Anotar

Introduction

Inline annotations have interested ADFI for quite some time and the group has added annotations to the ICE product. ICE allows users to annotate pre-published content inline in it's editorial phase and pass these comments between multiple users for discussion and collaboration.

The use of annotations for private notetaking or public discussion inline within course content has potential for student learning benefits and lecturer/student interaction. ADFI identified the following uses:

1. Learning tool for student review of content using private annotations

2. Discussion initiated by the points within the courseware itself allowing both students and lecturers can enter into discussions about specific course topics/elements.

3. Students having problems understanding content can ask for assistance at the place within the courseware content that is causing them difficulties.

In relation to research projects underway, we wanted investigated the annotation of video, audio and image files.

A project plan was initiated.

Project plan

Other annotation software examined

OAC

http://www.openannotation.org/

Pliny – a set of plugins for the Eclipse platform

http://pliny.cch.kcl.ac.uk/whatAndWhy.html

Annotea

http://www.w3.org/2001/Annotea/

Annozilla

http://annozilla.mozdev.org/

Danno and Dannotate

http://metadata.net/sites/danno-1.0.0/

digress.it

http://digress.it

Google Sidewiki

http://www.google.com/sidewiki/

SharedCopy

http://sharedcopy.com/

W3C Media Fragments

http://www.w3.org/2008/WebVideo/Fragments/

Marginalia

http://www.geof.net/code/annotation

Delicious - tag-based

http://delicious.com

Initial objectives

We set out with a basic idea of how we wanted to proceed for a week sprint.

- Develop a schema for the exchange of annotation information between client and server as well as multiple systems/applications.

- Similar to the approach taken by Annotea, but with an easy way for developers to program against, so we decided to use JSON for data interchange. JSON maps directly to Javascript objects on the browser and whatever language is being used on the server.

- Allow for the annotation of text, images, audio and video

- A stand-alone instance of the Fascinator with a document upload box and ICE-style annotations where docs have obscure URLs

- A proof-of-concept plugin for Moodle that uses the Moodle discussion database to store inline annotations

- A simple extension kit for WordPress

These objectives did change organically during the week and work spilled over into a second week of work.

Scope

Annotations would be restricted to:

- text files
- pictures
- video media fragments

Access to annotations would have two levels:

- team/public
- private

Applications targeted

- Generic standalone annotation server
- The Fascinator
- Wordpress
- Moodle
- Mobile devices

Storage

- CouchDB
- The Fascinator's own storage

Stakeholders

- LTSU – Dr Michael Sankey, who endorsed the idea of embedding commenting into Moodle at the ICE-week.
- Learning and Teaching Systems User Reference Group (as representatives of all the creators and consumers (students!) of courseware).
- PMRC – Leonie Jones, as part of the communities of practice project to be presented at the 5th international Social Sciences Conference in Cambridge in July 2010.
- DAIS – Part of the mobile technologies project led by Prof. Alan Smith.
- ANU/USQ collaboration – Dr Danny Kingsley, eScholarship Manager at ANU.
- Community Sustainability Programme – Glenn Postle et al.
- USQ Research Office – Ren Yi.

Initial steps followed

- Create draft schema.
- Developers chose their area of interest and selected an application on which to focus.
- Start with text documents.
- Use Javascript embedded in html to mark annotatable points within document.
- Annotate at document level, then paragraph.
- Save annotations to preferred storage.
- Display annotations.

Anotar

What does Anotar mean?

Anotar is a spanish verb:

> anotar (first-person singular present anoto, first-person singular preterite anoté, past participle anotado)
>
> 1. to annotate

Initial json-based schema created at: http://www.purl.org/anotar/schema/0.1

What has Anotar become?

- Anotar is now a lightweight, general-purpose web annotation toolkit, which successfully uses a JSON based schema for the exchange of annotations between web clients and servers.

- The Anotar client plugin for Moodle allows annotation of javascript-enabled pages, permitting note-taking, inline discussion and lecturer "signposting" important issues for classwork.

- Annotations can be stored in either a local or externally hosted database depending on institutional needs.

- Annotations can be made on video, image and audio files.

- Plugins are available for Moodle, The Fascinator and WordPress.

  Anotar plugin demonstrations

  i. The Fascinator
  ii. Moodle
  iii. HTML5
  iv. Wordpress

Next steps

- Create an annotation server which allows uploads and returns a uri for user distribution and group annotations.

- Further development for IMS content packages produced by ICE for Moodle will include the addition of other Anotar features such as image and video annotation and voice annotation.

- Plugins for OJS, ICE, ePrints