

The Yelp Collaborative Knowledge Graph

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Abstract

Yelp Open Dataset (YOD) is a widely used dataset for Recommender Systems (RS). Multiple Knowledge Graphs (KGs) have been built for YOD, but they have various issues: the conversion processes usually do not follow state-of-the-art methodologies, fail to properly link to other KGs, do not link to existing vocabularies, ignore important data, and are generally of small size. Instead, we present the Yelp Collaborative Knowledge Graph (YCKG), where we correctly integrate taxonomies, product categories, business locations, and the Yelp social network, through common practices within the semantic web community, overcoming all these issues. As a result, the YCKG includes 150k businesses and 16.9M reviews from 1.9M distinct real users, resulting in over 244 million triples, 144 distinct predicates, for about 72 million resources, with an average in-degree and out-degree of 3.3 and 12.2, respectively. Further, we release both the data and the code used to generate the KG for inspection and further extensions. This dataset can be used to develop and test both recommendation and data-mining algorithms able to exploit rich and semantically meaningful knowledge. We publicize the code for the CKG construction on: <https://github.com/MadsCorfixen/The-Yelp-Collaborative-Knowledge-Graph>.

CCS Concepts

• **Information systems** → **Test collections**; **Relational database model**; *Open source software*; **Collaborative filtering**; **Social recommendation**; **Ontologies**.

Keywords

Dataset, Recommender systems, Knowledge graph, Open data

ACM Reference Format:

Theis E. Jendal, Mads Corfixen, Magnus Olesen, Peter Dolog, Katja Hose, Daniele Dell’Aglio, and Matteo Lissandrini. 2025. The Yelp Collaborative Knowledge Graph. In *Proceedings of the 34th ACM International Conference on Information and Knowledge Management (CIKM ’25)*, November 10–14, 2025, Seoul, Republic of Korea. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 6 pages. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3746252.3761615>



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ACM ISBN 979-8-4007-2040-6/2025/11
<https://doi.org/10.1145/3746252.3761615>

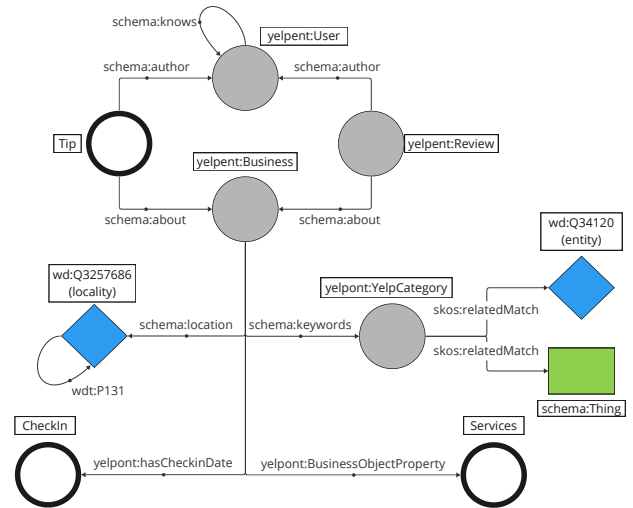


Figure 1: The structure of the YCKG. Circles represent Yelp IRIs, non-filled circles blank nodes, squares Schema.org IRIs, and diamonds Wikidata IRIs.

1 Introduction

In the Recommender System (RS) domain, there is an abundance of datasets describing products, businesses, and their customer relationships (e.g., ratings and reviews). Such data is exploited to build better services powered by intelligent recommendations. Many RSs adopt Collaborative Filtering (CF) [3, 10, 15, 41, 42], which assumes users with similar past behavior have similar preferences; more advanced methods extend this by using contextual information, such as taxonomies or item descriptions to handle sparse interactions [2, 12, 21, 22, 41]. With the increasing popularity of KGs, the RS community gained interest in exploiting KGs as a technology to organize contextual information [2, 12]. In these cases, the collaborative information is modeled as a bipartite graph with users, products, and their interactions. Moreover, the products are enriched with connections between themselves, and to non-recommendable entities (e.g., categories or descriptive entities), resulting in a Collaborative Knowledge Graph (CKG). However, none of the existing datasets fully utilize standard Semantic Web methodologies when creating a domain-specific KG to test RS (Table 1), with no standard ontologies or vocabularies being adopted or defined. This has been the case also for the Yelp Open Dataset (YOD) [46]. In the

Table 1: Existing CKGs: showing the statistics of the most sound. We use “” to represent availability of the original collaborative information and CKG. The method used for the CKG construction: crawling N-Hops connections from aligned entities, Hand Selected (HS) relations, or converting Attributes to nodes instead linking to an External KG. #U, #I, #E, and #P are the number of users, items, entities (w/o item and review nodes), and predicates, respectively. We define three levels of soundness: ✓ utilizes Semantic Web approaches for construction; (✓) connected to an open-domain KG; and ✗ no theory or open-domain KG adoption;**

| Domain | Original data | CKG | Ext. KG | Method | #U | #I | #E | #P | Sound |
|--------|---------------------|-------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|------------|-----|-------|
| Movie | MovieLens20m* [13] | [17] | Freebase | 1-Hop | 61,583 | 19,533 | 1,125,100 | 81 | (✓) |
| | | [38]* | Satori | 1-Hop | 138,159 | 16,954 | 102,569 | 32 | (✓) |
| | | [18]* | Freebase | 1-Hop | 138,287 | 13,047 | 40,529 | 66 | (✓) |
| | MindReader* [3] | [3]* | WikiData | HS | 1,174 | 9,000 | 10,030 | 8 | (✓) |
| Book | Book-Crossing* [51] | [38] | Satori | 1-Hop | 70,679 | 24,915 | 88,572 | 39 | (✓) |
| | | [36]* | Satori | 4-Hop | 17,860 | 14,967 | - | - | (✓) |
| | | [50]* | Freebase | 2-Hop | 70,679 | 24,915 | 88,572 | 39 | (✓) |
| | Amazon Book* [14] | [50]* | Freebase | 2-Hop | 70,679 | 24,915 | 88,572 | 39 | (✓) |
| | DBBook2014* [27] | [4]* | DBPedia | 1-Hop | 5,576 | 2,680 | 13,882 | 13 | (✓) |
| Music | Last.FM* [31] | [50]* | Freebase | 2-Hop | 23,566 | 48,123 | 58,266 | 9 | (✓) |
| | | [38]* | Satori | 1-Hop | 1,872 | 3,846 | 9,366 | 60 | (✓) |
| POI | Yelp2018* [46] | [45]* | Freebase | 2-hop | 45,919 | 45,538 | 47,472 | 42 | (✓) |
| | | [41]* | - | Attribute | 45,919 | 45,538 | 90,961 | 42 | |
| | | [48] | - | Attribute | 43,873 | 11,537 | 285,317 | 4 | |
| | | [49]* | - | Attribute | 36,105 | 22,496 | 1121 | 9 | |
| | | [35] | - | Attribute | 37,940 | 11,516 | 46,606 | 7 | |
| | | [16] | - | Attribute | 16,239 | 14,284 | 558 | 4 | |
| | | Ours* | Schema & Wikidata | HS | 1,987,897 | 150,346 | 67,238,177 | 267 | ✓ |

past, the Yelp2018 dataset [35, 41, 48] has already been converted to a CKG, to evaluate recommender systems that can exploit data represented as a graph. Unfortunately, as we describe below, past approaches, the original JSON dump has been directly converted to a set of triples, meaning the JSON node represents the whole JSON object instead of its constituents. It does not preserve all the original data, ignoring e.g. tips and social information. Among others, the heterogeneous graphs constructed with attribute-based methods omit a lot of semantic information. Existing KGs constructed by methods based on k-hops, on the other hand, have poor coverage of entities of the original Yelp dataset. To overcome these limitations, we release Y2KG [9], a tool to create the Yelp Collaborative KG (YCKG), a KG for the YOD, which contains data on more than 8 million entities, mostly businesses and reviews, while preserving almost all the metadata and semantic descriptions attached to them (see Figure 1). Thus, we present the first conversion of the YOD to a domain-specific KG, providing full coverage of users and items, the YCKG, while aiming to adhere to standards and best practices.

In this work, we thus present: (i) a sound methodology and a tool for converting the YOD to a CKG, (ii) an ontology for the YOD, and (iii) a methodology for mapping categories and locations to entities. The resulting open dataset [8], thus, features: (a) the first CKG released in standard-compliant RDF based on semantic design principles, (b) the first CKG with social information, and (c) the largest CKG for YOD. Specifically, our graph has over 244 million triples, approximately 72 million resources, 144 predicates, with the average in-degree and out-degrees being 3.35 and 12.20 respectively. Linking 310 Yelp categories to *schema.org* types, 136 of which linked to Wikidata entities, and further linking businesses to entities representing cities, counties, and states.

2 Related Work

KGs combined with user-item interactions, referred to as CKGs, provide contextual information connecting rated items to other

descriptive entities [3, 32, 35, 36, 41]. A single interaction, therefore, provides information not only about the individual item but also the relations to other similar items and thus it is possible to derive also information about users in sparse settings [41]. Some methods exploiting KGs are designed to provide explanations for increased user trust in the recommendation, such as “...because the user likes Italian restaurants with private parking”, which can be described as paths and relations in a KG [18, 34, 41].

Yet, most existing recommendation benchmark datasets do not have a KG, e.g., Amazon Book [14], DBBook2014 [27], Yelp [46], Last FM [31], and MovieLens [13]. Hence, approaches using KG information often construct their own KG [7, 12]. The KG creation processes utilized rarely adopt state-of-the-art methodologies and design principles. Table 1 is a summary of related KG datasets and the representative methods utilizing those datasets. Detailed overviews can be found in related works [7, 12]. We find that none of the existing datasets fully adopt standard Semantic Web methodologies when creating a domain-specific KG, e.g., no standard ontology or vocabulary is adopted or defined. We highlight that the version of KGs for the Yelp Open Dataset (YOD) currently used by most methods suffers from the following issues: (i) containing few triples (approximately 2 million[41]) while YOD contains almost 7 million reviews about more than 130K businesses; (ii) disregard social network information; (iii) does not link to any open-domain KG¹; and (iv) treat serialized JSON objects as single node identifiers, disregarding in this way the rich set of attributes they contain. This results in a large information loss and to widely varying numbers of users, items, entities, and relations across datasets, making subsequent evaluations across methods difficult or impossible.

Therefore without a high-quality KGs it is practically impossible to study and test advanced methods able to exploit such rich data. Given the YOD popularity in the RS community [15, 25, 42] and its frequent adoption for evaluating RS with KG information [6, 32, 33,

¹Freebase has remained unmaintained since 2015 [11].

Table 2: Yelp Open Dataset JSON files.

| File | Size | #Objects |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| Business | 113 MB | 150,346 |
| Checkin | 274 MB | 131,930 |
| Review | 4,980 MB | 6,990,280 |
| Tip | 172 MB | 908,915 |
| User | 3,130 MB | 1,987,897 |

Figure 2: Popular business over time.

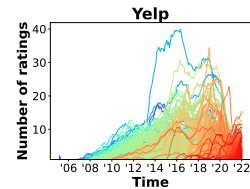


Table 3: Validation of the competency questions.

| Competency Question | Answer | Validated? |
|---|-----------|------------|
| 1 How many different types of businesses are defined in Yelp? | 1,311 | Yes |
| 2 How many businesses of type "Restaurants" exist? | 52,268 | Yes |
| 3 How many businesses of type "Restaurants" have been reviewed? | 52,268 | Yes |
| 4 How many businesses have been reviewed? | 150,346 | Yes |
| 5 How many businesses have, on average, a rating above 4? | 43,499 | Yes |
| 6 What is the average rating across businesses? | 3.5957 | Yes |
| 7 How many businesses have been reviewed in Santa Barbara, CA? | 3,829 | Yes |
| 8 What business has the highest number of visits in one day? | 465 | Yes |
| 9 How many visits does the most visited business have? | 52,144 | Yes |
| 10 How many people have written a review on Yelp? | 1,987,929 | Yes |
| 11 How many users have more than 10 friends? | 758,803 | Yes |
| 12 How many friends does a user have on average? | 52.93 | Yes |
| 13 How many users have authored 10 reviews? | 14,119 | Yes |
| 14 How many reviews did users make in May 2018? | 79,434 | Yes |
| 15 How many parking options can a business provide? | 5 | Yes |
| 16 How many businesses have karaoke? | 75 | Yes |
| 17 How many people live in Indianapolis? | 887,642 | Yes |
| 18 How many cities are in the state of Florida? | 391 | Yes |

35, 41, 48, 49], we select it as a focus of this work. Different from existing YOD-based KGs, we establish clear competency questions to define the requirements for the KG [1] and align the KG with open-domain ontologies, taxonomies, and entities. Obtaining the largest YOD-based KG for testing KG-powered RS.

3 Constructing the YCKG

The YOD dump contains multiple files describing Businesses, Users, and Reviews (Table 2), each having different characteristics. To capture the characteristics in our constructed CKG, we define competency questions, the final schema, and the structure of the YCKG.

Competency Questions. To guide our design of the desired target schema in which to convert the YOD, we listed a series of 16 competency questions [1]. These competency questions have been designed to ensure that no data is lost during the data conversion process while also guiding the integration of external data. They are supposed to be very simple questions to guide the data modeling, while our resulting resource can both express and support answers to more complex and advanced data mining tasks and research applications. We then used these competency questions to verify the appropriateness and quality of the CKG and of the data conversion process. This provides us the guarantee that all the relevant data has been converted successfully and that we can identify contextual information about businesses and user social networks and preferences. We define the questions in Table 3 and validate that our CKG is capable of answering them.

Conversion to RDF. Given the requirements derived from the competency questions above, we design the Y2KG [9], a tool to losslessly convert the YOD, which is a set of five newline-delimited JSON files, into a KG serialized as RDF triples in a set of N-Triple files. The structure of the YCKG is shown in Figure 1.

The JSON files contain a distinct object on each line, so that each entity of interest corresponds to a line in the file with the first key/value pair indicating the object ID. This ID is used to create an IRI for the User, Business, and Review nodes. As neither Tips nor Checkins have IDs, we represent them as blank nodes. Each Yelp Entity Business, Review, and Checkin node is then associated, through `rdf:type`, to Schema.org classes' `LocalBusiness`, `UserReview`, and `ArriveAction`. As Schema.org does not include a class for Tip, we define it in the Yelp Vocabulary [47].

The keys in each key/value pair in the JSON objects are usually mapped to RDF properties, and their values to RDF terms, which can be either literals or resources. We have manually inspected all the properties and associated them to Schema.org properties whenever possible². When the attribute values are strings representing lists or maps, we map them to blank nodes annotated by properties. In the dataset, there are a total of 8 different distinct types of attributes that in the conversion process are mapped to as many distinct types of blank nodes. For categories, we instantiate a URI for every category in the Yelp dataset, for a total of 1,304 distinct business categories. For attributes for which we could not find a match in *Schema.org*, we create a property in the Yelp vocabulary instead. In total we have re-used 22 properties from the Schema.org vocabulary, and 116 are created in the Yelp vocabulary.

4 Enriching the YCKG

The YOD provides mentions to categories and products that can be mapped to Wikidata entities or Schema.org concepts. The following describes the automatic process used for this mapping.

Mapping Yelp Categories to Schema.org. We identify candidate matches between Yelp categories and Schema.org terms by using word embeddings. In practice, we use a sentence transformer [19, 30] to map both labels of Yelp categories and labels of the Schema.org types to the same 384-dimensional vector space. Then, given a label of a Yelp category and the corresponding vector, the *Schema.org* type with the highest cosine similarity of its vectors is chosen as the candidate mapping.

Mappings to Wikidata. We also link the YCKG to Wikidata entities, both for the case of business categories and for business locations, allowing users of YCKG to use LLMs by querying Wikipedia for textual descriptions [28]. To map business categories, we exploit the information already present in Wikidata. Specifically, Wikidata includes some mappings to Schema.org resources using the "equivalent class" property (`wdt:P1709`). We further link the Yelp locations to Wikidata locations. Hence, we start by collecting from the YOD all the distinct (city, state)-pairs and the associated geo-location of the businesses. We group businesses by the (city, state)-pair, computing the centroid of the group to get a general geographical location. Then, for each (city, state)-pair, we find potential Wikidata QID matches by submitting a search query to the MediaWiki Wikibase API [26]. Allowing for automatic disambiguation of the pairs in the YOD to Wikidata-locations based on their coordinates.

5 Evaluation and Analysis

We present some relevant statistics extracted from YCKG (Table 4). The YCKG contains more than 242M facts about 10.4M subjects using 144 unique predicates. Around half of the triples are associated to the social network component (through the `schema:knows` relation in Figure 1), which is a rich resource that can be exploited when trying to infer user preferences from the past preferences of their social circle. Related to this, the average outdegree of nodes representing users is 74, since, as shown below (Table 3), we see that on average users have 52 friends; the remaining edges link to

²Note that some attributes are nested within a JSON object for the key attributes. Since the key itself does not carry any meaningful context for the business, the key/value pairs are extracted and treated as the other attributes.

Table 4: Basic statistics of the final Yelp knowledge graph.

| Statistic | Result |
|--|-------------|
| Triples | 242,247,823 |
| Unique Subjects | 10,495,829 |
| Unique Objects | 61,450,383 |
| Unique Predicates | 267 |
| Freq. Most Prevalent Predicate (schema:knows) | 105,225,474 |
| Freq. Most Prevalent Class (schema:UserReview) | 6,990,280 |
| Average Indegree (Overall) | 3.35 |
| Average Outdegree (Overall) | 12.20 |
| Average Indegree (Businesses) | 46.49 |
| Average Outdegree (Businesses) | 114.02 |
| Average Indegree (Users) | 3.97 |
| Average Outdegree (Users) | 74.10 |

user metadata. Further, we see reviews represent a core piece of the data, since $\sim 69\%$ of subjects (6.9M) are reviews. Thus, the dataset is extremely well-fitted to train RSs and maintain far more of the original dataset than any existing CKG for YOD (Table 1). Hence, Y2KG (i) preserves orders of magnitude more data than previous efforts, and (ii) introduces high-quality mappings to external resources.

Soundness of the Conversion Script. We use the competency questions (Table 3), released as part of the source code [9], to validate the soundness of the YCKG. The correct results are based on the original dataset and compared to the corresponding SPARQL queries on our CKG. These results illustrate the higher quality of the YCKG compared to the other CKGs outlined in section 2, as these do not preserve the data to answer the competency questions. Interestingly, the results also provide some insights into the contents of the dataset. For instance: there are more than 1.3k categories on Yelp, with $\sim 30\%$ of businesses being restaurants); the average rating is approximately ~ 3.6 while less than 29% of businesses have a rating above 4.0; and the social network portion of the graph is also well connected, with users having on average ~ 53 friends and around 38% of users having more than 10 friends. The YCKG is also one of the few existing datasets that provides timestamps to user-item interactions. In Figure 2, we analyze the number of ratings for the most popular businesses. We see that the number of reviews increases over time, but that the data is also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This pattern suggests that the dataset reflects real-world dynamics, with organically increasing user engagement interrupted by the pandemic.

Evaluating Schema.org Mappings. To ensure the quality of mapped entities, we compute a minimum threshold below which candidate matches are discarded. To estimate the threshold, we sampled and manually mapped 200 random pairs for ground truth labels. By analyzing the recall, precision, and F_1 score, we observed that a similarity above 0.91 are sufficiently reliable to be accepted automatically, which corresponds to 94 mappings to be included in this way. We discarded mappings for 927 Yelp categories and manually verified the remaining 291. Overall, this results in 23.6% of all Yelp categories being mapped to a Schema.org term. Because successfully mapped categories are also the most frequent, such as the Restaurant category, our mappings ensure that 94.6% of businesses (items) have at least one category mapped to a Schema.org term and 85.7% to at least one category mapped to a Wikidata concept.

Evaluating Wikidata Location Mappings. We sample some business locations to estimate the quality of this mapping. In our sample, we achieve precision at the city level of 69%. Our analysis of

Table 5: Related Yelp CKG statistics.

| Dataset | #Reviews | #Relations | CG Density | CKG Density |
|-------------|------------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| [45] | 1,183,610 | 869,603 | 1.42e-04 | 1.06e-04 |
| [41] | 1,185,068 | 1,853,704 | 1.42e-04 | 1.62e-04 |
| [48] | 229,907 | 570,634 | 7.49e-05 | 4.44e-06 |
| [49] | 191,506 | 467,288 | 5.58e-05 | 7.40e-06 |
| [35] | 229,178 | 302,937 | 9.37e-05 | 5.77e-05 |
| [16] | 198,397 | 54,276 | 2.13e-04 | 2.62e-04 |
| Ours | 6,990,280 | 242,247,823 | 1.53e-06 | 5.36e-08 |

the incorrect mappings is grounded in incorrect data in the original YOD, often due to misspellings. Moreover, in our sample we obtain a recall of about 70% since 30% of the corresponding cities are not present in Wikidata. Nonetheless, we have found that across the 1467 unique (*city, state*)-pairs, 783 of them appear only once (i.e., associated with only one business) in the entire dataset. Meaning that the precision does not actually indicate a widespread issue. Focusing only on (*city, state*)-pairs that appear more than once in the dataset, then 99.71% of businesses are assigned to a correct location. Therefore, this dataset present high quality temporal and spatial information for the first time mapped to a high-quality KG.

Use-cases. The dataset has been used in the benchmarking of recommendation approaches [22, 23]. Here it is shown that even purely collaborative-based methods struggle when working on the larger dataset. For example, the best performing model INMO [43] has NDCG@20 0.035 for YCKG [22], while on a smaller Yelp dataset it is 0.065 [43]. This illustrates that more work is needed to make use of the extended dataset in recommender systems. In Table 5, we show that YCKG is far larger than the related works' KG. While the proposed use-case for this dataset is to study recommender systems, it is not limited to this domain. Due to the amount of predicates, node types, and locations, it can be used for node-classification [44], link-prediction [39], POI analysis [20], and LLM improvements [28].

6 Conclusion and Future Work

Existing approaches disregard large portions of the Yelp Open Dataset [46] when converting it to a KG, and thus do not present realistic results and miss important opportunities. For this reason, we present here a tool to convert the YOD from a JSON dump to a standards-compliant knowledge graph in RDF, as well as an ontology for describing the Yelp Open Dataset. Our process allows for the first time the full conversion of the abundant information available in the original dataset. Moreover, it allows for the first time to exploit external knowledge from Schema.org (and its derived taxonomy) and Wikidata to enrich the original data dump with contextual knowledge. In the future, we aim to (a) study methods to extend the quality and coverage of our mappings, (b) extend the adopted technologies like SHACL for validation and `rml.io` for more declarative conversion, and (c) adopt this dataset for a re-evaluation campaign of state-of-the-art recommendation methods.

Acknowledgments

This research was partially funded by the EU's H2020 research innovation programme under grant agreement No 838216, the Poul Due Jensen Foundation, and the Independent Research Fund Denmark (DFF) under grant agreement no. DFF-8048-00051B. We are thankful to Christian F.P. Nielsen and Thomas Heede for their substantial contribution to the initial version of the Y2KG tool.

GenAI Usage Disclosure

Co-pilot was used during code writing. Generative AI has been used for spell checking and grammar, with the initial draft being written without the use of any tools.

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