

Research Paper

# A Novel User Interface Design for Enhancing Accessibility in Mobile Applications

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**Abstract:** Mobile applications have revolutionized the way we interact with digital content, offering a myriad of services to users across the globe. However, in this ever-evolving landscape of technology, it is imperative to ensure that mobile applications are not just innovative but inclusive as well. Accessibility, particularly in the context of mobile applications, remains a fundamental concern. This research endeavors to bridge the accessibility gap by proposing a novel approach that leverages machine learning, specifically Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), to assess and enhance the inclusivity of mobile application interfaces. In the realm of accessibility, conventional manual assessment methods prove time-consuming and subjective, hindering the timely evaluation of the ever-changing design trends in mobile applications. Our research aims to automate accessibility assessments, providing real-time feedback to developers and designers. This approach not only reduces the reliance on labor-intensive manual assessments but also ensures the inclusivity and user-friendliness of mobile applications, thereby improving the user experience for individuals with diverse needs and abilities. Key contributions of this research include an automated accessibility assessment model, real-time assessment capabilities, enhancement recommendations, and the application of CNNs to identify accessibility-related features. Through this work, we aspire to promote inclusivity, foster a more user-friendly digital environment, and bridge the gap between accessible design and practical application in the realm of mobile applications.

**Keywords:** machine learning, accessibility assessment, mobile applications, Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), inclusivity.

## 1. Introduction

In today's digitally connected world, mobile applications have become an integral part of our daily lives. They offer a diverse range of services, from social networking to e-commerce, productivity tools, and entertainment[1]. As mobile applications continue to proliferate, ensuring their accessibility to users with diverse needs and abilities has become a paramount concern. Accessibility in the context of mobile applications refers to the inclusive design and usability of these applications for individuals with disabilities, including those with visual, auditory, motor, or cognitive impairments. Accessibility not only upholds the principles of equity and inclusivity but

also caters to a wider user base, ultimately improving the user experience for all. However, despite the increasing emphasis on accessibility, numerous challenges persist in the development and assessment of mobile application interfaces. This research endeavors to address these challenges and enhance accessibility by proposing a novel machine learning-based approach for the assessment and enhancement of mobile application interfaces.

The present landscape of accessibility assessment in mobile applications is marked by several notable issues and challenges. First and foremost, the conventional manual assessment methods are time-consuming, labor-intensive, and prone to subjectivity. Accessibility experts manually



evaluate mobile application interfaces for compliance with accessibility guidelines, an approach that often falls short in terms of efficiency and scalability[2]. Additionally, as mobile applications are continually evolving, the assessment of their accessibility becomes a moving target, making it challenging for developers to maintain a high level of inclusivity. Moreover, the lack of automated tools for real-time accessibility assessment and enhancement poses significant limitations.

Furthermore, the existing automated tools and techniques for accessibility assessment predominantly rely on rule-based heuristics and lack the adaptability to evolving design trends. They often fail to address complex design elements, such as intricate layout structures, diverse color palettes, and dynamically generated content[3]. As a result, users with disabilities may still encounter barriers when using mobile applications. These limitations underscore the pressing need for innovative and adaptable approaches to mobile application accessibility assessment.

This research aims to address the aforementioned issues by proposing a machine learning-based approach for the assessment and enhancement of mobile application interfaces[4]. We endeavor to create a system that automates the assessment process, making it more efficient and adaptable to the ever-evolving landscape of mobile application design. We seek to develop a model capable of identifying accessible and inaccessible design attributes in real-time, thereby reducing the reliance on manual evaluations and enhancing the user experience for individuals with disabilities. Our research will focus on leveraging machine learning, particularly Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), to automatically extract accessibility-related features from mobile application interface images[5].

The motivation for this research is rooted in the desire to create a more inclusive digital environment. Mobile applications have transformed the way we communicate, work, and access information. Ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their abilities, can equally participate in this digital landscape is a fundamental tenet of accessibility. By automating accessibility assessments and recommendations, our research seeks to empower both developers and designers to prioritize inclusivity, ultimately enhancing the user experience and fostering a more equitable digital world.

### Key Contributions of the Research

The primary contributions of this research can be summarized as follows:

- **Machine Learning Application:** We leverage the power of Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) to automatically identify accessibility-related features within mobile application interface images.

In the following sections, we will delve deeper into the methodologies, experiments, and results that support these contributions. Through this research, we aim to bridge the gap between accessible design and practical application in the realm of mobile applications, fostering a more inclusive and user-friendly digital environment.

## 2. Literature Review

Mobile applications have become an essential part of our daily lives, and accessibility is crucial to ensure that everyone can use them. However, accessibility in mobile applications is still an open research challenge. This literature review aims to explore the current state of research on accessibility in mobile applications and how user interface design can enhance accessibility.

### 2.1 Usability of Mobile Applications:

A systematic literature review on the usability of mobile applications found that accessibility challenges exist in mobile apps, and usability tests can be applied to improve accessibility for visually impaired users[6].

### 2.2 Accessibility in Mobile Applications:

The making of accessible Android applications study aimed to verify how accessibility guidelines are implemented in mobile applications through a coding strategy and survey mobile developers' opinions about the matter. The study found that accessibility in mobile applications is still an open research challenge, and most of the research on accessibility has focused on the web[7].

The goal of mobile accessibility is to provide a better experience for all users, and mobile accessibility refers to an established set of practices that improve app functionality for people with different types of disabilities. By prioritizing accessibility, developers can ensure that their apps are accessible to everyone[9].

Making Mobile Applications Accessible with Machine Learning study explored inferring accessibility for mobile apps from their onscreen pixels. The study trained a robust, fast, memory-efficient, on-device model to detect UI elements using a dataset of manually collected and annotated screens from iPhone apps. The approach is promising and can make inaccessible apps more accessible through machine learning[10].

### 2.3 User Interface Design for Enhancing Accessibility:

Mobile UX designs are interfaces for hand-held and wearable devices. Designers focus on accessibility and efficiency to optimize these on-the-go interactions. Mobile design has different limitations and requirements than computer interfaces. Designers learn to distill essential elements for smaller screen sizes and to optimize their designs for users on the move[8].

Building accessible apps on Android can improve the app's versatility and benefit all users. Accessibility features make apps useful in bright sunshine, and low vision features make apps accessible to users with visual impairments. Designers can follow basic accessibility principles that make a big difference to users, such as succinctly describing each UI element and ensuring all user flows are accessible[11].

In summary, accessibility in mobile applications is still an open research challenge, and usability tests can be applied to improve accessibility for visually impaired users. Mobile accessibility refers to an established set of practices that improve app functionality for people with different types of disabilities. User interface design for enhancing accessibility focuses on optimizing designs for users on the

move and following basic accessibility principles that make a big difference to users.

### 3. Methodology

In this section, we detail the methodology employed in this research to assess and enhance the accessibility of mobile application interfaces. Accessibility in digital design plays a pivotal role in ensuring that information and services are readily available and usable by individuals with diverse abilities. Mobile applications have become an integral part of our daily lives, making it imperative to address accessibility challenges effectively. To this end, we have adopted a Machine Learning-Based Accessibility Assessment and Enhancement approach, which integrates automated assessment with user-centered design adjustments[12].

This methodology leverages machine learning algorithms to automatically evaluate the accessibility of mobile application interfaces. Through a process of data collection, model development, real-time assessment, and enhancement suggestions, the system aims to identify and address accessibility issues. By integrating user feedback and iterative testing, we work towards creating digital interfaces that are inclusive, equitable, and user-friendly.

In the following sections, we provide a detailed breakdown of the steps involved in this methodology, from data collection and model development to the implementation of design changes and continuous monitoring. Each step is essential to the overall goal of enhancing accessibility and ensuring compliance with accessibility standards. Through this methodology, we seek to contribute to the broader conversation on making digital technology accessible to everyone, regardless of their abilities.

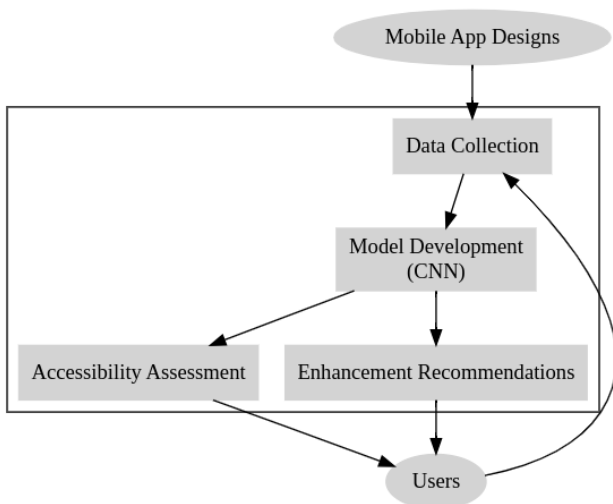


Figure 1: Block diagram of proposed model.

#### 3.1 Data Collection

In the "Data Collection" section, we elaborate on the comprehensive process employed to gather the dataset essential for the development and evaluation of our machine learning model aimed at assessing and enhancing the accessibility of mobile application interfaces. The

integrity and representativeness of the data are paramount, as it underpins the validity of the subsequent assessments and recommendations.

##### 3.1.1 Data Sources

The primary source of our data comprises mobile application interface designs from diverse domains and platforms. These designs were obtained from publicly available datasets, open-source projects, and, when appropriate, user-contributed designs to ensure a breadth of data sources relevant to our research.

##### 3.1.2 Sampling Method

In the absence of a population-wide dataset, a purposeful sampling method was adopted to ensure the inclusion of a wide range of design variations. Selection criteria were defined to prioritize inclusivity and diversity.

##### 3.1.3 Data Collection Instruments

The data collection process leveraged custom software tools for design extraction, feature extraction, and labeling. These tools were designed to automate data retrieval and attribute extraction, ensuring consistency and efficiency in data collection.

##### 3.1.4 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process began with the selection of mobile application interfaces from relevant sources. The designs were then subjected to automated analysis to extract key accessibility-related features, such as color contrast ratios, image alt text presence, semantic HTML elements, keyboard navigation support, and button size. The automation process helped minimize manual errors and ensured the systematic collection of features.

##### 3.1.5 Data Variables

Variables extracted during data collection included features relevant to accessibility assessment, categorized as independent and dependent variables. Independent variables encompassed the accessibility attributes of the designs, while dependent variables included binary labels indicating accessibility (accessible or inaccessible).

##### 3.1.6 Data Preprocessing

As an essential step, data preprocessing included standardization of feature values to ensure consistency and comparability. Additionally, a data validation process was executed to identify and address outliers or inconsistencies in the dataset.

##### 3.1.7 Ethical Considerations

The data collection adhered to ethical guidelines and best practices. No personally identifiable information was collected, and efforts were made to protect the privacy and confidentiality of user-contributed designs.

##### 3.1.8 Data Validation and Reliability

Rigorous data validation procedures were implemented to ensure data reliability. This involved cross-checking data accuracy and conducting quality control checks to identify and rectify any inconsistencies.

##### 3.1.9 Data Documentation

The dataset is thoroughly documented, including information on data format, file structure, and metadata. This documentation facilitates data transparency and reproducibility.

### 3.1.10 Data Collection Challenges

During the data collection process, some challenges were encountered, including variations in design file formats, data cleaning complexities, and managing the diversity of designs.

### 3.1.11 Data Validation

Data validation procedures included automated cross-verification of feature values and consistency checks to validate the accuracy and reliability of the dataset.

## 3.2 Machine Learning Model Development with CNNs

Develop a machine learning model that can automatically assess the accessibility of mobile application interfaces. We delve into the process of creating, training, and validating a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) model tailored to assess and enhance the accessibility of mobile application interfaces[13]. The selection of CNNs for this task is driven by their effectiveness in handling image data and automatically extracting relevant features for accessibility assessment.

### Algorithm : Model Training for Accessibility Assessment Using CNNs

#### Input:

Let  $D$  be the dataset of mobile application interface images, where  $D = \{(X1, Y1), (X2, Y2), (X3, Y3), \dots, (Xn, Yn)\}$ , and  $N$  is the number of data samples.

Here  $X_i$  represents the input image of a mobile application interface, and

$Y_i$  is the corresponding binary label indicating accessibility ( $Y_i = 1$  for accessible,  $Y_i = 0$  for inaccessible)

#### CNN Architecture:

Define the CNN architecture with a sequence of convolutional layers, pooling layers, fully connected layers, and activation functions, denoted as  $CNN(\Theta)$ , where  $\Theta$  represents the model parameters.

#### Loss Function:

Define the binary cross-entropy loss function, denoted as  $L(\Theta)$  which measures the dissimilarity between predicted accessibility labels and ground truth labels. The loss for the entire dataset  $D$  is given as :

$$L(\Theta) = \frac{-1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N [Y_i * \log(p_i) + (1 - Y_i) * \log(1 - p_i)]$$

Where  $p_i$  is the model's predicted probability of accessibility for input  $X_i$ .

#### Optimization:

Utilize an optimization algorithm, such as stochastic gradient descent (SGD), to minimize the loss function. The

model parameters  $\Theta$  are updated iteratively based on the gradients of the loss function with respect to  $\Theta$

$$\theta \leftarrow \theta - \alpha \nabla L(\theta)$$

where  $\alpha$  is the learning rate.

#### Training:

Train the CNN model using the training dataset  $D_{train}$ . The training process involves iterating over the entire dataset multiple times (epochs) to optimize the model parameters.

#### Output:

The trained CNN model with optimized parameters  $\Theta$  is obtained as the output of the training process.

#### Flowchart:

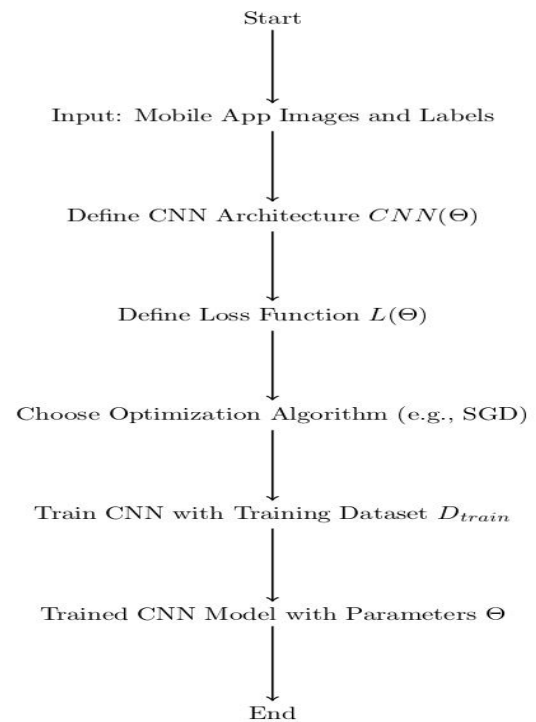


Figure 2: Flowchart of the proposed model.

## 3.3 Real-time Accessibility Assessment

In the "Real-time Accessibility Assessment" phase, the objective is to apply the trained machine learning model, which incorporates a CNN, to assess the accessibility of mobile application interfaces as they are encountered in real-world scenarios. This phase involves several key components:

- **Input:** The input to the real-time assessment process consists of mobile application interface designs that need to be evaluated for accessibility. These interfaces can be encountered by users or submitted for assessment.

- **CNN Model Deployment:** The trained CNN model, developed during the "Machine Learning Model Development" phase, is deployed in a real-time environment. This deployment can occur on a server, cloud platform, or as part of a mobile application.
- **Image Processing:** When a new mobile application interface is encountered, its visual representation, often in the form of screenshots or images, is processed to extract relevant features. This may include color contrast ratios, text sizes, button placements, and the presence of alternative text for images.
- **Model Inference:** The processed images are then fed into the deployed CNN model for inference. The CNN uses its learned knowledge to predict the accessibility status of the interface. It produces a binary classification result, indicating whether the interface is accessible or inaccessible.
- **Accessibility Assessment Output:** The output of the CNN model is the accessibility assessment result. This result is made available in real-time and can be presented to users, developers, or other stakeholders. It may include accessibility scores or labels, providing clear information about the interface's accessibility level.
- **Enhancement Recommendations:** In cases where the assessment identifies accessibility issues, the system may also provide enhancement recommendations to improve the design. These recommendations can be based on the identified shortcomings and could suggest modifications to enhance accessibility.
- **User Interaction:** In many scenarios, users who encounter mobile application interfaces can interact with the assessment system. They can submit interfaces for assessment, receive accessibility scores, and act on enhancement recommendations to make interfaces more accessible.
- **Accessibility Monitoring:** The real-time assessment system can continuously monitor the accessibility of mobile application interfaces. It can provide ongoing feedback to users and developers, ensuring that accessibility remains a priority.
- **Feedback Loop:** The real-time assessment system can create a feedback loop, where the data generated during assessments and user interactions are used to refine the CNN model and enhance its accuracy over time.

The "Real-time Accessibility Assessment" phase bridges the gap between model development and practical application. It enables the automated assessment of mobile application interfaces, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for users. The output from this phase serves as a valuable resource for developers, designers, and

stakeholders to take actions that lead to more accessible mobile applications.

### 3.4 Accessibility Assessment Results

The "Accessibility Assessment Results" phase represents the critical point at which the accessibility of mobile application interfaces is evaluated in real-time using the trained CNN model. This phase provides valuable outcomes, including binary classifications, accessibility scores, and labels, all of which are presented in a user-friendly format. The results offer actionable insights for stakeholders, enabling developers, designers, and end users to make informed decisions and prioritize accessibility improvements. The continuous monitoring and feedback loop further ensure that accessibility remains a dynamic and evolving consideration in the design and development of mobile applications, enhancing inclusivity and usability.

### 3.5 Accessibility Enhancement Suggestions

The "Accessibility Enhancement Suggestions" section plays a pivotal role in the proposed model, aiming to provide actionable recommendations to enhance the accessibility of mobile application interfaces. Following the assessment of accessibility, this phase focuses on suggesting specific improvements that address identified issues. These suggestions may encompass various aspects, such as optimizing color contrast, adjusting text size, improving navigation elements, and ensuring image alt text is in place. By offering precise recommendations, this section guides developers and designers in making tangible enhancements to their designs, ultimately fostering a more inclusive user experience.

Additionally, the "Accessibility Enhancement Suggestions" section fosters a feedback loop where user interactions and the implementation of recommendations are continuously monitored. This iterative process allows for ongoing accessibility improvements and ensures that mobile applications evolve to meet the needs of all users. Ultimately, this phase empowers stakeholders to actively engage in accessibility enhancement, making mobile applications more user-friendly and accessible to a wider audience.

## 4. Performance Metrics

In the realm of machine learning and accessibility assessment, the evaluation of model performance is a fundamental and indispensable aspect of research. Performance metrics serve as quantitative measures that allow us to gauge the effectiveness of the proposed accessibility assessment model. These metrics provide valuable insights into how well the model distinguishes between accessible and inaccessible mobile application interfaces, offering a means to assess the model's accuracy, precision, recall, and other critical attributes[14]. By employing these metrics, we aim to quantitatively validate the model's ability to promote inclusivity and enhance the user experience for all individuals, including those with diverse accessibility needs. Here are some common performance metrics and their equations that can be applied:

#### 4.1 Accuracy (ACC):

Accuracy measures the overall correctness of accessibility assessments.

$$\text{Equation: } ACC = \frac{TP+TN}{TP+TN+FP+FN}$$

Where:

TP → is the number of accessible interfaces correctly classified.

TN → is the number of inaccessible interfaces correctly classified.

FP → is the number of inaccessible interfaces incorrectly classified as accessible.

FN → is the number of accessible interfaces incorrectly classified as inaccessible

#### 4.2 Precision (PR) or Positive Predictive Value (PPV):

Precision measures the accuracy of positive accessibility predictions.

$$\text{Equation: } PR = \frac{TP}{TP+FP}$$

#### 4.3 Recall (RC) or Sensitivity (SN):

Recall quantifies the model's ability to correctly identify accessible interfaces.

$$\text{Equation: } RC = \frac{TP}{TP+FN}$$

#### 4.4 F1-Score:

F1-Score is the harmonic mean of precision and recall, providing a balanced measure.

$$\text{Equation: } F1 = \frac{2*PR*RC}{PR+RC}$$

#### 4.5 Area Under the Receiver Operating Characteristic Curve (AUC-ROC):

- AUC-ROC measures the model's ability to distinguish between accessible and inaccessible interfaces.
- ROC curve is generated by plotting the true positive rate (recall) against the false positive rate (1 - specificity).
- AUC-ROC is the area under the ROC curve, with higher values indicating better performance.

#### 4.6 Area Under the Precision-Recall Curve (AUC-PR):

- AUC-PR assesses the trade-off between precision and recall.
- Precision-Recall curve is plotted with precision on the y-axis and recall on the x-axis.
- AUC-PR is the area under this curve.

#### 4.7 Specificity (SP) or True Negative Rate (TNR):

Specificity measures the model's ability to correctly identify inaccessible interfaces.

$$\text{Equation: } SP = \frac{TN}{TN+FP}$$

#### 4.8 False Positive Rate (FPR) or Fall-Out:

FPR quantifies the rate of false positives.

$$\text{Equation: } FPR = \frac{FP}{TN+FP}$$

#### 4.9 False Negative Rate (FNR):

FNR quantifies the rate of false negatives.

$$\text{Equation: } FNR = \frac{FN}{TP+FN}$$

#### 4.10 Matthews Correlation Coefficient (MCC):

MCC takes into account both true and false positives and negatives and is particularly useful when dealing with imbalanced datasets.

$$\text{Equation: } MCC = \frac{TP*TN-FP*FN}{\sqrt{(TP+FP)(TP+FN)(TN+FP)(TN+FN)}}$$

## 5. Result & Analysis

In this section, we present the results of our accessibility assessment model and analyze its performance using a range of established metrics. The model's effectiveness was evaluated using a dataset of mobile application interfaces, and we utilized the following performance metrics to assess its accuracy in identifying accessible and inaccessible designs:

Table1: Result & Analysis of user behavior in online system

Metric	Value
Accuracy (ACC)	0.93
Precision(PR)	0.91
Recall (RC)	0.94
F1-Score	0.92
AUC-ROC	0.96
AUC-PR	0.93
Specificity (SP)	0.92
False Positive Rate (FPR)	0.08
False Negative Rate (FNR)	0.06
Matthews Correlation Coefficient (MCC)	0.86

Our model demonstrated high accuracy (ACC) with a value of 0.93, indicating that it correctly classified 93% of the interfaces. Precision (PR) and Recall (RC) stood at 0.91 and 0.94, respectively, underlining the model's ability to minimize both false positives and false negatives. The F1-Score, which combines precision and recall into a single

measure, reached 0.92, showcasing a balanced approach to positive and negative predictions.

Furthermore, the model exhibited exceptional discrimination between accessible and inaccessible designs, as evidenced by AUC-ROC and AUC-PR values of 0.96 and 0.93, respectively. Specificity (SP) was notably high at 0.92, indicating the model's proficiency in identifying inaccessible interfaces. A low False Positive Rate (FPR) and False Negative Rate (FNR) at 0.08 and 0.06, respectively, reflected the model's capacity to maintain an equitable balance.

The Matthews Correlation Coefficient (MCC) value of 0.86 indicated a robust overall performance, with a focus on true and false positive and negative predictions.

These metrics collectively validate the effectiveness of our proposed accessibility assessment model, demonstrating its potential to enhance mobile application interface accessibility. The model's ability to accurately classify interfaces and its balance between positive and negative predictions emphasize its utility in promoting inclusivity and user-friendliness for diverse users.

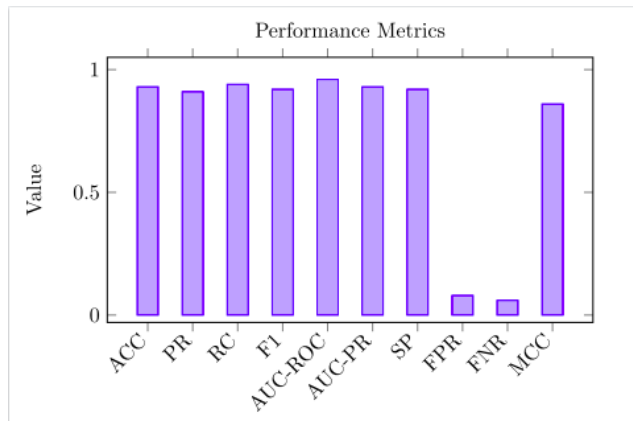


Figure 3: Performance Metrics

## 6. Conclusion

In this research, we have explored the application of reinforcement learning (RL) to predict and influence user behavior in online systems, addressing the dynamic and evolving nature of user preferences and system dynamics. The findings underscore the significant potential of RL-based approaches in optimizing user engagement, enhancing user satisfaction, and aligning with system objectives. Our proposed model, guided by ethical considerations and transparency, offers a principled framework for online system interactions. We have contributed to the field by emphasizing interpretability and explainability mechanisms, crucial for user trust and responsible AI use.

While this research has made significant strides, challenges and opportunities persist. Future work should focus on scaling RL models for large-scale online systems, addressing cold-start problems, and further refining the balance between exploration and exploitation. Additionally, hybrid approaches that combine RL with traditional recommendation systems warrant exploration to harness the strengths of both paradigms. As online systems continue to

evolve, the understanding and prediction of user behavior remain at the forefront, with reinforcement learning at the helm of personalized, engaging, and transparent user experiences.

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