Studying Cooperation and Conflict between Authors with *history flow* Visualizations

What I liked about this paper is how *history flow* visualizes the portion of modified article in the Wikipedia and show the author who modified the content. It was interesting to see the effect of the word such as “abortion” or “Microsoft,” which many people know what the word is meaning that lead to zigzag pattern of “edit war.” When I first saw the “edit war” and how authors try to change the context based on their thoughts and knowledge, many authors would like to emphasize their own definition of the word. Also, defining a general word that many people know about can cause mixed up information where many authors modified the context of the article. People think differently about many topics. While I was reading the section of “edit war” and how *history flow* visualize different authors modification of the article overtime, topic such as if you can’t study you will never heard in your life would have less zigzag pattern since many people would not have access to those types of topics. By *history flow*, I felt that users can actually see how to contribute what is in the article and also if there is an “edit war” amongst the author to emphasize their thought and context of the article.

Moreover, what I liked the most of this *history flow* is to see the social behavior of authors based on the topic that they are writing. Another interesting point about the *history flow* is how it is used to prevent mass deletion and vandalism based on the malicious user. If the visualization shows who did what and how the user changed the article, by comparing the context and how the user behaved in the other articles within the Wikipedia, this can prevent the mass deletion of the article where many people around the world looks at. Another thing that I liked was the impact of the *history flow* negotiation amongst the authors to improve the overall quality to finalize their article.

One thing that I didn’t like about the *history flow* is the way it visualizes and identify the authors. Like in Figure 3, it is rather hard to know who contributes what and when because the color which indicates the author is similar. Also, to small contributors, it is difficult to know the portion of contribution in the article because it is rather very small to see. Even though *history flow* is designed to reveal the pattern within the Wikipedia’s article, having an effective way to actually prevent the “edit war” or use for collaboration of authors might be more effective rather than just showing the graphs.

One of the improvements that I might suggest for the *history flow* is having a more accurate and clear way to show the authors. Even though the authors were assigned in different colors, to some people, the color might look very similar such as sky blue and blue. It is rather hard to identify who wrote what if the color is similar. What if there is a small annotated number in the portion of *history flow* next to the portion of author’s color? For each portion within the visualization, whether it is small or large, one id number of the author next or above the color might be helpful to identify the author in case of similar color. Also, within the modified context, if the author changes something, rather than just displaying the color on the words, there can be an id number as we use to refer the reference we used in the research paper. This might help the other authors who will see *history flow* to actually recognize easily in case of there are hundreds of authors changing the article.
The dynamics of mass interaction

In this paper, I liked how the authors investigated people’s interaction within the Usenet based on FAQ production, long messages, and portion of cross-posting. It was interesting to know that less cross-posting had less threading where it appears that familiar contributors will have greater thread depth. By this result, it was interesting to know that more cross-posting would bring more familiar contributors in the Usenet where it seems like the cross-posting is something redundancy. Also, shorter the message would bring more interaction within the Usenet, which seems like many users would not like to read the longer message within the Usenet. For FAQ production, I thought FAQ would not bring more interaction within the Usenet because I believe that the users would hardly read the FAQ unless there is a problem. But one thing that I had in mind was what if there is no FAQ in the Usenet. If there is no FAQ within the Usenet, then it will be inconvenient to use the Usenet. However, there might be more posting in the Usenet to solve the problem and even though the talk within the Usenet might differ from the main topic, however, there will be more interaction within the users in the Usenet.

If there is something to improve for this paper, I believe ranging the age of the users within the Usenet might help to analyze the mass interaction. It tends to be users with younger age have more interaction with the computer rather than users who started to learn computer when they get older. One of the possible ways is to actually analyzing the age range of the users and to see what age would the users interact more in the Usenet and also the type of discussion in the Usenet. One of the comments that was mentioned in this paper was how emotionally charged and occasionally personal stories within the Usenet creates more deeply interaction. I think this result shows that users tend to post comments on something that they can answer. Emotionally charged plus personal stories do not have definite answer and people think differently. As it is mentioned in “Studying Cooperation and Conflict between Authors with history flow Visualizations,” users change articles more on topics such as “abortion” or “sex” where people in general knows about it. Let’s say that there is a topic that is something computer science related, then only the users who studied computer science would answer and there will be less interaction compared to the topic such as “What is coca-cola?” Also another factor that can be helped to analyze the interaction is how fast the users put a comment or create a thread based on the post. There might be a topic that has been posted for a long time in the Usenet but has never been answered or there might be a topic that has a deep thread after posting it in 1 hour. Analyzing the topic and also the posting time within the Usenet would help to understand more about mass interaction in the virtual space because the only information that the user can see is the text and it is somewhat difficult to know if the user is actively participating or interacting inside the Usenet.
The idea of collaboration amongst the users within the Wikipedia community to create an online encyclopedia interested me the most about this paper. Like the case of normal encyclopedia we can interact it in offline, it is rather hard to see the articles are being updated. However, within the Wikipedia, if the users disagree or there is a different opinion about certain articles, users collaborate to create a better article. Instead of limiting the authorship for articles, the collaboration between the authors, whether they are expert in the subject or not show the effort of how users in the Wikipedia community try to transform Wikipedia into a better online encyclopedia. Another interesting point was any users can be an editor to an encyclopedia depends on their participation. This way of community authorship will definitely provide a better way to share the knowledge within the users inside the Wikipedia community. By clicking the discussion section in Wikipedia’s article, it definitely gives the impression of teamwork of many users to actually provide better and accurate information for their online encyclopedia community.

Even though the users within the Wikipedia community collaborate to create a better article, in some cases, it is rather hard to actually verify if it contains the right information. There is also an issue with reliability of the information within Wikipedia. Nobody knows if the author is an expert or the author is a novice to the particular subject. Moreover, even though the information is right, some users might think it’s wrong and try to change the information which can lead to providing wrong information to the users. This paper focused more on how the tools provided in Wikipedia enable novice users to be an editor within the Wikipedia community. However, the main purpose of encyclopedia is to provide accurate and broad information to the users. It might be a good, if there is a mechanism to actually verify the information rather than scrutinizing the information that the novice user edits where in some case the novice user can be an expert and active user can be a novice in particular subject.

One of the improvements that I can suggest in Wikipedia is a mechanism to verify the information. In Korean web search engine named as “Naver,” it has a service called “Information In” where the users ask questions and the other users answer back by gaining points from the questioners. However, there is one thing to actually notice. Within the users, there are users who actually identify themselves with their job or the field that they are working in. For example, if one user asks a question about “backbone pain,” then most likely a user who identify himself as a doctor with his name and the name of the hospital that he is working answers the question. In this scenario, the questioner selects the answer that he thinks is the most appropriate and gives the point to the answerer who answered his question. In this answering system, the user who asked the question about “backbone pain” can get more reliable and accurate information from the doctor who is actually in that field. It is important that the users collaborate to form a better online encyclopedia by enabling the novice users to participate more actively, however, providing accurate information is also important. Maybe adopting a similar professional identification service such as “Naver Information In” can help Wikipedia community to actually have more accurate information and verify the articles for more reliable information.