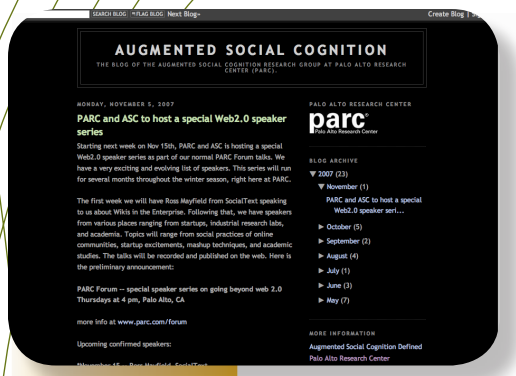
PARC: Your guide to understanding social software in the enterprise



Blogs, wikis, social bookmarking . . . these and other "Web 2.0" tools are gaining traction in the workplace. It's easy to list the reasons; they're easy to use, cost much less than many other applications, and help people communicate and make connections. Less obvious is why these social computing tools are effective and how to make them perform to enterprise standards.

To guide enterprises in most effectively leveraging these approaches, PARC scientists explore social software systems, and discover and analyze the underlying motivations and interactions that enable social web tools to offer the broadest utility. Our augmented social cognition scientists:

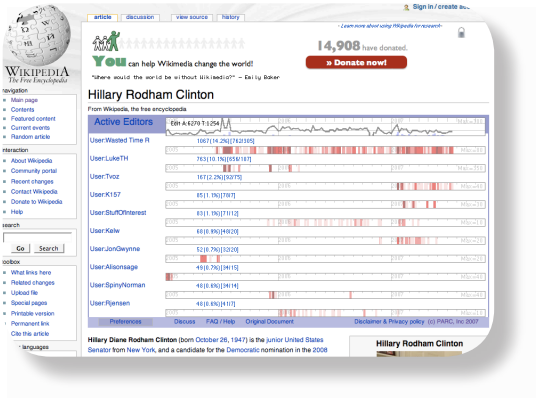
- Combines cognitive theories with heavy computation and data mining – so we can save our enterprise clients the time and expense of standard trial-and-error experimentation with social software;
- Works very closely with enterprise clients to discover their unique opportunities, design custom solutions, and test and implement prototypes.

Example Projects at PARC

WikiDashboard™ Project

One problem encountered when using wikis is the question of a statement's veracity, and a related issue is its provenance: "Who wrote this content and should I believe it?" One way to increase the quality of wikis is to increase the transparency of editing activity.

PARC recently developed WikiDashboard, a prototype tool to visually represent individuals' editing activities for Wikipedia (http://wikidashboard.parc.com). With WikiDashboard, readers have an easy way to identify the most active editors for any wiki page, along with their edits. This additional visibility motivates editors to be more rigorous and to edit more often, through positive feedback and recognition.



TagSearch™ Project

One challenge for enterprise search tools is low precision (i.e., too many irrelevant documents) because the context of a query is difficult to understand. Tags add contextual knowledge to a search engine; users can add them to documents or web pages to help facilitate finding the documents again at a later time. This practice generates "folksonomies," user-generated taxonomies that emerge naturally from user action. Folksonomies can be misleading or confusing, however, because people often use different words to mean the same thing.

Through data mining and semantic analysis, PARC has developed a novel approach to reduce the noise in collaborative tagging spaces and harness the knowledge contained within tags to increase the precision of enterprise search engines.

PARC has a rich history in studying human information interaction that serves as the foundation for its new work in understanding how communities remember, think, and reason. We call this type of work Collaborative Co-Creation, and we would be happy to talk with you about using this approach to boost productivity and gain insights into diverse practices within your enterprise.

Contact PARC's augmented social cognition scientists at asc@parc.com.

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About PARC

PARC works closely with other organizations – from leading global corporations and government agencies to newly formed ventures – to discover breakthrough concepts that deliver value and solve real needs. By aligning our expertise with their strategic interests, our clients can:

- Strengthen innovation effectiveness;
- Extend scientific and technical capabilities;
- Anticipate and respond more quickly to emerging industry trends;
- Cultivate new market opportunities or business models; and
- Acquire intellectual property while maximizing existing assets.

Founded in 1970 as part of Xerox Research and chartered to create "the architecture of information," PARC was incorporated in 2002 as an independent research business. PARC has contributed to the creation of more than 30 companies and is celebrated for such innovations as laser printing, distributed computing and Ethernet, the graphical user interface (GUI), object-oriented programming, and ubiquitous computing. PARC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Xerox Corporation.

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