



COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER OFFICE

TITLE (AND CASE NUMBER) OF INVENTION

METHOD FOR REAL-TIME COLLABORATIVE BROWSING (0901)

INVENTORS

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APPLICATIONS

Internet Co-Browsing. Our invention provides a simple approach to collaborative internet browsing using multiple computers, and could potentially be included as a third party application, or integrated into internet browsers such as Firefox and Internet Explorer.

SUMMARY

We have developed a purely browser-based solution to internet co-browsing. This method for Real-time Collaborative Browsing (RCB) leverages the power of Ajax (Asynchronous JavaScript and XML) techniques and the end user extensibility of modern web browsers for supporting co-browsing. Unlike previous techniques for RCB, our invention enables real-time collaborations between web users without using any third-party platforms, servers, or proxies.

The framework of our RCB method is simple, practical, and efficient for conducting co-browsing. It consists of two key components. One is a plug-in (hereafter “RCB-Agent”), which can be seamlessly integrated into a web browser. The other is a small piece of Ajax code (hereafter “Ajax-Snippet”), which can be embedded within an HTML page and downloaded to users’ regular browsers. Its simplicity lies in the fact that a user wishing to host a collaborative web session only needs to install a RCB-Agent plug-in. Users who want to join a collaborative web session just need to use regular JavaScript-enabled web browsers. Nothing else needs to be installed. The framework is practical because the tools needed to support RCB-Agent and Ajax-Snippet are already in place on most computers. As a result, joining a collaborative web session is no more difficult than visiting a regular web site. The efficiency of our RCB method arises because co-browsing participants are directly connected to the user who hosts the session. There is no third-party involvement in the co-browsing activities to potentially slow down the session.

Our RCB method has the following attributes:

- (1) Co-browsing can be achieved almost everywhere. Since no specific platform, server, or proxy is needed, users can perform co-browsing via any type of network connections.
- (2) Co-browsing can be applied to almost all kinds of web servers and web pages. Web contents hosted on HTTP or HTTPS web servers (including session-protected or unprotected web pages) can all be synchronized to co-browsing participants by RCB-Agent.
- (3) Co-browsed web elements and coordinated user actions can be very fine-grained.

PATENT STATUS

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