

EDUCATION & RESEARCH

EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM FOR COLAB STUDIOS

Most computer/cyberspace users have highly idiosyncratic styles. Even those who had some instruction develop their own preferences for using their selected software and their own patterns of online activity. Few people actually observe others working and few have any interest about how others use their computer or cyberspace. Given the great diversity of applications and the many levels of use in each application, it is safe to say that most users actualize only a very small percent of their potential with intelligent tools and cyberspace. Many are quite resistant to learning new applications, and even avoid version updates. Many learn only a few features of an application and refuse to delve deeper into its potentials - some which would make their work easier and more productive.

Because of this situation tested methods for instructing people to use intelligent tools and cyberspace have yet to be developed. This is made more difficult when we consider the vast diversity of cognitive competency and styles in the population. This pilot project will not attempt to solve this large educational problem. However, it will attend to the educational and training needs of all involved, and in doing so may shed some light on the larger issue.

An early project for the colab studio will be to produce training programs for its use.

{Useful here may be the application, Camtasia by TechSmith

<http://www.softwarecasa.com/pprod/212402dd.htm?gclid=CLKwudD7pYsCFRIahgodbSpzdw>

and also to use open source education curriculum software, such as Moodle (<http://moodle.org/>) will also develop a questionnaire inventory of each person's computer/cyberspace knowledge and competencies. This may eventually involve asking them to perform specific tasks and record their behavior for later analysis and feedback.

Training will also be needed for the staff, technicians, and sysops - although they will also be involved in developing training programs for core participants. The amount of training for core participants will depend on the specific nature of their sessions. Some sessions can be conducted with minimal training, others may require considerable training. All training programs will attempt to assess the summative levels acquired in the training, providing remediation training if indicated.

The development and implementation of the training program will be closely related with the overall research component of the project.

RESEARCH INTO THE DYNAMICS OF COLLABORATION

A system will be designed and implemented to collect relevant data for the assessment and evaluation of the whole pilot project, and the component activities. The evaluations will be formative, providing feedback to all as to necessary improvements as well as evidence of successes. Summative evaluations will be conducted periodically and used as components of a final evaluation report. This final report would include specific recommendations for the creation of the next generation of colab studios. These later generations may be developed in the private sector as there may be a large market for variations of colab studios. Additional external research projects may use the products and data from this pilot project to study collaborative behavior. Feedback from such studies could recommend changes in the procedures and protocols of colab studios.

PARTICIPATORY HYPERWEB CREATIVE PRODUCTION

Early hypertext was an ordinary looking text document with some words or phrases highlighted. Clicking on the highlights (buttons) brought up another text document, which itself might contain buttons for clicking to other documents. Usually the new document occupied the whole screen and the original document could be view only by backing up on your browser. Today, this remains standard although a user could tailor their browser to create separate windows for simultaneous viewing of linked documents in a hypertext web. Some viewers (e.g., Trellix, PersonalBrain <http://www.thebrain.com/>) provide a network map of the web in addition to the text. Today, clicking a button can bring up any url, any webpage, or any audio or video segment. To create basic hypertext required a bit more effort, but quickly one could avoid learning the html codes and create webs using a few basic protocols.

Hypertext composing has always lagged hypertext viewing. WikiWiki, designed initially for programmers for better communication with each other, has become the exemplar for contemporary hypertext creation. A Wiki page can be edited by anyone, using simple protocols. Copies of modified pages are recorded so edits are preserved if later negotiation is needed. Often an edit can simply be the addition of a button to link to a new Wiki page in the system. Complex Wiki systems require management, such as Wikipedia http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page Some systems permit Wiki pages to include

graphics, audio and video segments.

CRITSuite was a experiment of The Foresight Institute to enable a viewer of any webpage to attach a comment to a specific point on the webpage.

<http://www.foresight.org/WebEnhance/index.html> . The webpage had to be viewed through a CRIT program that presented the page to the viewer with an overlay superimposed, without altering in any way the original webpage. The overlay would show where others had added comments to a word or phrase on the webpage. That segment of text was bracketted by four color brackets (as to the nature of the comment), and clicking on the bracket would bring up the comment. Viewers could also add comments. Although efforts were made to promote CRIT it never caught on. Improvements were needed, and would have occurred, had there been interest. It was the explicit intention of The Foresight Institute to fill the gap of making tools adequate for CREATING hypertext as well as for viewing hypertext. I saw this as a possible distinction between "interactive" and "participatory". The former for the viewer being "active" in choosing branches and navigating a hyperweb, but not being able to easily modify or add to it. "Participatory" added the function of becoming a co-author of the hyperweb.