

Exploring Personal Information Spaces to Build Better Visualization Tools

Rod Peters & John Stasko
{repeters, stasko}@cc.gatech.edu

"That pile of paper...went on living like the watch on a dead soldier's wrist." - Jean Cocteau

Problem Statement

Personal information management (PIM) has become a more complex and time consuming activity due to the IT Revolution!

Motivation

One way to help people manage information is through information visualization tools.

Information types : (Nardi, Gwizdka)

1. Prospective - future
2. Working - current, medium span
3. Ephemeral - current, short-lived
4. Retrospective - past



Qualitative Research Field Study - Interviews

- Learn about people's stories and gain an understanding of their experiences.
- Interview people in locations where they are immersed in their information space.
- Use purposeful sampling as an effective strategy to represent population.



Field Study Progress:

20 interviews conducted to date (8 male, 12 female)

PIM Observations:

- People organize information temporally or spatially.
- People want to organize by event and/or theme.
- Lists are a good tool to reduce memory loading.
- Email is widely used and modified to support all 4 info types.
- Piles are used to link disparate info to one global label.
- Data structures need to be malleable.

Future work:

Develop a framework from which to implement a PIM tool.

Design Goal: An interactive, information visualization application that aids information management.