Mouse Trail Leads to Online Shoppers

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Emory computer scientists Eugene Agichtein and Qi Guo have developed on online tool that helps predict whether a person intends to buy or to browse by tracking the cursor movements.

"We used controlled experiments to develop a model for the way people use a computer mouse when they plan to make a purchase," explains Agichtein, assistant professor of mathematics and computer science.

"When we apply this shopping model to data from actual Web users in an uncontrolled environment, it correlates to a doubling of the ad click-through rate."

Agichtein and Guo, a graduate student, will present their findings this month at the SIGIR 2010 conference in Geneva, Switzerland. SIGIR is the leading forum for innovations in information retrieval and Web

search.

Patterns of computer mouse behavior vary a great deal, depending on the habits of the user, Agichtein says. "A lot of skeptics have felt that mouse movement is too varied to be useful, but our study shows that it can be a valuable indicator of a searcher's intent."

Provided by Emory University