

Data Management in MARRS^{2/2}

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1. Introduction

This paper discusses a computer teleconferencing system that is designed for overseeing the completion of a software design project. The software design has been focused toward a specific type of project. In particular, this conferencing system is to help automate the process of the collecting, reviewing, and presenting of master's reports. This paper does not describe the computer teleconferencing system in detail. Rather it focuses on the data management aspects of the computer teleconferencing system.

Computer teleconferencing can be defined as an interactive group-communication through a computer where individuals in the group can be at different locations [CROS84]. Computer teleconferencing attempts to eliminate the problems associated with people attending meetings. Some typical problems include traveling costs, time and schedule conflicts, thinking on the spot, interest in only one particular item on the agenda. Computer teleconferencing provides many of the features found in a face-to-face conference to its participants. Some of the features found in a computer teleconference include conference and discussion areas, note pads, bulletin boards, status and tracking functions, on-line search operations, voting and data gathering. These features are described in detail in [JANN86].

Some advantages of computer teleconferencing are :

- No travel time and cost (frees a person from the necessity of attending a meeting),
- No time constraints involving time zone changes and conflicting schedules,
- The conference is self-documenting. Any part of the document/discussion can be retrieved at will,
- Users can take time to think before making a comment,
- Users can select items of the conference/discussions in which they want to participate. This is different from a face-to-face conference where an attendee might have to sit through the conference and listen to all the speakers when the interest is only in one speaker,
- Users of a computer conference do not have to 'be' at the conference at the same time. They can 'attend' the conference at their convenience.

Some disadvantages associated with computer teleconferencing are :

- No face-to-face meeting,
- The ability of managers to maintain closer contact and control may make users feel restricted,
- Lack of face-to-face meetings could reduce professional development and contacts.

This paper consists of four chapters.

Computer teleconferencing systems create, manage, and communicate text among the participants. The participants can read, access and respond to this text [CROS83]. The second chapter looks at the relationship of data bases to computer teleconferencing systems. It also looks at some existing computer teleconferencing systems and how they manage their data.

The third chapter is an overview of the system and it looks in-depth at how our computer teleconferencing system will manage the data.

The final chapter contains a summarization and suggests possible extensions to this work.

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