Social Translucence: An Approach to Designing Systems that Support Social Processes - Response

Alexae Stone

This paper touches on some topics that we have covered before and new ones. The idea of MUDs is brought up and how they attempt to portray real life situations today. It relates to the article’s theme of improving these social spaces that technology provides and learning from normal life. They are prototyping a new idea called Babble.

Babble has a feature that allows users to save their chart history. It seems like something that pidgin might save or any other chat feature. This must have been before the time that keeping a chat history was popular, but not necessarily in a chat group. They also tried to find a mix between forums and emails. I like the idea of the marbles and allowing people to visualize their chat. I think this is a similar idea to the chat circles, letting you see who is around. I think that’s very beneficial in a chat group because you do have many lurkers who just sit in on a conversation and this allows those who are talking in the chat. I agree that users would utilize the feature of seeing when their friends are active. I use the same thing on my buddy list to see when they are on and when we can talk. Though this is a little different than a chat group situation, I think it is related.

They mention that the future could bring seeing more than one conversation. I think this would be greatly utilized by users who are involved with more than one chat at a time or would like to be. This would allow someone to keep up on who is involved in both of these chats. However, there becomes a problem when you have too many groups trying to be represented on a page. One way to solve this could be allowing users to select the groups that would be displayed on the page. Maybe some groups could be minimized so you only see small dots and then the groups that you are active in are enlarged.

I feel like a visual history is a great thing that users always like to see done in these visualizations and seeing how much a person has contributed to a chat is no different. The more “blips” on a line, the more a user has talked. So a user can go through afterwards and see oh I contributed this much or oh, I really need to contribute more to a certain conversation. I think they need to show a longer history of the chats, not only a day. I think this would give users a better idea of how they have contributed over a longer period of time. The greeked conversation seems like it could be very difficult to understand. It is difficult to see the actual text, which may be the purpose of it. However, if you are looking through large amounts of text, like in this situation, there is really no good way to go about it. This could be a good opportunity and I would like to try it sometime.
Social translucence: designing social infrastructures that make collective activity visible

Alexae Stone

Again, this is another article talking about visualizations that are trying to portray chat areas to its users. They relate how everyday objects have to be made to make sense in social situations, like a door allowing users to see through it and know how to interact with people on the other side. It works the same in these online social environments. You need to know how others are feeling about a situation, be able to see some of their activity. They mention in the article not being able to pick up on social queues in a social space. I think this could be addressed through emoticons but also the idea of being able to see when users are clicking or typing. It doesn’t give the awkward time of wondering, are they responding, did I say something wrong. This is the kind of topic we discussed earlier in the course when users became worried when their friends went away from the computer while in conversation.

Being able to see the Babble in a color display window gives me a better idea of what the project is. I think the timeline they provide is definitely more useful than what I previously thought. I think though they could add a way for users to see the exact date on the timeline. Also, adding the feature of seeing different chat groups represented at a time could be interesting to see how you have interacted in one group compared to another.

Viewing a lecture is an interesting idea to me. I think it is a great way for people to learn some social skills. Being in CS, some people aren’t always on top of these. It could give users an idea that maybe they shouldn’t interrupt while a professor is talking. However, it would be good for seeing when a professor opens things up for discussion. This could be more useful in a small class type setting, where students and the professor are in constant sharing of conversation with the others. It would be cool to see the turn taking that occurs and how the professor takes charge of the arguments if it gets unruly. I know its done over audio, so users wouldn’t be in the same location but it would still provide a good discussion image.

The auction idea I think is awesome. It allows you to see who you keep bidding against and if one particular person keeps raising the price or if its all across the board. I think here seeing when users are active too could be very convenient. Maybe its at the end of a bid and you want to see if someone’s going to jump in and beat your bid. Here you could see if you are being threatened.