

Connecting Worlds

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Abstract: The poster is about the idea to visualize tags being associated with connecting the four worlds *Virtuality*, *Edutainment*, *Reality*, and *Practice*. The tags are visualized by a tag cloud, whereas the association of size, order and color is based on preliminary experiences and thorough research of existing tag clouds in this area. The idea is to confront the viewer with the tags but allow them to build their own association from their experience and perspective. A short survey is planned during the poster session where the top 10 and top 5 missing tags are recorded and later contributed to the poster by adding tags or modifying their size and style.

Introduction

Tag clouds are one of the most interesting developments in the Web 2.0 era: Content is summarized in a few words, which are only distinguished in size, arrangement, and sometimes color. And even a brief look on tag clouds can reveal the importance of the content in way that is not possible with any other means. Having multiple authors, we even gain more insight as the tag cloud represents the common interests of communities or social groups (so-called folksonomy). The tags are keywords assigned to, e.g., documents, sites, forum entries, or images and allow to index otherwise non-structured documents and define relations to other objects by either having a common vocabulary for the tags, or by finding a vocabulary over time.

For this poster contribution, the theoretical background of tag clouds and its development over the last years should not be in the scope. Each observer of the poster, and this will be an experiment to be conducted during the presentation, should find its own perspective of the given tag cloud to *feel* the content and, most important, find the tags of most importance. In a preliminary test, we discovered that all participants – all with interest or projects connected to virtual realities – could find themselves in the tag cloud but generally with different understanding/concepts/emotions of the tags than it would be for other participants.

The poster on the next page is given in German (see <http://tinyurl.com/connectingworld-eng>) and visualizes tags being related to the concepts *Virtuality*, *Edutainment*, *Practice*, and *Reality*. The tags and its structure show that all worlds are actually closer together than expected and require co-existence rather than a firm decision on one to be used. Another surprising aspect so far was that previous viewer changed their connotation when seeing a tag together with another one. Therefore, tag clouds broaden their view and understanding of the worlds; including the acceptance of tags and their associated meaning.

The selection of tags was done by scanning tag clouds from the Internet, interviewing colleagues and students, and gathering terms from various sources. A general selection by the author was done to increase readability and to get a reasonable number of tags such that the poster is still readable. The size of the tags is not demonstrating the perspective of the author but will adapt with the answers of the survey. The initial setting was done based on occurrence of tags in existing tag clouds, articles, personal experiences as well as feedback from two classes that author lectured.

During the poster session, the audience is asked to name the 10 most important tags as well as 5 missing tags, which will result in a modification of the poster for the next event/demonstration. Therefore, the poster can be seen as a printed folksonomy, where tags about (virtual/real) worlds are recorded. An online version is planned but not being expected to be online before March 2010.

