

ClaimID: A System for Personal Identity Management

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ABSTRACT

In this poster, the authors describe a system, claimID¹, that enables individuals to create representation of their online identity. Realizing that online identity, especially personal identity as represented in search, is difficult to collect and verify, the authors propose a system that enables individuals to collect and self-classify the information that is about them online.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

H.3.3 [Information Storage and Retrieval]: Information Search and Retrieval—*Information filtering*; H.4 [Information Systems Applications]: Miscellaneous

General Terms

Management, Design

Keywords

Personal Identity Management, Folksonomy

1. INTRODUCTION

An individual's representation in search is a true information-age problem. The notion of identity representation in search is quite simple; the issue can be summed by the question "What does a search engine say about an individual, when that individual is researched in a search engine by another individual?"

As more individuals establish identity presence online, we begin to see the serious vulnerabilities in identity search methodology; that is, the human namespace does not support an effectively scalable search strategy. Whereas there can only be one definitive name locator for a website, humans support many names - be it our nicknames, maiden names, given names and so on. What's more, uniqueness in

¹<http://claimID.com>

naming is rare, and as time progresses, relying on uniqueness for personal findability will prove to have diminishing returns.

2. PROBLEMS WITH IDENTITY REPRESENTATION

The obvious problem with identity representation in search is limited namespace. If an individual has a common name, they *lose out* in identity search. Perhaps more importantly, though, is the problem that *aboutness* in identity search is generally tied to the name searched. That is, an identity searcher will generally only find things directly tied to a person's name. Things that are legitimately *about* individuals that do not contain reference to their complete names, such as a news article about a project an individual worked on, present a significant challenge to information retrieval systems.

Additionally, one's online identity is not solely tied to the things that are *about* them. In fact, the things that are *by* them, but *about* someone or something else are also very important.

ClaimID allows individuals the ability to track, classify, annotate, prioritize and share the information that is about them online. Realizing that individuals are best suited to discover their online identity, claimID provides these individuals a set of tools to self-classify and share their online identity. Additionally, claimID lets people associate their multiple namespaces and identities in a singular location, presenting identity searchers a findable place to explore the identities of those they search.

Individuals are provided both hierarchical and folksonomic schemes for describing the links that are about them. Using a mixed-format approach, individuals are allowed to cross hierarchy; for example, an individual might put two different links in their "Work" or "School" groups, while using folksonomic classification to apply the "programming" tag to the links.

3. THE FUTURE OF IDENTITY SEARCH

We envision claimID as an important step for individuals concerned with identity representation in search. The limits of search and the human namespace present problems going forward; with claimID, a new paradigm for self-aggregation and classification presents interesting new horizons.