

Peter Suber
Dan Collis-Puro
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TagTeam Final Report

Project summary

TagTeam is open-source middleware designed to stand between social-tagging platforms, like Delicious or Connotea, and readers who subscribe to RSS feeds from those platforms. It will allow a research community to tag articles, books, datasets, news stories, and other relevant sites, use the resulting tag feeds for current awareness, and use the tag libraries to organize knowledge in the field. While the tagging platforms themselves already offer rudimentary versions of those services, TagTeam will go further by combining user-defined tags or folksonomies on the input side with standard vocabularies or ontologies on the output side. It will eliminate duplicates and spam from output feeds, and free users in the research community from the need to agree on a common tagging platform.

Accomplishments

In the first funding period (ending October 2011) we built a robust and flexible infrastructure for the project. Here are the highlights of what we accomplished.

- TagTeam supports any number of “hubs” or topic-focused social-tagging projects. Each hub can subscribe to any number of input feeds and publish any number of output feeds.
- It supports what we call “interoperable tagging” by accepting input feeds from different tagging platforms (e.g. Connotea and Delicious) and standardizing the data from their different formats. Users subscribing to the output feeds won’t know or care which platforms were used by the original taggers.
- It allows users to create output feeds out of any combination of input feeds.
- It stores all feed items in a local database for de-duplication, back-up, export, modification, and search.
- It allows different users to tag the same item with different tags, and merges the tags in the single stored record.
- It allows different hubs to share input feeds, and allow different hubs to give different local names to the same feed.
- It spiders or updates its input feeds often enough for its output feeds to provide useful real-time alerts. Hence it combines a prospective alert service with a retrospective knowledge-organization service.
- TagTeam is already the most stable, robust, and standardized open-source RSS aggregator anywhere. We’ve separately released the code for TagTeam’s RSS/Atom abstraction library

to the open-source community <<http://goo.gl/5jiAf>> while we build TagTeam's remaining features on top of it.

Here's the latest running demo. (Warnings: To date we've focused more on structure and features than UI. The demo requires a Berkman Center login. The current version does not save data experimentally entered.)

<http://dev7.berkmancenter.org/>

Next steps

- TagTeam will support both automated and manual filtering of input feeds, feed items, and item tags. All modifications of both kinds will be reflected in the hub's output feeds.
 - The automated filtering will allow a project to convert user-defined tags to a standard vocabulary, enabling projects to offer "folksonomy in" and "ontology out".
 - The manual filtering will allow a project to delete spam and correct tagging mistakes too difficult to detect algorithmically.
- TagTeam will support the direct tagging of web pages, not just the organization and filtering of feeds from existing tagging platforms.
- TagTeam will support boolean searching of its database of tags, tag feeds, and feed items.
- TagTeam will support collaboration within a hub, for example allowing management privileges for some participants and not others.

Budget

We requested \$20,000 for Dan Collis-Puro, TagTeam's developer, and \$15,000 for Peter Suber, TagTeam's principal investigator. The first portion covered Dan's time to work on the project, and the second covered Peter's time.

We're grateful that Library Lab renewed our funding for Round 3 (December 1, 2011 – November 30, 2012).

Publicity

We presented TagTeam at the Library Lab Showcase on October 27, 2011, where we offered a screencast of our working demo and distributed a hand-out of its current and planned features.

Peter sat for a video interview on TagTeam with Dan Jones of the Berkman Center (also October 27, 2011), but the result has not yet been posted online.

Peter plans to use TagTeam to upgrade the existing Open Access Tracking Project (OATP), and has mentioned TagTeam in a few blog posts about the future of OATP. He has also mentioned it as forthcoming on the new Google+ page for the OATP <gplus.to/oatp>.

We've received very positive feedback from colleagues with whom we've discussed TagTeam. Several already want to launch hubs.

The TagTeam Team

Peter Suber, Faculty Fellow, Berkman Center for Internet & Society; Special Advisor to the Harvard Office for Scholarly Communication; psuber@cyber.law.harvard.edu

Dan Collis-Puro, Senior Developer, Berkman Center for Internet & Society;
djcp@cyber.law.harvard.edu