Colledit: A Real-Time Collaborative Text Editor

Adam Torgerson
Revisiting Complex Problems

• Recall Gerhard's Paper “Transcending the Individual Human Mind”
• Complex Problems require more knowledge than any single person possesses
• Systems such as the EDC are great for groups of people in the same location, often groups are not in the same location
Real-Time Collaboration

- Collaborative systems fall into two broad groups: asynchronous and synchronous
- Real-Time collaboration systems are synchronous
- Real-Time collaborative systems are a form of new media
- Facilitates distributed cognition
Real-Time Collaboration Applied to Extreme Programming

• One facet of Extreme Programming is pair programming

• A real-time collaborative editor would allow developers to work in this fashion despite their location

• The team would not be limited to one developer using the computer at a time
Colledit Overview

- Client/server model, user who starts the session is also the owner
- Service discovery via Zeroconf
- Users pick a color, any editing they perform will be shown in that color
- Chat component for communication within an editing session
Demonstration
Fundamental Limitations of Colledit

- Does not scale well
- Does not provide a programmer's text editor
- Each collaborative event requires code to drive the respective network event
- Does not provide a method of notification of what other users are doing
Towards the Future: Real-Time Collaborative GUI Toolkits

- Modern editors and GUI toolkits are not conducive to real-time collaboration
- Ideally, support for real-time collaboration would be in the GUI toolkit itself
- Beyond seeing changes in realtime, cursor location, mouse location, screen position, of all users would all be tracked and displayed by the toolkit
Questions?