The Last Half-Century: A Perspective on Experimentation in Information Retrieval

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Abstract. The experimental evaluation of information retrieval systems has a venerable history. Long before the current notion of a search engine, in fact before search by computer was even feasible, people in the library and information science community were beginning to tackle the evaluation issue. Sometimes it feels as though evaluation methodology has become fixed (stable or frozen, according to your viewpoint). However, this is far from the case. Interest in methodological questions is as great now as it ever was, and new ideas are continuing to develop. This talk will be a personal take on the field.