gmark

david_r_millen paul_moody

mreddy

patil

jmadden jpd

sbtorpey swt

vmavg

maribrowntown michelle

prole

ulrik

lenore bab5

cblake

rmharman sks

jmuramat

nora

sabrams

fish5q

craig

jeremy_fisher

gail.fisher

fswitkes

User Tests of Soylent

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Thank you for helping with our research. This packet contains directions for downloading and running our visualizations, as well as the interview questions we'll want to discuss.

These visualizations are meant to give a variety of views of your email record. We intend them as a topic of discussion, a way for us to understand what sort of recurrent patterns and sets of ideas might occur in your inbox.

Our goal is for you to run this experiment, and together to see two things. First, what patterns emerge in your mail that are particular interesting or revealing?

Second, how might we use these patterns to enhance current technologies and ways of handling email? What kinds of features do these patterns suggest?

More information on this project can be found at the UCI technical report "Activating the Social Workscape"
http://www.isr.uci.edu/tech_reports/UCI-ISR-02-2.pdf

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Installation

Pre-requisites

+ Lotus Notes must be installed, and it must know about your .ID file.
+ JDK 1.4 must be installed:
  http://java.sun.com/j2se/1.4/download.html

Download the self-extracting zipped file from
http://www.ics.uci.edu/~danyelf/soylent, and install it to a
temporary directory.

Downloading Data

Run the applet, "**to-database.**" Data will be stored on a database on **drzaius.ics.uci.edu,** a tuned database on a machine maintained by Paul Dourish. While this database is not as secure as we would like in the long term, it will store your data.

In particular, the system will store, for each message in your in and out box:

The date the message arrived
The author of the message
All people to whom the message was sent ("to", "cc", and "bcc")
The names of any attachments to the file.

You will need to specify whether the mail is stored on an **IMAP or POP server** such as imap.ics.uci.edu; or your own MH message store. In order to access your mail archives, the system *will* need your password; however, it will not store that information past the one session. (All other information will be maintained in a file called **soylent.prop**).

During the run, the DOS box may print warning messages, as well as progress information. If you interrupt the run, the data will be stored safely mid-way; however, it is only able to store real names if the program completes its run.

Fixing Aliases

An "alias" is the program's way of knowing that several different email addresses refer to the same person. Some of these can be found automatically (jpd@ics.uci.edu is the same person as jpd@drzaius.ics.uci.edu) while some need to be done manually (paul@dourish.com).

The program has three mechanisms for repairing aliases. First, the tool "SameNameDifferentDomain" links up pairs of names automatically, as in the two "jpd" examples above. Second, the tool "RealName" links pairs of names that list their real name as the same.

Last, if you notice two names that should be the same, you can shut down the viewer and link the names together.

Running the Program

Run the applet, "**view-outgoing.bat**". The system will preload some data, and then show a control bar. This booklet will walk through the functions on the control bar one at a time.

Where "**view-outgoing.bat**" shows only outgoing messages that you sent, "**view-all.bat**" shows all messages, whether outgoing or incoming. It is a more crowded view, but can have richer information.

Association Net
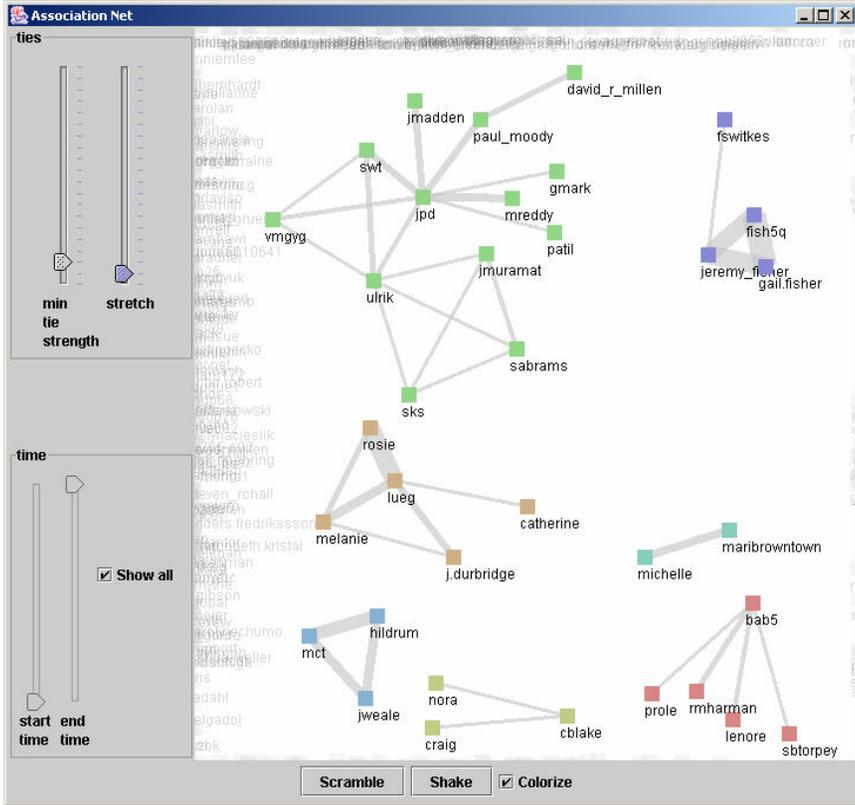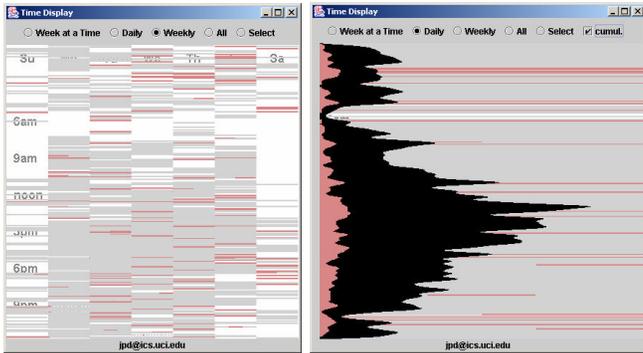

The association net shows connections between pairs of users. If a message has been carbon-copied between two users, the chart will draw a line between them. If many messages have been sent between them, the line will get thicker and the users will be drawn closer together.

+ Filter out weak connections with the "min tie strength" slider
+ Expand tightly-compressed blocks with the "stretch" slider
+ Color connected groups with the "colorize" button.
+ Grab individual nodes and drag them around.
+ Hide (or show) clusters by right-clicking on nodes.

Some of the clusters that appear are relevant and meaningful, especially at high "min tie strength" levels. Which ones?

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Are there clusters that are not meaningful? What happened?

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Are there any nodes that are responsible for merging groups that should be distinct clusters?

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Time Display

The temporal display shows all messages, and the time and date they were sent. A single message is represented by a single horizontal bar. Bars are placed (vertically) by time, and (horizontally) by date.

Hovering the mouse over a single bar colors it by the names of the sender and all receivers; other bars with the same participants are highlighted with the same colors.

Switch between "weekly" (left, above) view and the "daily" (right) and "all" views. Turn on the "cumulative" switch (right, above). Now mail messages are represented by little curves; spikes represent lots of mail at once, while smooth areas represent mail sent over time.

Both of the images above show messages sent to jpd@ics.uci.edu. The left one shows all messages in the database, sorted by day (that is, which week doesn't matter—all messages sent on a Tuesday are in the Tuesday column); the right one shows all messages, separated by time.

These views bring out the regularities in schedules. It can be easy to tell things like when lunch is, and where vacations fall. For some people, it's also possible to see recurring appointments and regularly-scheduled projects.

This view also has a "top ten" list. For each month and week, it shows the ten most frequent correspondents. People often rise and fall as the time schedule progresses, becoming more or less important.

Go to the group view, and highlight a group. See how that group looks on the temporal view. Turn on the "cumulative" view to see where the members of the group co-occur, and where they don't.

Are there any **personal** patterns from your own mail that occur in the cumulative view for any of the views?

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Are there any patterns in the way you send messages to others? These may be daily patterns ("always before noon on Wednesdays") or long-term patterns ("a project that ended in June").

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Demographic Survey

Job Role: How would you describe your job title or position?

 ....

How **interactive** is your own job and workplace?
+   I'm an evangelist or promoter—everything I do involves contact with other people (90% - 100% of work is interaction)
+   I work with others most of the time, but occasionally I work on individual projects. (70-90% is interactive)
+   I meet routinely with others, working more together than individually (50-70%)
+   I meet occasionally with others, but work mostly alone (30%-50%)
+   I work with a set of personal tools; I coordinate with others, but largely work alone. (10%-30% is interactive)
+   I do almost all my work alone, and hardly ever contact anyone else (0-10% is interactive)

How **varied** is the group of people you meet with?
+   I professionally meet many different people, and work with widely varying teams
+   I work largely with other teams and outside groups; however, I often come back to a central core of teammates
+   I work largely within a team of people; however, some of my work involves a group of outside members
+   I stick consistently to the same group.

Survey on Saved Mail

By default, incoming Notes messages accumulate in your mailbox. Some users save almost all messages, while others aggressively clean their inbox, saving few. Still others come through periodically and clean up in a great burst.

For the purposes of this section, we are unconcerned with whether you file a message or leave it in your inbox folder: we'd like to learn about all the messages that are not deleted.

Select the most accurate option:
I routinely delete **[none / some / most / almost all]** incoming messages upon arrival.

I routinely keep mail that …
+   needs me to do something soon (such as quick questions and sudden deadlines)? **[always / usually / sometimes / never]**
+   needs me to do something in a while (such as continuing discussions or meetings)? **[always / usually / sometimes / never]**
+   needed me to do something in the past (that I've already dealt with) or is about events that have already past or are no longer important)? **[always / usually / sometimes / never]**
+   is informative, and that I specifically requested (such as shopping and payroll receipts, messages with contact information, or answers to questions) **[always / usually / sometimes / never]**
+   is informative, and that I didn't specifically request (such as announcements and newsletters) **[always / usually / sometimes / never]**

Do you save a lot of the messages that arrive?
+   Almost all the messages that make it into my mailbox
+   Most of my incoming email
+   A select group of my incoming email
+   Virtually no incoming email

Do you go back through your inbox or archives and clean up lingering messages?
+ Frequently
+ Infrequently
+ Never

Of the messages that you save, why do you do so?
+ I'm likely to want to look them up again
+ I want to save messages for addressing purposes
+ I want to keep a complete archive.
+ I don't like deleting messages.

Outgoing Messages

You routinely save **[none / some / most / almost all]** outgoing messages when you send them.

Of those saved outgoing messages, would you describe them as…
+ Mail that **asks someone** to do something soon (such as quick questions and sudden deadlines?) **[always / usually / sometimes / never]**
+ Mail that **responds to a request** to do something soon (such as quick questions and sudden deadlines?) [**always / usually / sometimes / never**]
+ Mail that **asks someone** to do something in a while (such as continuing discussions or meetings?) [**always / usually / sometimes / never**]
+ Mail that **responds to a request** to do something in a while (such as continuing discussions or meetings?) [**always / usually / sometimes / never**]
+ Mail that **asked someone** to do something in the past (that they have already dealt with) or is about events that have already past or are no longer important? [**always / usually / sometimes / never**]
+ Mail that **responds to a request** to do something in the past (that you've already dealt with) or is about events that have already past or are no longer important? [**always / usually / sometimes / never**]
+ Messages that show you completed some work. [**always / usually / sometimes / never**]

+ Messages that contain answers you have to give often. [**always / usually / sometimes / never**]

Why do you save outgoing messages, if you do?
+ I'm likely to want to look them up again
+ I want to save messages for addressing purposes
+ I want to keep a complete archive.
+ I don't like deleting messages.