

‘Patacritical Demon Specification

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The demon is what S. T. Coleridge called an “aid to reflection”. It is a markup tool for allowing a reader to record and observe his or her interpretive moves through a textual field. The reader marks what are judged to be meaningfully interesting places/moments in that spacetime field – the marks being keyed to a set of control dimensions, on one hand, and behavior dimensions on the other.

There are currently seven behavior dimensions in which a user of the demon might mark a document:

Table 1.0 – Behavior Dimensions

Linguistic	Syntax and semantics (words, structure, grammar and morphemes)
Imagistic	Pictorial content (composition, figures, conventions and iconography). This dimension is less certain than the others.
Documentary	Artifactual and material (media)
Graphical/ Auditional	Codes of inscription
Semiotic	Differential relations within the whole field of symbolic space
Rhetorical	Higher order logic (not merely conventional)
Social	Reception and production history (transmission)

These dimensions are acted on through three control dimensions:

Table 1.1 – Control Dimensions

Temporal	Relation between the time and order in which a participant marks a document.
Resonance	A control dimension concerning just the eye catching nature of a marked portion of a document. Initially a mark may be made without assignment to any behavior dimension because it is resonant with the participant.
Connection	A control dimension concerning the connection between resonant marks. While all marks are resonant, they are not necessarily connected.

Use Case #1: marking a new reading

The user of the demon would begin by loading a new page (image or text), typically poetic. At this point, the user can select a dimension in which to mark, or she can choose to mark in no dimension. In the latter mode, the user selects markings when done and assigns marks to one or more behavior dimensions. In the former mode, the user proceeds to select one by one each behavior dimension she chooses to mark.

Use Case #2: reflecting on a reading

The user would begin by opening a previously saved “demon” file and could turn on marks with respect to layers and readings. The marks could also be viewed in time sequence.

Reflective Properties of the Demon

After marking a document, the user can reflect on the experience by turning on one or more dimensions. The view would be akin to layering transparencies containing only the marks in each dimension. This could take several forms:

1. Observing a single dimension from several readings
2. Observing n dimensions from one reading
3. Observing n dimensions from several readings
4. Doing any of the above on two or more readings of the same material
5. Doing any of the above with a temporal control to observe the order of events

Social Properties of the Demon

The tool will permit the user to call forth one or more interpretations and view them as overlapping layers. [should we consider a means to pull them up in juxta?] In such a way, comparative and contrasting interpretations are visualized.

One might want to view multiple demon sessions on the same document in the following ways:

1. Observing a single dimension among several participants
2. Observing n dimensions among several participants
3. Comparing any of the above with two or more readings of the same material
4. Doing either of the above with a temporal control to observe the order of events

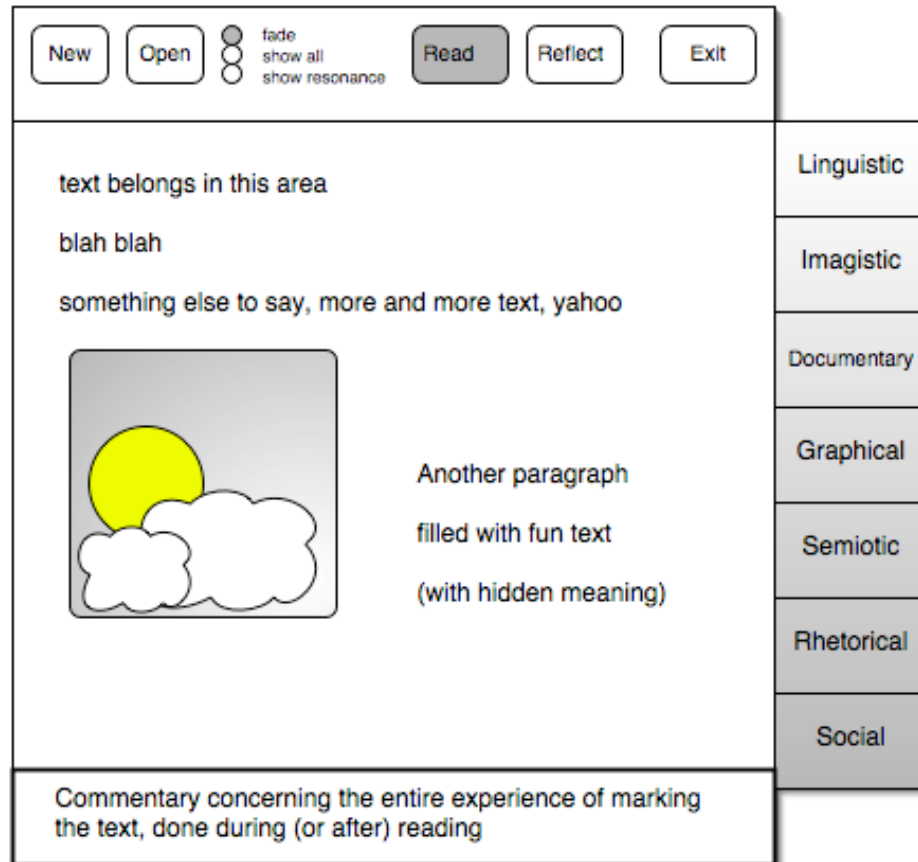
Note that the user of the software may be a participant. Comparing one's own interpretation with others would be a common usage.

Known issues

- People mark documents differently and the lack of uniformity affects the value of comparing one's interpretation with another. The system makes no overt statement about the meaning of a mark. Standardization, if desired, is an exercise of the users. Over time a set of best practices may be recommended.
- This description does a lot of hand waving concerning "pulling in layers" that assumes we have some cogent manner of organizing multiple interpretations and their constituent layers.
- Image sizes vary greatly. A facility to resize the image to the window or zoom may be necessary. The former choice may distort the image, so it may not be desirable.

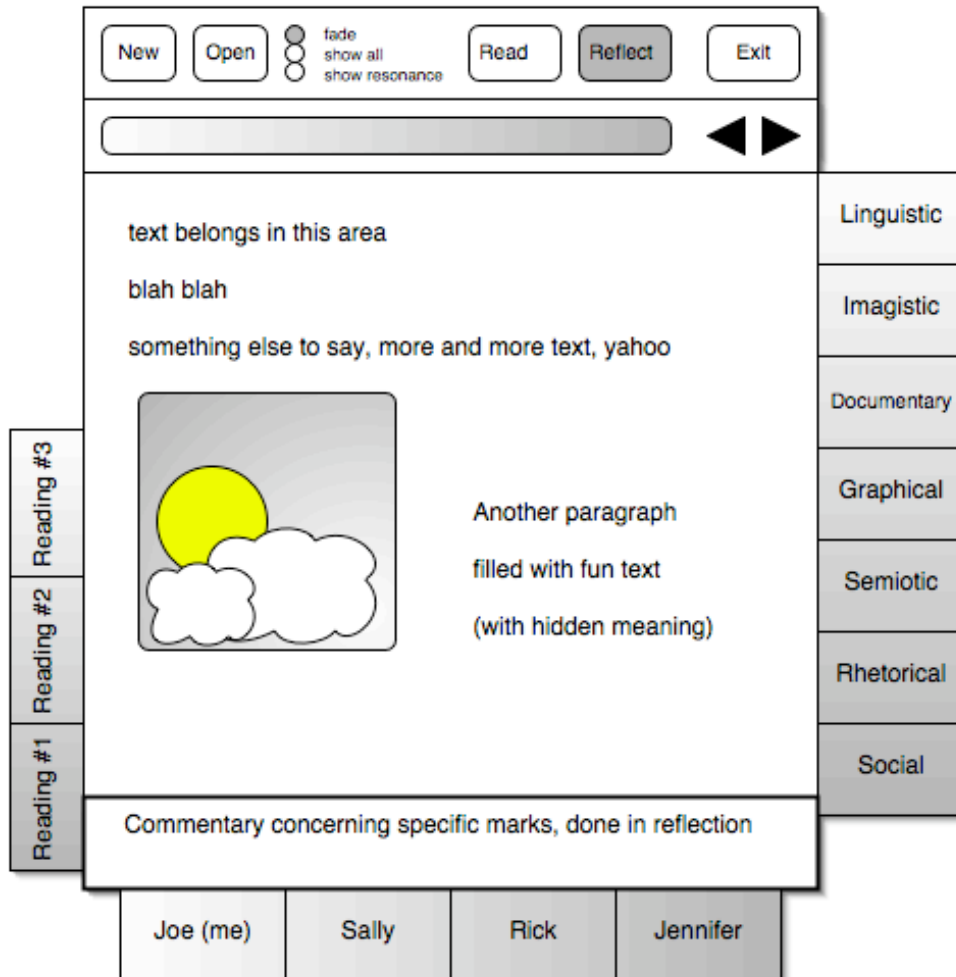
User Interface Sketch (read mode)

The mock user interface below would be used by a participant to mark a document. High level commentary would occur during the reading stage and the user can toggle the view for marks to fade, show all (marks and connections) or just show resonance (marks without connection).



User Interface Sketch (reflect mode)

The mock user interface below would be used by a participant to switch from reading, or open up a previously saved session. The user could observe other participant's markings, readings and replay events. This example shows the UI where three readings have taken place among four participants. Note the additional temporal scale and switches for users and readings. For simplicity sake, no marks are shown in the text area.



Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Document	Either an image based representation of a real-world document or an ASCII text of the document in RTF, HTML or plain text.
Mark	A graphical arc or line made in one or more dimensions on the document. When marking a document the marks themselves fade away a few seconds after making them in order to reduce visual clutter. By default a mark is resonant.
Marking	The act of making a mark on the document, which is done through depressing the input button (or some other activator) while drawing a region or line on top of the document. A mark begins at the start of the activity and ends when the input button is released.
Dimension	A control or behavior characteristic of the document that is designated with a mark.
Participant	A user of the software, typically taking part in a classroom exercise to mark a particular document. Also referred to as the user.
Interpretation	A completed set of marks by a participant that is saved and available for reflection, in a private and social sense
Layer	Visual term for a means to view marks in relation to a document, akin to laying a transparency sheet on top of the document. One layer represents one dimension viewed by one participant. (this definition may need expanded to refer to users and readings as layers)
Observe	A reflective act on one's own marks or on a group's marks. This is done by pulling layers onto the visual space.
Behavior Dimension	Generally accepted facets of a document that might be used to characterize a mark. See table 1.0 for a complete list.
Control Dimension	Dimensions that exert influence at the time of marking. See table 1.1 for further description.
Reading	One complete session where the participant reads, marks and designates marks into dimensions. The user can record multiple readings of the same text for comparison.
Comment	Brief summary for a mark or a reading session. These comments are entered during the reflection stage.