Introduction

Chat-rooms and chat enabling software have introduced a revolutionary way of how people communicate with each other interpersonally or in a group. Chat conversations have facilitated a whole new world of chat grammar, for example: “ping me”, “gtg”, “r u cming 2day” etc.; chat emoticons to convey emotion when not face-to-face, for example: smileys, “awww”, “grr”, “hahaha” etc. and interpersonal non-text communication like backchannels and turn-taking. Most of the chat software widely popular and available freely, example MSN, AOL, Gchat, Yahoo! etc. support these systems but they do not show any kind of interaction within the users. However, Chat Circles by Donath, Karahalios and Viegas explores this kind of group interaction and some websites also provide chat-spaces following similar fashion\(^1\).

Motivation

The motivation for my chat visualization stems from the need of group interactivity and visibility and is based on the Chat Circles model. While it can be argued that this kind of group interactivity poses a problem if privacy, this kind of visualization can find its uses where maintaining privacy can be overlooked or where more transparency is needed.

Concept

The concept is can be based on any chat platform. Each circle represents a user. The bigger circles represent individuals that are interacting with each other. The smaller circles are the people that each separate individual is interacting with. The purpose of this visualization is to see if people are chatting with common friends. This way it would be easily visible who the users are chatting with and therefore help to add the common friend on the same chat and talk about issues that are common to them.

In the following diagram, S and T are chatting with each other, which they are chatting with g,v,f and g,a respectively.

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\(^1\) Red Interactive Agency [http://www.ff0000.com/](http://www.ff0000.com/)
Once it is visible that S and T both are chatting with the common person G, it would be simpler to add G into a common group chat space where S, T and G can interact.

This chat visualization can be implemented in student or employee communities within work-spaces providing a common space to talk about projects or certain topics that call for group conversations.