Customizing user access to the Miguel de Cervantes Digital Library

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ABSTRACT

According to [1] Internet is a market with many micromarkets, based on needs, interests and trends, both personal and professional. Each and every space of the net is atomized to reach the users, with their own preferences and behaviors. Our DL project [1] intends to give the users a customized view where they could receive personalized information. We describe the goals and design ideas followed in our customization project.

KEYWORDS: digital libraries, digital library development, human-computer interfaces

INTRODUCTION

The global purpose of our customization project is to give the users a customized view of the DL, according to their personal needs and preferences and also an interface where they could receive personalized information. For this purpose users must create a profile that identifies them when they connect to our web site. To create a profile it is necessary at least that the user provides an identification key (unique within the DL) and a password. An option would be to use her/his email address as id. key.

Additionally, more data is requested to create a personalized profile: name, address, country, etc., and customization preferences. If they are already subscribed to the news bulletin their personal data will be shown as default, allowing modification. If they are not subscribed, a subscription proposal appears as an option. Users can access and modify their profile at any time.

Personalized page

In some part of the main menu there will be an option called

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[1] Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra

"My library". From that option users can entered their personalized page. This page has its own domain, for example http://mi.cervantesvirtual.com/, easy to recall and allowing the users to enter directly to their page without going through the main page of the library. At this time is when users must identify themselves. This can be done by introducing key and password before entering the customized page, or well by creating a profile if it is the first time they enter.

A customized session is ended when the user closes the browser or after 30 minutes without requesting a page from our web site (the user "has gone").

Users will be given the option of memorizing their key in a cookie [2] to avoid having to identify themselves each time they begin a session. This will work as long as they connect from the same machine, since the cookie will be kept in the local disk of the PC. If they change their machine or delete the cookie, they will be asked for identification the next time they connect to the library. This key memorizing feature is optional, since users may not be interested in sharing their PCs with other persons, that could access their profile or personalized page without a key.

The personalized page may contain the following features: bookmarks, historical record, new additions, news and profile update.

BOOKMARKS

In all digital book pages (customized mode or not), a new icon appears for bookmarks. When users want to put a marker on a page they only need to clic on the icon. A small window appears to acknowledge the accomplished action, allowing for a comment addition associated with the marker. If the user has not been identified yet, will be requested to enter a key and password.

Later, the markers list will appear in the personalized page, allowing the user to call the respective pages with a simple click. Erasing bookmarks is also allowed.

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[2] a cookie is a small file

HISTORY RECORD

In essence, these are automatic bookmarks that keep track of the last visited pages.

NEW ADDITIONS

In the three types of bibliographic card currently available in our DL – title card, author card and subject card – a new icon appears that will allow the user to mark that title, author or subject to be notified later of the new additions concerning this preference. This is done in the following way:

- **Title:** new comments added to the forum of this title will be shown as well as new recommended related-web-links added from the last day in which the user entered the customized page.
- **Author:** apart from new forum comments about the author there will be a notification of new books published by the DL of that author. The user will also be informed in the event that the selected author is added to the list of authors with "author-library".
- **Subject:** new published works under the selected subject will be shown. Later these features will be widened, allowing the user, for instance, to be notified of new links added to a selected category within the "libraries-of-the-world" link list. This notification facilities can be easily activated or cancelled at will from the customized user page.
- **News:** From her/his customized page, the user can read the "library news" occurred from the last time she/he was connected, being informed of new sections in the library and new services.

CUSTOMIZING THE PAGES' "SKIN"

We call the skin of a library web page all that surrounds the book text: the head-frame with the library logo, the menu at the left and the foot-frame, as well as the background color of the page, the color of the text, the type and size of the fonts. This skin is different, for example, in the portal Lluis Vives, and will be a distinctive element in new portals to come.

Upon creation of a profile, the user will be able to choose the skin of her/his preference. Four or five skins will be available with different design philosophies. In addition to the current classic design, there will be a "high performance" design, ideal for users that have the newest browser and a good transmission speed, that may contain photographs, animations, dynamical HTML, etc. There will also be a "minimalist" design, where the head and foot frames will be simplified to occupy the smaller possible space, using a horizontal menu instead of the left one, to leave maximum space free for text. These are only a few examples of what can be done. User request will be taken into account in the design of this skins.

REFERENCES

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