

In this interactive, gesture-based visualization of the affiliations within a community, users place anchors, each representing a different topic relevant to that community, on the screen. The names of people who are particularly drawn to a topic flow towards the associated anchor. The resulting animation reveals the shared interests and affiliations that comprise the structure of the community.

In the real world, we are continuously (though often peripherally) observing the social patterns around us. In a conference like SIGGRAPH 2000, we notice groups of people who always appear together: students whose common bond we recognize because of their shared sartorial eccentricities, groups of suited businessmen amidst a sea of t-shirt-clad researchers. These observations help us make sense of our complex social environment.

Similar patterns exist in the virtual world, whether as communities of people in an online service, the employees of global corporations, or

electronically registered participants in a conference. Yet in the virtual world, such patterns are usually invisible, hidden within vast databases; they can be seen only if they are explicitly visualized.

LaserWho not only visualizes these social patterns, but does so in a way that recreates (though in a very different way) the fascination of people watching in real life.

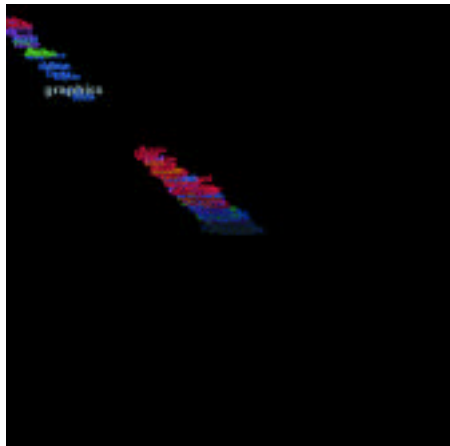
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