



2006 年度下期未踏ソフトウェア創造事業 採択案件評価書

1. 担当PM

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3. プロジェクト管理組織

株式会社メルコホールディングス

4. 委託金支払額

10,795,405 円

5. テーマ名

Serendi: A Location-Aware Social Networking Platform

6. 関連Webサイト

<http://www.serendi.org>

7. テーマ概要

Busy urban lifestyles tend to place restrictions on an individual's social life.

Expanding one's social circle and meeting new friends can be difficult due to lack of time and opportunity.

Many Internet-based applications have been proposed and implemented in an attempt to address this issue.

Among the more popular types of applications to do so is the online social networking service (SNS).

SNS was developed to model the way people meet each other in real world.

However, many people highly value the ability to meet a friend in person and find it far more convenient to be in the same place -- an issue not generally addressed by online SNS. To address this shortcoming,

we propose Serendi; a location-aware social networking system to enhance our real world friend-meeting process.

Serendi operates over the mobile phone network and allows real world interaction between Serendi users based on their location and compatibilities.

Serendi can be considered an add-on service for existing online SNSs.

Serendi consists of a meta-level over layered SNS on top of existing reliable SNSs.

Meta-data necessary for location-aware services are extracted from the existing SNS network.

We have designed Serendi with a special focus on protecting user privacy to the maximum level possible by controlling location data propagation based on social network connections and by controlling location data resolution accordingly.

8 . 採択理由

I found this a very interesting effort. It combines a number of interesting technical issues such as the best way to get location information as to the location of a person (suggested 3) and raises a whole set of very interesting issues such as the whole privacy set of issues - to who do we wish to know our location? How long are records kept, how to introduce us to “new: friends etc.

The integration of the social networks issues with the mobile platform makes this a worthwhile effort. The ties to relationship based systems that are a hot topic in the USA may make the impact of this proposal higher than normal.

There are a whole interesting set of social issues that arise when one tries to “internationalize” such software. What is permissible in one nation may be highly improper in others.

In order to be successful, there does need to be an agreement with one or more cellular operators to supply location information to the system. It was not clear if this permission was obtained but I could be of some help if difficulties arose due to my DoCoMo past connection.

The proposal itself was well written -- exceptionally clear when read in English which suggests an ease of working with the group.

I can see a real commercial market for this idea if it is successfully completed. The use of location-based assistance is blooming again in the USA after the .COM bubble burst and this could be a real winner.

All in all, this was one of the more interesting proposals I have read.

To summarize, it offers a host of design issues including human interface and privacy issues that will greatly mature the proposers.

It offers an interesting possibly profitable commercial opportunity and it raises a host of interesting design issues.

I rate this project 1st of those I am considering. I would be pleased to manage this effort if chosen and strongly suggest it be accepted.

9 . 開発目標

- A. *Serendi* the location-aware social networking service that will run on mobile terminals
- B. A location data management system with focus on user privacy
- C. User compatibility calculation algorithm

10 . 進捗概要

Implementers found integrating their service with existing SNS more difficult than anticipated, and linking to other applications was difficult as they often did not operate as expected, though most key services are now operating to their published specifications.

One initial idea to use signal strength to provide location data proved unworkable, and using other means became necessary. GPS location data was successfully adopted, but the implementers then faced a user problem as a main target user population, students, tends not to use high-end expensive phones where GPS functions are standard. It is expected that GPS enabled phones will become standard in the near future.

11 . 成果

The implementers are aware of the issues of privacy that the technology raises and have several techniques to provide measures of privacy. While the idea is not new, this is one of the better and most complete implementations and may well find a path to commercialization.

I was very pleased with the interaction with the developers and believe they accomplished a major part of what they proposed.

12. プロジェクト評価

The implementers have shown a maturity in understanding the problems and have been very responsive to criticism and suggestions.

While the project is of very high rating, there is not uniquely a super creator due to the division of responsibility. The whole team is certainly of a high caliber and deserves recognition.

13. 今後の課題