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Title of the Invention

Mouse-over File Browsing System

Description of Invention

This invention is an addition to the file manager GUI that provides more information to the user via pop up previews and file browsing, which is initiated by moving the mouse cursor over a folder or file icon.

Problem or Opportunity

Operating systems contain a basic file manager module within the graphical user interface that allows users to graphically browse through the file system in order to find files or folders. These file managers display information in a standard way, using static file and folder icons. As file managers are currently implemented, they lack a system for displaying relevant information about each file or folder to the user. As a result, locating a file can be a tedious process full of clicking, backtracking, and opening files.

Detailed Description of the Invention

A layered mouse-over browsing system adds additional functionality to the File Manager and provides a clear and intuitive way for users to efficiently browse through a computer's file system. When browsing files and folders in the file manager, the user may preview or browse the contents of a file or folder by placing the mouse cursor over the file or folder. A small pop-up box would display the relevant information to the user.

Files, such as word processor documents, music files or pictures would be treated slightly differently than folders. When a user moves the mouse cursor over a file's icon, a pop-up box displays a preview of the contents of the file. The preview might display the first few lines of a text document or a thumbnail of an image file. A preview of a music file might show more detailed information about the file, such as artist, album, and song title; or display the cover art from the album. When the cursor is moved away from the file icon, the pop-up box disappears.

For folders, a pop-up box would allow a more interactive look at the folder contents. When a user moves the mouse cursor over the icon of a folder, a pop-up box in the File Manager displays the contents of the folder. The pop-up box would contain the icons and file/folder names for the contents of the folder. If this folder contains too many files and/or folders to be displayed in the pop-up box, only the most frequently accessed files and folders are shown. If the user moves the mouse cursor off of the folder icon, the pop-up box disappears. However, if the user moves the mouse cursor over an icon displayed within the pop-up box, a new pop-up box appears, showing the preview or contents of the file or folder. At any time, the user may click on an icon within a pop-up box to open a file with an associated application or open a folder in the standard file manager view. This system allows the user to quickly browse throughout a file system with minimal clicking and effort by the user.

Figure 1 shows a diagram of the system in which the Mouse-over File Browsing System operates.

The User Machine is a computing device such as a desktop computer, laptop, or mobile device.

The OS is the operating system (i.e. Linux) that runs on the User Machine and manages interactions between the user and the machine.

The GUI is the Graphical User Interface that displays information to the user. The user interacts with the OS through the GUI.

The File Manager is a GUI module that allows the user to graphically browse through the File System on the User Machine. The File Manager has the ability to provide mouse over previews of files and folders.

The File System is the collection and organization of files stored on the User Machine. The File System may be stored on an internal hard drive, or removable media. Figure 2 depicts an example of a hierarchal file system.

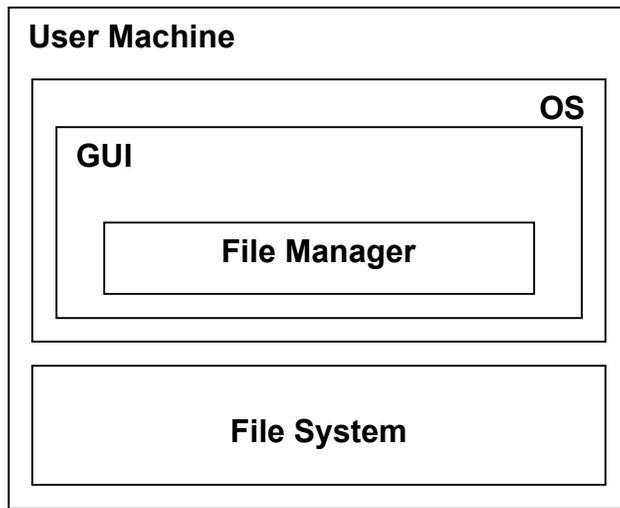


Figure 1. File Manager System for implementation of the Mouse-over File Browsing System.

Figure 2 depicts an example of a file system through which a user may browse using the Mouse-over File Browsing System. The figure shows a Root Directory that includes all the files and folders stored on the machine. Within the Root Directory are stored Folder A and Files 1 and 2. Folder A contains Folder B and File 3. File 4 is contained within Folder B.

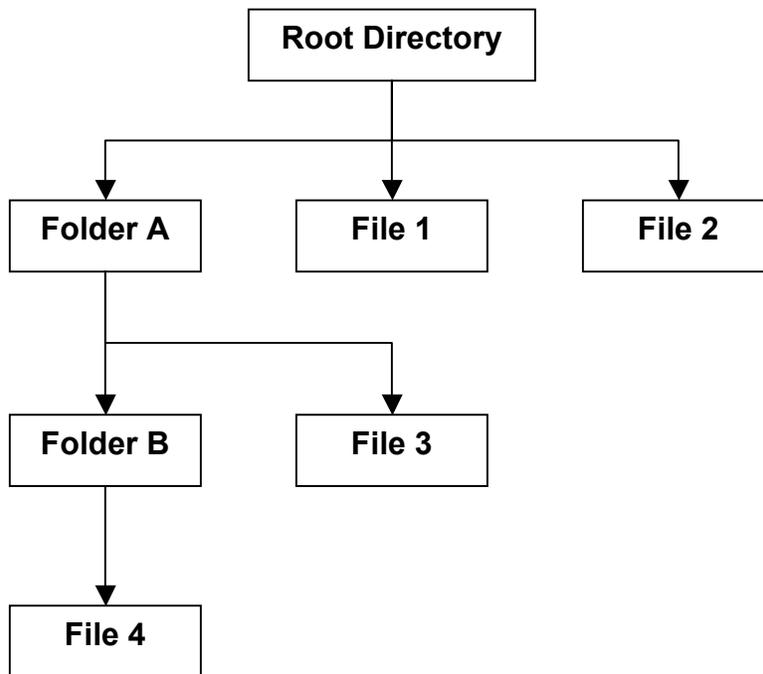


Figure 2. Example file hierarchy for the Mouse-over File Browsing System.

Figure 3 shows an example of the methodology for browsing an example file system (Figure 2) with the Mouse-over File Browsing System.

In step 1, the User opens the Root Directory with the File Manager. The File manager displays the contents of the Directory to the User in the standard form.

In optional step 2, the User moves the mouse cursor in the GUI over the icon representing File 1.

In optional step 3, a pop-up box in the File Manager appears, showing a preview, or list of attributes, of the information in File 1. When the user moves the cursor away from the File 1 icon, the pop-up box disappears.

In step 4, the User moves the GUI mouse cursor over Folder A.

In step 5, the File Manager displays a pop-up box containing the contents of Folder A. This pop-up box shows Folder B and File 3 existing within Folder A.

In step 6, the user moves the mouse cursor over Folder B displayed within the pop-up box.

In step 7, a second pop-up box appears, in the File Manager, displaying the contents of Folder B (File 4).

In step 8, the User clicks on File 4 with the mouse cursor. The OS opens File 4 and the pop-up boxes disappear.

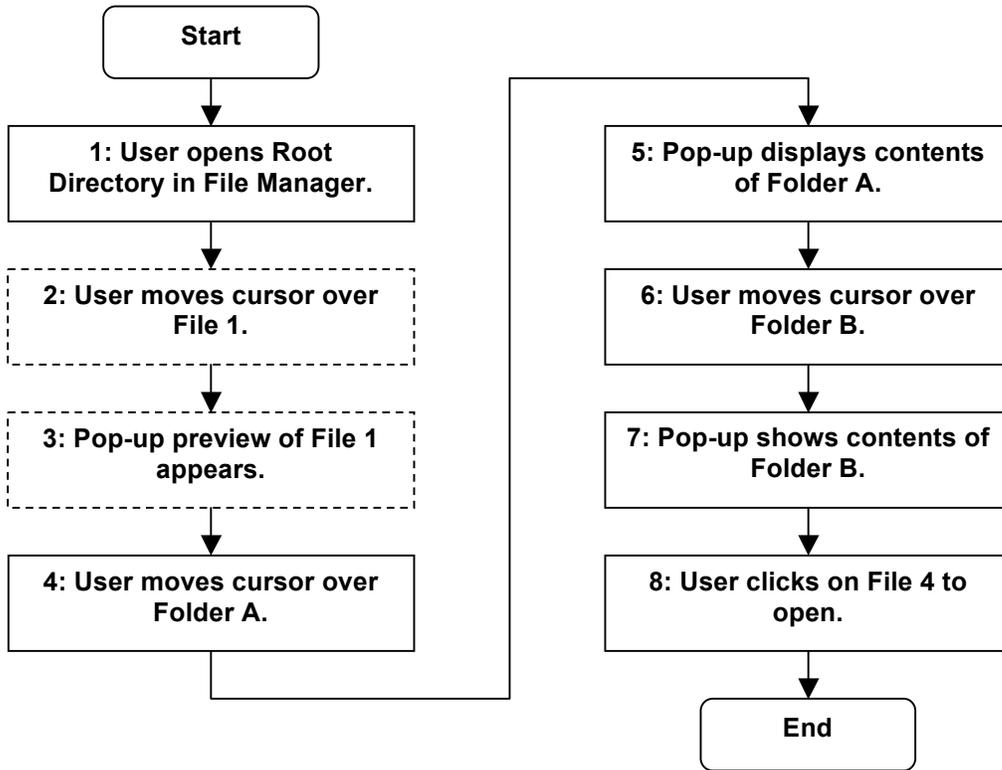


Figure 3. Example Method for using the Mouse-over File Browsing System.