Info-Scavengers

Daniela Karin Rosner
daniela@ischool.berkeley.edu,

Kevin Mateo Lim
k7lim@ischool.berkeley.edu

Hannes Hesse
hannes@backin.de

Scavenger hunts are emergent collections, constructed out of small bits of information gathered by the players. As information scholars, we engage in scavenger hunts every day, whether researching ideas to formulate a paper, looking for the right regex pattern to parse a chunk of data, or integrating information into the correct ontology for a set of documents. We hope to illuminate this process in our everyday lives as students by revisiting the scavenger hunt for the world of us, the informavors [3].

We propose a scavenger hunt that takes place in and around the UCLA library. We intend to base some of the structure of the event on Jane McGonigal's work on Big Games [2]. Participants will engage the physical environment of UCLA campus in the access of information. Groups of 4 members will be given a set of 15 clues about different types of information that exist in a multiple spatiotemporal locations. In order to unlock their clues, groups will forage [4] and retrieve information using social and theoretical processes studied in the field. Information will include literary objects in the library, files "buried" in the web, and actual physical objects around the UCLA campus. In following with the berrypicking model of information retrieval [1], some clues will point to other clues, helping participants refine their search. Such clues interact with each other and need to be decoded in a certain order; however, all 15 clues will be given out at the same time. Groups will have 1 hour to gather all 15 clues, assemble them into the right order and unlock a final clue to win the game.

As a technical requirement, teams will need access to UCLAs wireless network so they have access to the world wide web, where some of the clues will be located. Each team should have at least one laptop between them.

[1] Bates, M. The Design of Browsing and Berrypicking Techniques for the Online Search Interface. http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/bates/berrypicking.html
[2] McGonigal, J. Supergaming: Ubiquitous Play and Performance for Massively Scaled Community. Modern Drama 48:3, 2005.
[3] Miller, G. A. (1984). Informavores. In F. Machlup & U. Mansfield (Eds.) The study of information: Interdisciplinary messages. New York: Wiley.
[4] Pirolli, P. and Card, S. (1995). Information Foraging in Information Access Environments, Proc. CH1'95,ll S-25