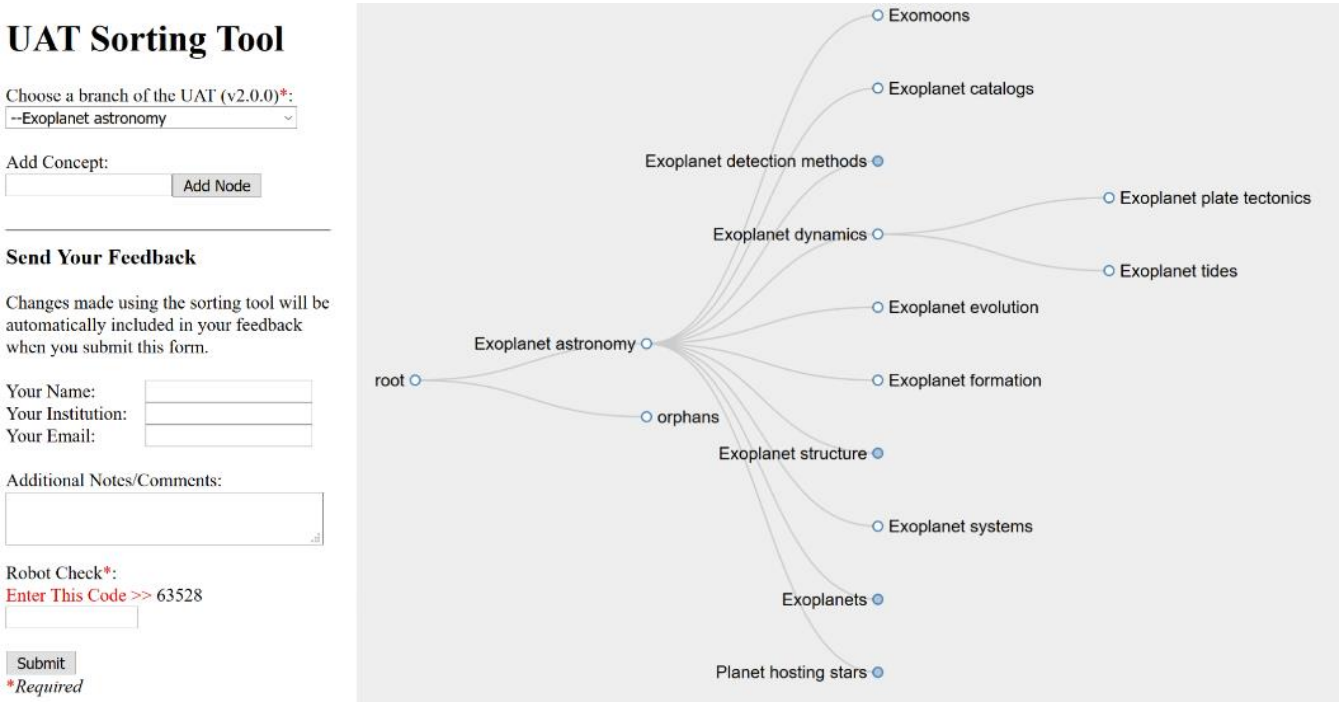
Unified Astronomy Thesaurus

The Unified Astronomy Thesaurus is an open, interoperable, and community-supported project that unifies the existing astronomy and astrophysics vocabulary into a single, freely-available thesaurus that formalizes astronomical concepts and their inter-relationships.

Contributing to the Unified Astronomy Thesaurus

We wish for the Unified Astronomy Thesaurus to become an open reference vocabulary for the Astronomy community at large. In response to feedback from our community and as our knowledge of the field evolves, we expect that the UAT will be reviewed and potentially updated at least once a year, to ensure that it is still current with respect to the latest research in our fields. This schedule should allow us to perform analysis of the literature published in a calendar year to detect whether any new concepts have appeared. To that end we have developed feedback tools to solicit contributions from the community.



http://uat.altbibl.io/sort

One is the Visual Sorting Tool, which allows users to explore the UAT, see the concepts in their structural context. Suggestions can be made for adding or removing concepts, as well as general comments about the thesaurus. A second method of providing feedback is the Abstract Review Tool, designed by the Institute of Physics, which also showcases a use case for the UAT. This one focuses on concept tagging by presenting the user with article abstracts and a list of keywords automatically assigned to the paper.

More Information: http://astrothesaurus.org

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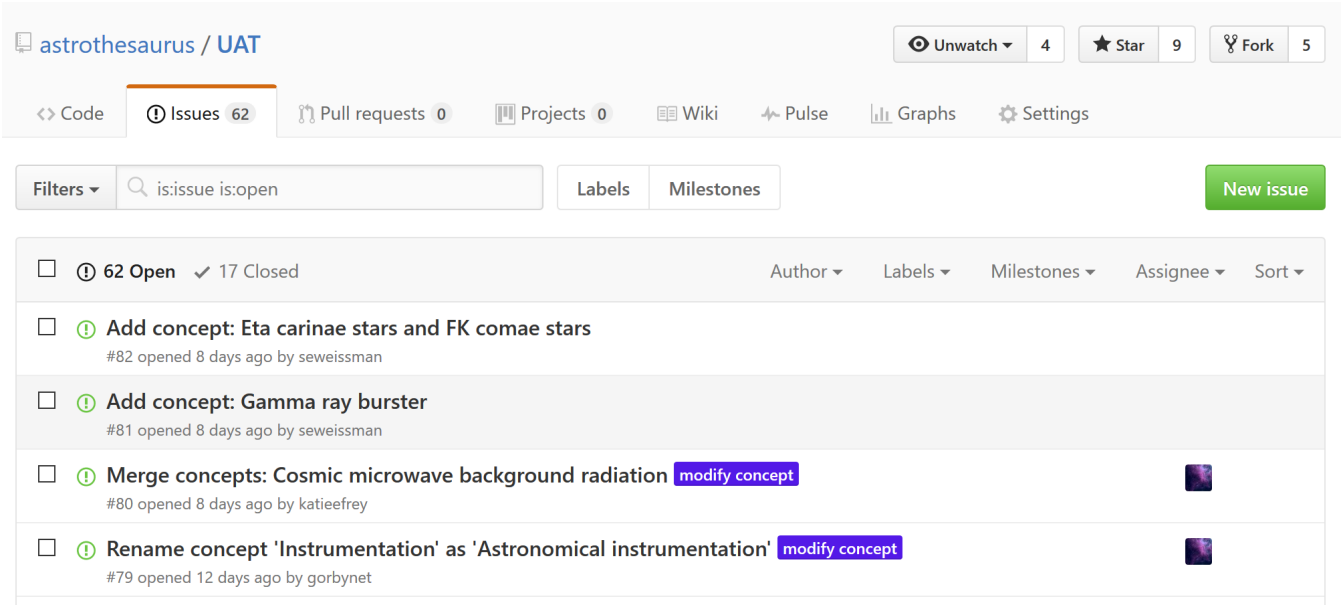
Tracking and Responding to Suggestions

A persistent issue for updating and managing the UAT has been the difficulty of keeping track of suggestions, contributions, and the decisions made regarding them. Our original, temporary, solution consisted of emails sent directly to the UAT manager, that were filed away into a folder until they were ready to act upon the suggestions. Unfortunately, this system was equivalent to a black hole for the contributors. Information goes went in, but it was nearly impossible to tell what, if anything, was coming back out.



https://github.com/astrothesaurus/UAT/issues

To change this, it was proposed that we use the Issues feature on GitHub to manage and track the suggestions. As a lightweight tracking system, GitHub has several prominent features: any user with a free GitHub account can raise an Issue to make a suggestion or contribution, the issue can be assigned to a project member, it can be attached to a Milestone, it can be tagged for filtering, it can host short discussions, and the issue can be closed once action is taken.

The history and provenance of each contribution is kept, and anyone can search through the list of Issues to see if their idea has already been suggested and the reasoning behind the decision that was made.

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