

HIRL: Heuristic Individual Resource Locator

MOTIVATION:

Ever forgotten the exact link to a page a friend sent you and you don't want to sift through your email to find it again? Did you spend hours trying to find a page on Google and forgot to bookmark it – and don't want to sift through your history to try to find it? Tired of clicking and scrolling through the fifty bookmarks you've added? Relax, HIRL has come to the rescue.

WHAT IS A HIRL?:

HIRL stands for Heuristic Individual Resource Locator. You are familiar with a URL- those are the cryptic strings of characters you've been typing into your browser for years. A heuristic (according to Merriam-Webster) is "involving or serving as an aid to learning, discovery, or problem-solving by experimental and especially trial-and-error methods." So what's a HIRL? Well, that's exactly what you type into HIRL's textbox. Essentially it's whatever word pops into your head when you think of a site you've recently been to and to which you want to return.

HOW DOES HIRL WORK?

Install the HIRL toolbar on Firefox. Initially, its textbox will be inactive. As you browse the web, HIRL learns. It saves data about the pages you visit. After you browse a certain number of pages, HIRL becomes mature and can start talking back to you. Type your HIRL into the now active box and hit enter. The HIRL system immediately takes you to the site you wanted. If you gave a bad HIRL, or the HIRL system just wasn't smart enough, you can browse many results within HIRL and choose the one you wanted.

THE FUTURE

OK, you're saying, "Wow, HIRL's pretty cool and all, but - I want to get to pages I haven't browsed. Well, you can right click on links as you're browsing pages and "Eat" them (add them to your HIRL database). But, it gets better.

Click the "Join HURL" button in your HIRL toolbar. What is HURL? Heuristic *Universal* Resource Locator. Joining HURL uploads your HIRL database to HURL's webserver. It connects your data to others who are similar to you. Say you're a big Baltimore Ravens fan. Well, HURL will first search other Ravens fans' databases and return more relevant results to you. Pretty cool, huh? HURL's pretty smart.