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Boundary Labeling for annotated documents

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Wien, 25. September 2017

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Annotating a document is usually solved by adding footnotes in an appropriate position and adding a simple reference in the text, leaving the reader to find the referenced content by themselves. If a more obvious connection between the text and the referenced content is required, the reference placed to the side of the document and visibly connected to the text by drawing a straight line or a more complex path between them.

In this paper, we will look at ways to use Boundary Labeling, which means that all annotations will be placed somewhere outside of the text they are referencing and will be visually connected to the feature they are referencing. (See also [2])

The guidelines on how to create suitable labelings are as follows: the connections should be as direct as possible, no important information should be obscured, and it should be easily discernable which Label belongs where. These three criteria easily come into conflict with one another, as the text usually is very dense and leaves little space for lines in between, yet one shouldn't allow them to pass through the text, as this makes the text harder to read.

While there are many papers discussing Boundary Labeling in general, only very few exist that apply this concept to written text. Generally, this approach isn't used very often, and tends to use simplistic algorithms which produce mediocre results. However, the papers that do discuss boundary labeling in text offer interesting contributions.

In the paper about the Luatodonotes-Package[3] illustrates some of the different styles of drawing these connecting paths, and came to the conclusion that paths without bends are easier to follow. However, most solutions proposed in that paper do not consider whether a path overlaps with text or not, which results in a decrease in readability.

The paper by Loose[4] on the other hand is based around only using the free space between lines and words, which produces longer paths, and forces curves, but doesn't obscure any part of the text.

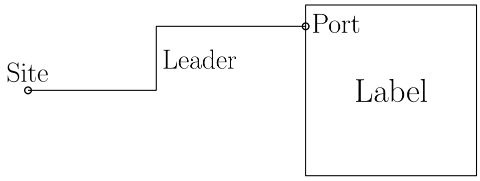

Figure 1.1: Illustrated guide to the labeling terminology

1.1 Terminology and Fundamentals

While Boundary Labeling (or an equivalent concept) can be applied to a space with different geometry or more dimensions, this paper will only concern itself with two-dimensonal, euclidean space. To easily reference important concepts, some additional terminology will be introduced as well. (See Fig. 1.1 for a visual explanation)

A *Graph* $G = \langle V, E \rangle$ is a tuple of *Vertices* ($V = \{v_1, v_2, ..., v_n\}$) and *Edges* ($E = \{e_1, e_2, ..., e_m\}$). A vertex $v_i(i \in \mathbb{N})$ is a featureless object. Each edge $e_i\,(i \in \mathbb{N})$ is a relation between two vertices ($E : V \to V \times V$). The vertices forming the edge are considered *adjacent* to each other. Edges can also be directional, or have a weight, which affects how they are treated by algorithms. A *Path* ($P = v_1, ..., v_h$) is an ordered series of vertices, where each vertex must have an edge connecting it to the subesquent one. *Depth-first search* is a searching algorithm on a graph G that starts at a given vertex $v_s \in V$ and explores the graph by traversing its edges as far as possible before backtracking. In our algorithm, the goal is to reach a target vertex $v_t \in V$, at which point the algorithm terminates and returns the route taken from v_s to v_t.

Polylines are a connected series of *Line segments*. Line segments are straight lines that contain each point between their starting and end point. *Labels* hold additional information and are represented as boxes containing this information. They are usually placed in the *Label area* which is an area designated to hold labels and is located off to a side so the labels don't obscure anything. The point or object that this information refers to is called a *Site*. The site and the label are connected via a *Leader*, a polyline that can be further classified by looking at the orientation of its segments: *O-Segments* run orthogonally to the border of the label area. *P-Segments* run parallel to the border of the label area, and as such must be combined with other segments for the leader to reach its destination. *S-Segments* are not required to have any particular orientation, and simply connect their start and einding points in a straight line. The leader's name is created by combining the name of the segments - for example, the leader from Fig 1.1 would be classified as an OPO-Leader. The location where a leader connects to the label is called the *Port*. It can be restricted to pre-defined positions.

CHAPTER 2

The Algorithm

In our algorithm, the focus was put on keeping the text as readable as possible. This means that leaders aren't allowed to pass through words, which was simplified by enclosing each word in a bounding rectangle that leaders aren't allowed to pass through. The leaders should also be kept as short as possible, so we restricted them to always be moving toward the label in at least one dimension.We also wanted to use the space available in the labeling area as efficiently as possible, so labels are placed as far up as possible in order to maximize the space available to future labels at the cost of possibly increased leader length.

To easily create leaders that exclusively use the space not taken up by a word's bounding rectangle, we decided to use a graph similar to the one Loose [4] used. As each vertex represents a physical location, they will have co-ordinates associated with them, and the vertices representing the sites will hold additional information regarding its leader and label. The graph is constructed by placing vertices in the space between lines next to each corner of a word's bounding rectangle, with two consecutive words in a line sharing the two vertices associated with their adjacent corners. For the sites, we inserted an additional vertex above the center of the word, which will serve as the leader's starting point. After placing all vertices, we created edges between each vertex and the closest horizontal neighbour to both sides, and between nodes that are located exactly above or below each other, and exactly one line apart.

In our labeling algorithm, we decided to work through the labels in the order they appear in the text, and placing each as far up as possible, skipping any label that would've required us to move a lower line. We also opted to use fixed ports located in the top left corner of each label, as this allowed us to unabiguously place annotations by only knowing their port location, which is equal to their leader's ending point. To not restrict the label's placement by the line spacing, we left a buffer zone between the text area and the label area, which allows to place labels even further above to optimally use the available space. The routing was implemented using a depth-first search algorithm, restricted to only selecting vertices located above or to the right of the current vertex, prioritizimg locations above whenever possible. After the algorithm terminates, it returns a path from the site to the right text border and information on where to draw the OPO-segment that connects the text area with the label's port, if successful.

2.1 Implementation

The program was written in Java 1.8.0u40, using JGraphT1.0.1[1] as graph library. Since we only want to create leaders that don't intersect with the text, the graph was created alongside the placement of the words on the canvas.

Bibliography

[1] Jgrapht - a free java graph library.

[2] Michael A. Bekos, Michael Kaufmann, Antonios Symvonis, and Alexander Wolff. Boundary labeling: Models and efficient algorithms for rectangular maps. *Computational Geometry*, 36(3):215 – 236, 2007.

[3] Philipp Kindermann, Fabian Lipp, and Alexander Wolff. *Luatodonotes: Boundary Labeling for Annotations in Texts*, pages 76–88. Springer Berlin Heidelberg, Berlin, Heidelberg, 2014.

[4] Amrei Loose. Annotation von texten unter berücksichtigung von textzwischenräumen. Master's thesis, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, 2015.