Visualizing Conversation

Visualizing Conversation has many interesting and unique information on how context of human communication is being visualized. The part where it explains that visualizing conversation is similar to data visualization with differences interests me right away. I believe that although it is called conversation, conversation as it is a data among people with higher degree of freedom and expression. Visualizing those qualitative contents into quantitative representation might lead to misinterpretation of conversation, but there are techniques used to prevent those misinterpretations in this paper.

Absence of Avatar and use of "zone of hearing" are techniques I like the most in Chat Circles. Absence of avatar eliminates the possible misinterpretation of a dominating single expression over user's communication. I think it is a clever choice to use inexpressive objects like circle as often I realize on a chat room, emoticon or avatars are more effective than sentence that follows. "Zone of hearing" provides filtering of unnecessary chats with other participants who are not engaged in conversation. It is often annoying to involuntarily read what others are saying when engaged in different conversation with the others.

Meanwhile unbiased objects to represent participants is well used, "zone of hearing" might need improvement with certain additional features. "Zone of hearing" does provide filtering but it prevents participants actively engage in other conversations effortlessly as one will not see other topics but only ones that are within the zone. In linear stream, as comments are unfiltered, participants can freely engage in other conversations, but due to the zone, one needs to roam around to find other conversation. It might have been useful to have one or two keyword of conversation in the circle to inform the nature of conversation to other who are out of the zone.

The most interesting parts that I like about Loom was the use of colored line segments. By just looking at lines and its connections to others, one can simply and intuitively understand the nature of conversation; whether it is active or not. I like where it shows a single line that is a write of many massages of which most of them are not responded. The use of grid in content patterns is clever as it almost explicitly connects invisible newsgroup usage into a map-wise representation with representation of its contents. It is as if to see how much traffics there are in a certain area of interest.

Although usage of gridded layout brings out clear interpretation of pattern, I begin to ponder why 3-dimension space is not used. As far as I understand, the content patterns are presented as an aggregated representation of Usenet. If 3-dimension is used, many categorized patterns could be presented and be observed along with others. It could be a sphere where some part of it represents certain topic and its pattern of angry, peaceful, informative or other, and how this section of topic is depicted when there is an intersection of other topics. It might bring more visualization of the nature of the newsgroup.
Medium Effects

Medium Effects provides incredible level of detail on analysis of conversation on MUD world based on face-to-face conversation. As MUD is purely text-based, interpretation of how conversation continues is hard to grasp, the most interesting part is the actually interpreting the conversation in MUD word in term of the main difference between face-to-face conversation and text-based conversation; simultaneity and turn-taking. Turn-taking that happens almost naturally in face-to-face conversation is not well defined in MUD conversation, but parts where Turn-taking indeed could have different forms or ways of happening are thoughtfully written as instead of defining one way that turn-taking could happen in MUD, there could be many more.

Despite its high level of detail, overall it seems the techniques and analysis of MUD conversations put too much emphasis on detail transactions and sometimes overestimating the meaning of turn taking. Turn-over indeed is an indication of how people interact via conversation, in the paper, it is more geared toward how turn-take takes place, but not much on why it takes place in that way. This overemphasis on how-to also can be found in Edelsky’s examples on multiple/joint floor.

Although, turn-taking part of reading provides high level of detail, I like Back Channel part of reading as I think the analysis is more unbiased (not that turn-taking is biased) and well written. As many people intuitively realize that text has lack of gravity of a writer in terms of absence of gesture, tone and intonation, author did a good work on emphasizing the face-to-face and text-based conversation. In part where heavy usage of emotes, “says” and words like “mm”, “hmm” are well captured and interpreted as in face-to-face conversation those indeed are indications of paying attention or acknowledgment.

While reading the article, it came to my attention that several things should be improved or changed if I were in charge. As there are too much emphases on how turn-taking and back channel happened, more of why those actions are taken as in terms of face-to-face conversation should be discussed as nowadays these turn-taking and back channel are dominantly done with heavy usage of emoticons as well as abbreviation.
Managing the Virtual Commons: Cooperation and Conflict in Computer Communities

One of the parts that I enjoy reading the most is about relating the real world rules to cyberspace. Although cyberspace is an artificial and virtual playground of human activities and therefore not easy to establish any set of rules to analyze it as it is and its activities are kept only in text excluding subtle human gestures and reactions, with notation of common goods, public goods, and free-riders, cyberspace can be understood more distinctively.

I like the part where how Usenet is understood with its common goods, bandwidth, and how boundaries are kept to keep its public goods, in this case being on the topic and keeping provocative post out, and also dealing with free-riders who refers to those who are selfishly take advantage of Usenet and not participate. The reason I like it the most is that as i was reading i began to think that whichever part of the world and activities human belong, dealing with large group of people with various interests and bringing out cooperation among them follow the similar process. Whether it is in cyberspace dealing with people’s arguments and comments or it is in the real world dealing with people themselves, they seem to follows those notations that the author mentioned and I think the author did tremendously good work to find the connection among real world and cyberspace.

Despite its excellent work, I would not totally agree with the author as I believe that although this analysis of cyberspace is still applicable to the current day cyberspace, there are some part where it needs improvements and maybe different aspects of cyberspace is to be observed. Keeping the common goods and public goods are still applicable, but the shift of focus on “being on the topic” might need to be observed once more. Nowadays, diversified topics are being discussed over the same cyberspace and, even more, those who manage various topics altogether harmoniously are attracting more and more people and each person works as a monitor to keep their common goods.