



TITLE: Specification for final design

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REVISION: 1

The following pages provide a specification for a reasonably complete design of Pinpoint. It is based on the demonstrator, our findings from user testing, and our work on ideas that were partially developed but not enough to make it into the demonstrator. The specification is presented in the form of modifications and additions to the demonstrator. Hence, the best way to read it is probably while viewing and playing with the demonstrator.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE DEMONSTRATOR

More information in the info-card.

The information card for a person can be augmented with all kinds of information, of course. What we find most essential is a link to formal HR information, an availability indicator that the person can set, a field for free-format text that the person can enter, and a field for annotations that the user can make about the person currently viewed.

Reason: User tests highlighted information needs as above, drawing on their actual use contexts.

Visualize more people.

The visual treatment of people in the organization should indicate that there are many more people available than the 60 currently focused, perhaps by presenting a blurred crowd of nearly-transparent silhouettes around the group in focus. When a center or filter operation affects the set of focused people, the changes should be animated by moving silhouettes between the group in focus and the crowd around it.

Reason: User tests showed difficulties in grasping the conceptual model of a large database of people and a small set of selected people on the floor. The visualization could be improved to communicate the conceptual model better.

Move the floor text from the floor.

After a filter or search operation, the active tag or search string should be presented in a way that does not connect to the surface of the floor.

Reason: The current design, where the active tag or search string is presented on the floor, proved in user tests to be misleading: Users incorrectly inferred that the distance between a person and the floor text was a measure of how well the person matched the filter or search criterion.

Make tag lists into a tag cloud.

Change the way user-provided and system-generated tags are presented into a less structured form, more similar to a typical tag cloud.

Reason: The tag presentation in the demonstrator was mis-interpreted to contain much more structure than it in fact does.

More complete search.

The free-text search should cover job descriptions and other text-based person information as well, not only names and tags.

Reason: User tests showed that we may expect search to be a frequent strategy for locating people and competences.

Blue outline comes from a click.

When the user clicks a person, a rapid animated light-effect should be triggered, ending in the blue click-history outline around the clicked person.

Reason: In user tests, it was clear that the click-history outline was not noticed when it appeared and hence not consistently interpreted as a click-history indicator. An animation might enforce the connection between clicking and the outline appearing.

PROPOSED ADDITIONS TO THE DEMONSTRATOR

Timeline.

There should be a slider to control the point in time displayed in the visualization, in order to allow the user to explore changes over time. The timeline should be marked-up with the user's own milestone events (such as finishing a project), in order to facilitate time-based recall.

Reason: Exploring how people's competences and networks change over time may provide valuable information for deciding whom to contact.



Tag manager.

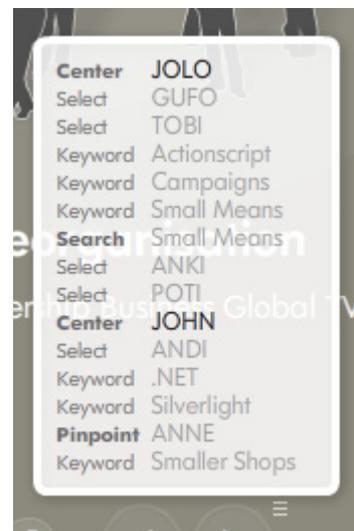
There should be a tool for selecting tags from a list of all tags defined in the system, for defining new tags and for searching based on Boolean combinations of tags.

Reason: It has great social significance if users provide tags to describe themselves, and there should be a tool to make self-tagging as convenient and interesting as possible.

Navigation history.

There should be a popup listing all navigational moves of the session, including center operations as well as tag filtering and searches.

Reason: To allow for more convenient backtracking than the Back and Forward buttons, and hence to facilitate undaunted explorative behavior.



Snapshots.

There should be a mechanism for capturing and sharing snapshots of specific views in the visualization.

Reason: To facilitate convenient sharing of findings, insights and potentially useful contacts.



Single Point of Contact.

In addition to people in the organization, the database should accommodate the SPOC concept (Single Point of Contact – a phone number or email address for answering questions on a specific topic, possibly manned by several people as a jointly organized effort). A SPOC could be visualized as a reserved silhouette on the floor, with perfect match for the tags or combinations of tags that it is defined for, and with contact information comprising the SPOC phone number, email address etc.

Reason: Several information needs, including certain support topics, are addressed in the organization using SPOC addresses to ensure the best possible responsiveness. It is straightforward to extend the Pinpoint visualization approach to include SPOC »people« and it would make the system more organizationally appropriate.

Integrated micro-Pinpoint.

Productivity applications such as the corporate email client should be augmented with a context-menu alternative invoking a micro-Pinpoint floater. Right-mousing a person's name and selecting micro-Pinpoint, for instance, would bring up a small floating window showing the people most closely related to that person (in Pinpoint's sense). A second click would launch the full Pinpoint visualization.

Reason: A lightweight version of a Pinpoint search may sometimes be enough to provide the necessary information. If not, the full version is close at hand. It has been a general ideal in designing Pinpoint to provide a system with unique functions and no duplication of data or functions. Hence the tight integration with existing productivity applications and intranet services for handling people information.

PROPOSED NON-CHANGES TO THE DEMONSTRATOR

The user tests indicated a possible difficulty in the demonstrator which we intend not to address. In a sense, we view it as a »false positive«; this section outlines what it was and why we feel that it should not be changed.

The wall.

The final Pinpoint design is proposed to contain a wall which presents information on a person when the cursor has rested on the person for more than 1 second. The information presented on the wall comprises geographical location, current assignment to projects and other defined tasks, and information about closest superior.

Reason: User tests seemed to indicate that the wall was hard to interpret and somewhat distracting. We conclude that these drawbacks are due to the tentative nature of the information on the wall, compared to the relatively precise information in the rest of the demonstrator. A more functional and relevant wall is likely to be easier to understand and to be deemed more relevant.