

Linux Invention

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Title of the Invention

Method for Creating a Personalized Graphical Interface that Balances Individualized Content with Content Provider Requirements

Description of the Invention

Users want a personalized, customized interface when visiting a content provider's site, with links to their favorite topics, places, and interests. On the other hand, content providers want to maintain a certain degree of control over the information presented to a user. (Content can contain news, gossip, politics, sports, shopping, and entertainment.) Linux satisfies the preferred content of both users and content providers by creating a personalized graphical interface that a content provider transmits for display on a user's browser. Linux balances the content of a user's highest priorities with the specific priorities and requirements of a content provider while creating an personalized interface based on the user's graphical experience from their personal computer.

Problem or Opportunity

Content providers, through the decisions they make about content choice, create an editorial voice for their public portal. This voice includes editorial decisions concerning the content of news, gossip, politics, sports, events, entertainment, shopping, and many other categories.

While the content at a particular content provider's site might be rich and varied regardless of its editorial viewpoint, users still want to create their own experience and interface on a content provider's site. User want to see information that is most important to them, such as specific types of news, entertainment, restaurants, stores, sports, and other categories. The content provider welcomes this level of personalization because they know that creating a relationship with a customer through this personalization is one way to keep people coming back to their site. The content provider desires to balance this personalization with their own ability to display the type of information most important to them as well.

While a content provider can allow a user to personalize their site to create a unique online experience, the look and feel of this personalized user interface relies solely on the

content provider. Users are comfortable with the look and feel of the user interface that they have created on their own computers. Rather than adapt to the many user interface designs on these numerous content provider sites, users would prefer to recreate their own user interface look and feel on the content provider sites that they access.

Detailed Description of the Invention

Linux running on both a user's computer (the local Linux) and on the content provider's server (the remote Linux) personalizes a content provider's site for a particular user in different ways.

First, Linux recreates on the content provider's web pages, as much as possible, the look and feel of a user's personalized graphical interface from its personal computer. This graphical look and feel includes items such as color, buttons, font, arrangement, icons, and many other items needed to create a user interface. Both the local and remote versions of Linux work together to create this personalized graphical interface of the content provider's site, one that is displayed only for this user.

Next, Linux personalizes specific content to match the needs of a user. Linux does this by remembering the paths that the user creates by clicking through many different content provider sites. Linux assumes that the more a user clicks a particular link to a specific Web page, then the greater the possibility that the content at that link is important to that user. The more a user visits a site, the more accurate will Linux be when creating the personalized Web pages for that particular user. Essentially though, Linux counts the number of user clicks on a particular link or category (such as today's financial news) and displays those with the most clicks on the user's personalized version of the content provider's site. Linux stores this historical information in a user preference database on the user's local hard drive.

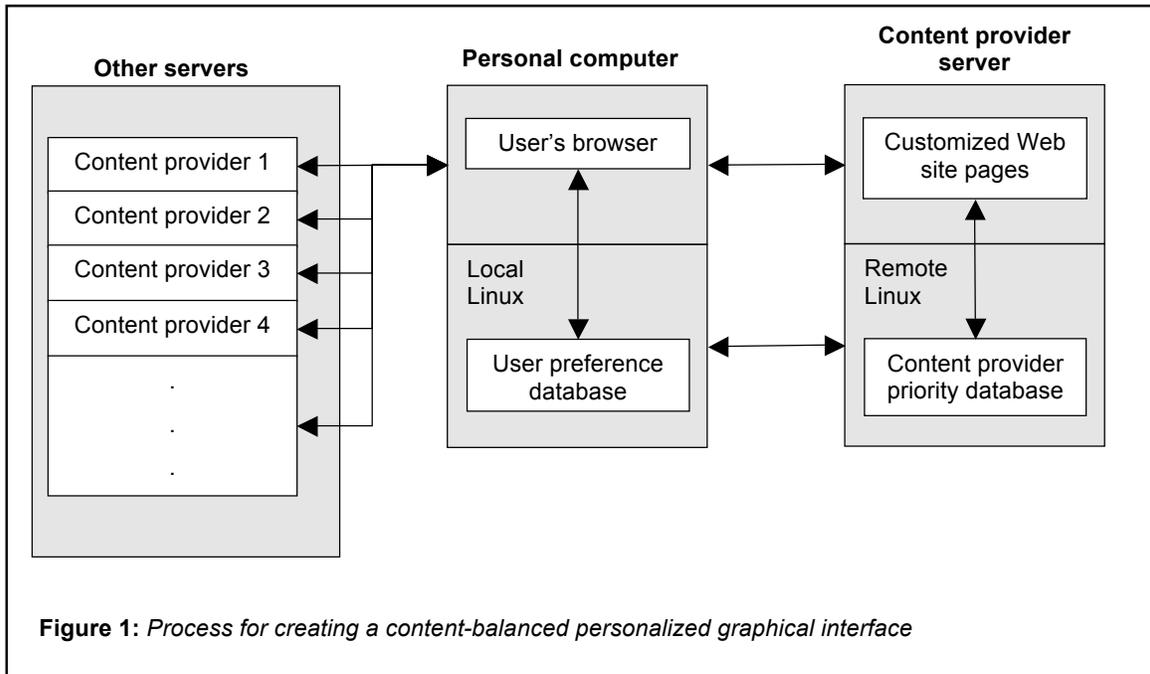
Many content providers already track this kind of information for a particular user, and display that customized content when the user revisits the site. In this implementation, however, Linux merges this content provider customization with the user's larger interests (from visits to many different content provider Web sites) ultimately creating personalized content that is more specific for a particular user and doesn't rely solely on a user's past experiences on a particular content provider site.

Finally, to meet the editorial voice of the content provider, Linux displays the content most important to the content provider together with the user's personalized content. Linux attempts to balance the needs of the content provider with those of the user. A content provider, when specifying information to post on its Web site, sets a priority for some information and specifies that other information is required to be displayed. Linux stores these priorities and requirements in a content provider preference database on the content provider's server. Linux always displays the required content on a user's personalized pages together with the highest priority items of the content provider. The lowest priority items are the first to be replaced with a user's priority content. Linux balances the remaining content of the personalized pages between the preferences of the content provider and the user.

All together, the local Linux works in concert with the remote Linux to create a unique user experience of a content provider site, one that not only personalizes content for the

user but also recreates the look and feel of the user's online interface. In the end, a content provider maintains some editorial control over what is displayed to a user, with the user able to personalize, to a large degree, what they want to see.

Figure 1 depicts an overview for creating a personalized graphical interface that balances individualized content with a content provider's requirements.



The method starts when a user browses or searches the Internet, accessing various Web pages and clicking through links.

In step 1, a user browses various content provider Web sites, accessing various Web pages and clicking through links.

In step 2, the version of Linux running on the user's personal computer (the local Linux) records these Internet sessions and aggregates this information to create personalized preferences for this user. Linux stores this information in a user preference database residing on the user's hard drive.

In step 3, a content provider creates content and links to information, applying a priority to each item: the higher the priority, the greater the chance this information will appear on a user's personalized graphical interface of the content provider's site. The content provider can also specify information that is required to appear on this personalized interface.

In step 4, the version of Linux running on the content provider's server (the remote Linux) records these priorities and display requirements, and stores this information in a content provider priority database residing on the server.

In step 5, the user opens a content provider's Web site (running on the content provider's server) into their browser running locally on a personal computer.

In step 6, the local Linux sends information from the user preference database to the remote Linux.

In step 7, the remote Linux accesses information in the content provider priority database residing on the server.

In decision step 8, the remote Linux determines if the content provider attempts to customize its user interface for this particular user. If so, the method continues with step 9; if not, the method proceeds to step 10.

In step 9, the remote Linux obtains the content provider-generated customization for this particular user.

In step 10, the local Linux sends the user's graphical interface requirements to the remote Linux.

In step 11, the remote Linux composes a personalized graphical interface (from information garnered in steps 6, 7, 9, and 10) containing the content provider's requirements and high priority items together with the user's high-level preferences and graphical interface requirements for subsequent transmission to the local Linux for use on the user's personal computer. The personalized graphical interface balances three levels of content: the requirements of the content provider, the content provider's customization for this user, and the personal preferences of the user.

In step 12, the remote Linux transmits the code that creates this personalized graphical interface to the local Linux.

In step 13, the local Linux installs the personalized graphical interface on the user's browser running on the personal computer, activating the personalized graphical interface.

In step 14, the user browses the personalized graphical interface, clicking on various links.

In step 15, the local Linux records this current session and merges this new information into the existing local user preference database.

The method ends.

Figure 2 depicts a flowchart for creating a personalized graphical interface that balances individualized content with a content provider's requirements.

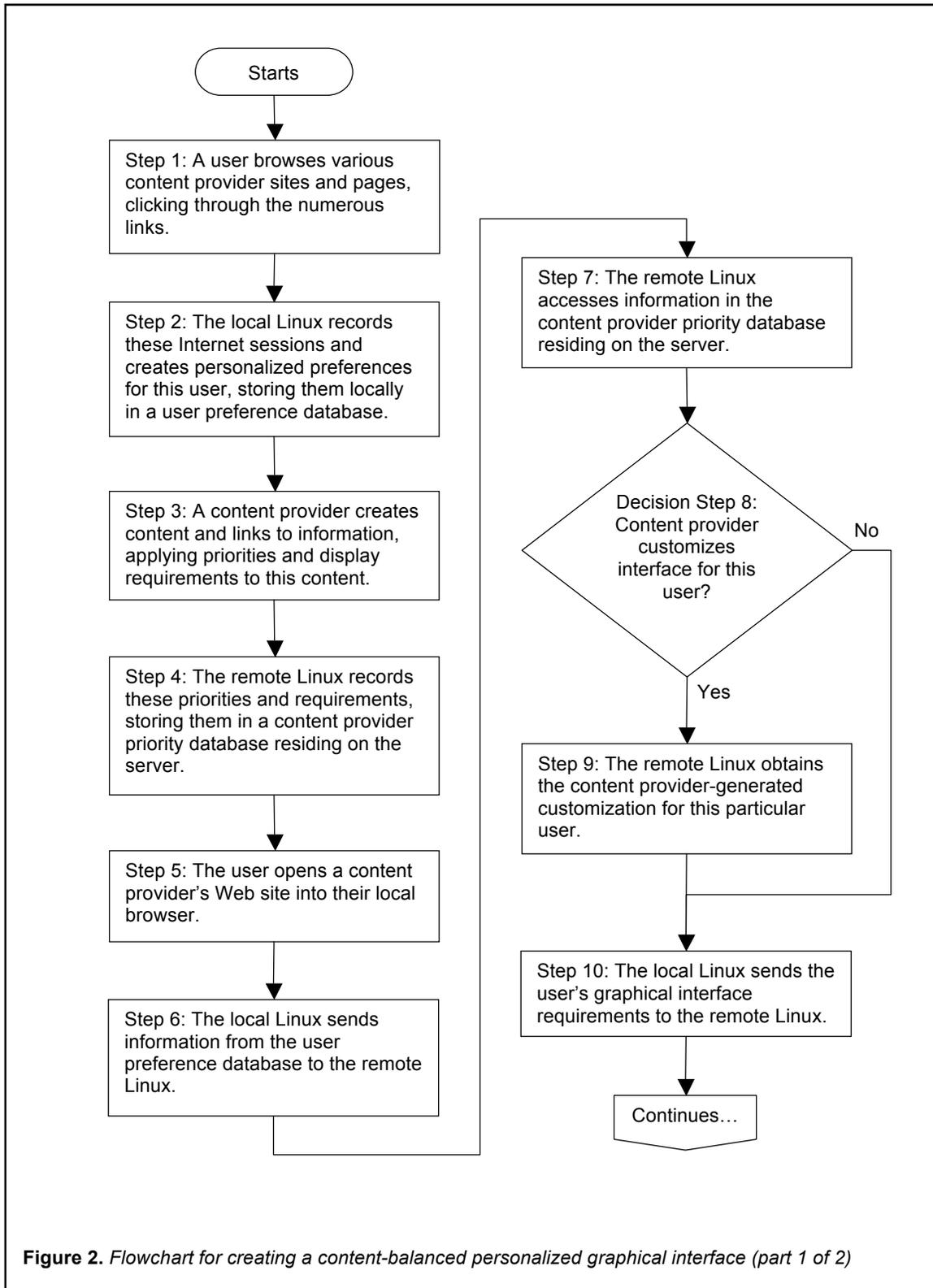


Figure 2. Flowchart for creating a content-balanced personalized graphical interface (part 1 of 2)

