

A Survey of Distributed Hypertext Systems

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Abstract

Distributed hypermedia systems provide the ability for collaboration of a possibly arbitrary large group of people. These people can be located in physically separate locations, in different organizations, with possibly intermittent network connectivity, and with possibly high latencies for data transfer.

While the need to manage distributed documents was recognized early by both Ted Nelson and Doug Engelbart, most early hypermedia system implementations were limited to single machines. Rather, the focus was on the representational and navigational aspects of hypermedia. The rise of the World Wide Web, however, highlighted the problems of navigation and collaboration in a distributed hypermedia environment.

This survey identifies the key problems faced by hypermedia systems in a distributed environment, and analyzes and categorizes distributed hypermedia systems with respect to the extent the systems attack these problems.