

Report on TagTeam December 2011 - November 2012

Project summary

TagTeam is an open-source, social-tagging platform and feed aggregator. It goes beyond existing tools in the same categories in two large ways.

First, it supports what we call *interoperable tagging*. It accepts tags from virtually any tagging platform (such as CiteULike, Connotea, and Delicious). It accepts those tags by subscribing to the RSS feeds they create, and by publishing its own integrated or unified feeds for TagTeam readers. Social-tagging projects no longer need to restrict their participants to just one tagging platform.

Second, it allows manual and automated modification of the input feeds before publishing its own output feeds. There are many reasons why a project might want to do this, but one important reason is to support what we call *folksonomy in, ontology out*. TagTeam allows user-defined tags to evolve into convergent, consensus tags under the direction of project managers. Crowd-sourced tagging projects no longer need to choose between the freedom of user-defined tags and the utility of a standard vocabulary. They can have the best of both worlds.

For more details, see my short Introduction to TagTeam.

<http://bit.ly/tagteam-intro>

Accomplishments

TagTeam 1.0 launched in June 2012, and has the basic functionality to support a social-tagging project on any topic.

My own motivation for developing TagTeam was to support and strengthen the Open Access Tracking Project (OATP). One consequence of the launch of TagTeam 1.0 is that I've officially moved OATP from Connotea, its previous platform, to TagTeam.

However, I have waited to recruit new projects to TagTeam until the program has a friendlier user interface (which is nearly finished as I write). Hence, I find it remarkable and very encouraging that a handful of serious users have already launched "hubs" (projects) on TagTeam:

Affordable Care Act

<http://tagteam.harvard.edu/hubs/8>

Disasters, the Environment, Energy, and the Law

<http://tagteam.harvard.edu/hubs/21>

DPLA Aggregator

<http://tagteam.harvard.edu/hubs/10>

Mentoring

<http://tagteam.harvard.edu/hubs/11>

Equally encouraging is the fact that TagTeam now hosts almost a dozen test projects from users who are clearly experimenting with the software.

Challenges

The development of TagTeam 1.0 focused on the architecture and basic features. It didn't give much attention to the user interface, which we know is inelegant and unfriendly. Nor did it have time to refine some basic features, such as the search engine, or add some highly desirable additional features.

Next steps

I've requested funding for TagTeam version 2.0, which will refine the new UI, already under development, and add some useful new features.

- * The user interface is unfriendly and confusing. It needs a makeover. We already have a clean and friendly design, and have begun to implement it.
- * The search engine is unfriendly and underpowered. It too needs a makeover. We plan to support full boolean searching, phrase searching, wildcard searching, searches that mix keywords and tags, and to do all this from a single search box.
- * Items tagged are currently associated with the tags that users have applied to them, but not with the users who applied those tags. By associating tags with their taggers, we can support output feeds limited to given taggers, collect statistics on how many users are using certain tags, and start to implement a system of governance in which user privileges depend in part on user performance.
- * When different people tag the same item, TagTeam already merges the tags they used and prevents duplicate records from appearing in output feeds. But it doesn't prevent later taggers from overwriting the descriptions or excerpts supplied by earlier taggers. The next version will block this kind of (inadvertent or mischievous) harm.
- * We will make it easier for project managers to see which tags are in use, and sort them alphabetically and by popularity. This will help write tag filters to correct misspelled tags. It will also help use user behavior as a guide to which tags should be promoted to the official project ontology and tags should be deprecated.

* TagTeam divides projects into "hubs" and allows great flexibility within any given hub. But it does not yet allow much flexibility across hubs. We'll start to add that flexibility by allowing users to move records from one hub to another.

* Currently TagTeam can only be used through a browser. We want to build mobile apps for the major mobile platforms to support reading, searching, and tagging from mobile devices.

I've already made arrangements with the Usability Lab at the Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science to evaluate TagTeam's new UI.

I also hope to write an article about TagTeam (as opposed to the Open Access Tracking Project, which runs on TagTeam), to describe its power and recruit new users and projects to the platform.

Publicity for TagTeam to date

When TagTeam 1.0 launched in September, I announced on my blog that the Open Access Tracking Project (OATP) would soon migrate from Connotea to TagTeam. When the migration began, I posted new instructions to help OATP users make the move. When the migration was complete, I posted some summaries of how to use the new TagTeam version of the project. Here is that series of blog posts:

Major upgrade for the Open Access Tracking Project (OATP), September 8, 2012

<https://plus.google.com/109377556796183035206/posts/2NdDHncTLvN>

For users of the Open Access Tracking Project (OATP), September 13, 2012

<https://plus.google.com/109377556796183035206/posts/NBsfNLzJ7qr>

Reminder for users of the Open Access Tracking Project (OATP), September 15, 2012

<https://plus.google.com/109377556796183035206/posts/Sc2kwRXcsqf>

Transition day for the Open Access Tracking Project (OATP), September 17, 2012

<https://plus.google.com/109377556796183035206/posts/7RrFra68HKM>

One email a day to keep up with open-access developments, September 20, 2012

<https://plus.google.com/109377556796183035206/posts/8K82t2FvPET>

How to stay on top of open-access developments, October 19, 2012

<https://plus.google.com/109377556796183035206/posts/Wkr8GZPy2UN>

I posted a version of this news to the SPARC Open Access Forum on October 5, 2012, and included some of the same information in the SPARC Open Access Newsletter for December 2, 2012.

<https://groups.google.com/a/arl.org/forum/#!topic/sparc-oaforum/PqD5YhEbUpM/discussion>

<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/newsletter/12-02-12.htm#housekeeping>

As I mentioned above, I also wrote an online handout introducing TagTeam to new users. I continue to revise it and keep it up to date.

<http://bit.ly/tagteam-intro>

My research assistant, Andrea Bernard, presented TagTeam at the Library Lab Showcase on November 14, 2012. I could not be in Cambridge that day.

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Peter Suber

Director, Harvard Open Access Project

Fellow, Berkman Center for Internet & Society

Special Advisor, Harvard Office for Scholarly Communication

<http://bit.ly/suber-gplus>

peter.suber@gmail.com