

Focus and Awareness in Groupware

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Abstract of Video

Medium-sized shared workspaces present two design goals to groupware designers: first, people need to focus on the details of their work; second, people need to stay aware of others working elsewhere in the workspace. This video presents and compares four different visualization techniques for achieving these goals.

The techniques are part of a system for building and editing concept maps, visual languages for representing ideas and relationships. When people use concept maps, they often need to work in different parts of the map. Since a groupware workspace can only show a small part of the map at one time, this means that staying aware can become a problem.

We present four different visual approaches to supporting both detail and awareness. All approaches extend the earlier versions illustrated in our CSCW '96 videos, and (for ease of comparison) all work within the concept map editor. The *radar view* splits the interface into detail and awareness windows. The *fisheye view* uses distortion to integrate detail and awareness in a single window. The *dragmag view* lets people selectively magnify a portion of a large overview. The *two-level view* overlays a full-screen overview onto a detail view.