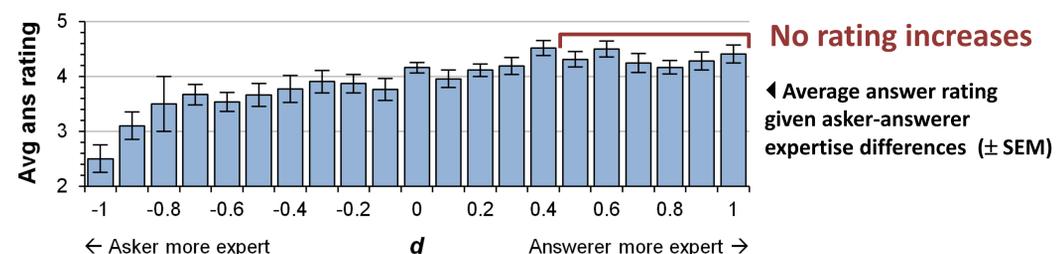
- Study effect of expertise differences on answer ratings and the Q&A dialog
- IM-an-Expert data (1725 questions, 937 users)
- Profiles comprise:
 - Self-reported knowledge
 - Email sent to distribution lists
 - Q&A history on IM-an-Expert
- Est. expertise **w.r.t. question**, not generally
 - Cosine similarity between query & profile
 - Diff. in cosine \approx Diff. in expertise
- Study examines asker and answerer expertise

Findings

Metric	Expertise differences		
	Ans < Ask	Ans = Ask	Ans > Ask
Average answer rating	3.66	4.05	4.27
% dialog from asker	54.8	54.7	59.3

◀ Average answer rating and percentage of dialog from question asker, given expertise differences. Ask=asker, Ans=answerer.

- Answerer more expert, higher answer quality
- Answerer less expert, lower answer quality



- Answer rating stable beyond difference of 0.4
- > 0.4, dialog imbalanced (↑ asker clarifications)

Conclusions

- Diminishing returns from more domain expertise
- Ration most expert answerers for expert askers