

Indigenous Knowledge and Resource Management in Northern Australia (IKRMNA) - ARC Linkage Project

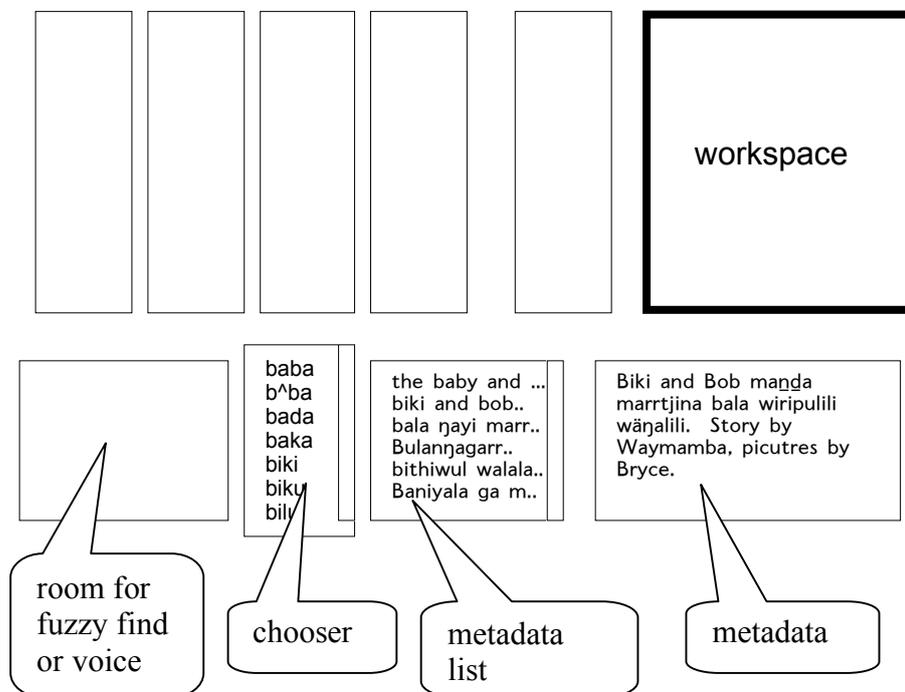
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Friendly text-based search design:

Notes for Barbara, Anthony and the ARC CIs, 24/10/2004

This project is specifically aimed at developing friendly text-based searching and metadata attachment processes on a single interface. The TAMI e-poc will look into the important aspects of text-free searching. This paper is about the text-driven end of the same database. It is hoped that we can develop this text-friendly and view-friendly model for the Yolngu Studies database, and the Garma Cultural Studies Institute database.

- the interface looks like this: (ie based on the current TAMI ideas)



- CHOOSER - all words in the metadata (including English and vernacular) are glossarised, put into alphabetical order, and always visible.
 - List is scrollable. Click the word you want
 - Users can also use keyboard to key in first then second letter... and list will be progressively refined. Click any word to find metadata.
 - Can also use fuzzy find list (as in dictionary) or voice recognition to refine choice.
- The METADATA LIST is beside the chooser. It is always already populated with all the metadata. It show the first 50 characters of each metadata text. These 50 characters constitute a sort of ersatz title for the resource (even though there are no metadata categories).
 - if a word from the CHOOSER is clicked, the METADATA list is refined to display only metadata which contains that word.

- if an item in the metadata list is clicked, the full metadata entry appears in the metadata box (and the resource(s) appear in the WORKSPACE)
- or maybe TvW's idea that a rollover will reveal the full metadata in a tag box? (as suggested in Melbourne)
- The METADATA box contains one item of metadata at a time. It is not always populated – only when a resource (or collection of resources in a folder) is displayed in the workspace, and where that resource has metadata. (All folders have metadata but not all individual resources do.

NOTES ON SEARCH

- database can be searched without text . However, this project is aimed at making the use of text easy to people with a range of literacy levels.
- text-based search always based on choosing (or keying in) word from glossarised list. (you can only search for text strings which are possible to find)
- Search sequence:
 - Find a word in the CHOOSER. You can find the word by scrolling through, or by reducing the list through keying in (eliminating), or fuzzy (click) or maybe voice activation.
 - Once you have found the word you want, click it once.
 - The list of all the metadata first lines which is in the METADATA LIST box will now reduce to list ONLY those metadata statements which contain that word. (There is no facility to further refine the search or to search for more than one word)
 - From the list of metadata which is in the METADATA LIST box, click one line. The line will be the first 50 characters of the metadata for any resource. (If you're lucky the whole metadata will pop up in a tag as you roll over the first line)
 - When you click a line the whole metadata from that resource appears in the metadata box and the resource itself (themselves if it is a folder) appear in the workspace.

UPLOAD

- First step in upload: resources are dragged and dropped from the desktop (or elsewhere?) into the workspace.
- They can then have metadata added, or they can be uploaded without metadata ie they get moved straight into the receptacles. (How do we do this? Another drag and drop into the receptacles – or do we need a GO button or something?)
- Users who want to add metadata to a new or an existing resource can drag and drop words from the CHOOSER to create or enrich the metadata, or they can key in extra words.
- Each time a new metadata text is added to the database the new extra terms are added to the CHOOSER list)
- It might be a good idea to have upload and metadata enrichment available through password.

COMMENTS

It will remain to be seen how much the metadata-text option (as opposed to text-free sorting) is engaged by users. I think it's important not to have whole collections dumped into a database because of issues of ownership and manageability. Owner-users should know pretty well what is in their database.

The relation between the resources, the metadata and the lemmatised contents of the chooser, is dynamic. The metadata can be modified while (and whenever) the resources are being viewed. The metadata continuously sorts and distributes into the chooser list.

This means that all sorts of bad spelling will go into the chooser list, but also anyone can correct the bad spelling by calling up metadata which contains the bad spelling and correcting it. The regenerated list won't show the old word.

It is interesting to consider how the processes of reading/writing will come into this reflexivity between the metadata (in particular the chooser list), the resources, and the user. There are no a priori categories in the metadata apart from the distinction between metadata and resources, and within the resources, the distinctions between TAM and I. Artefacts of earlier episodes (the TAM&I) are available for engagement. They can be found by sorting through resources with or without the assistance of text.

Literate people can hasten their search by using text-driven measures. The object is to match something you create with something which is already available. The friendly ways in which people with varying levels of text literacy are given the best possible chance of selecting the best search string, are key to the task of making a database which will really work in most Australian Indigenous communities.

The text string introduces the possibility of creating new worlds through language. The elimination of metadata categories improves this possibility.

The text driven search opens the questions of how worlds are created using words in the everyday life of a knowledge community. Single words from the chooser may activate quite heterogeneous collections of resources. It will be interesting to see how people will use them.

It will also be interesting to see how people choose to formulate the first few words (50 characters) of metadata, because these will become the basis for identifying which resources to explore from the metadata list. Composing metadata will become a significant part of digital memory management. Users may begin to choose metadata on the basis of resource retrievability (rather than on the basis of simply describing the resource).

Here we see the possibility of a new way of using language that supports the sorts of connectivity that characterises Yolngu meaning making.