Perspectives on Tag Clouds for Supporting Reflection in Self-organised Learning

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Tags are popular for organising information in social software based on the personal views of the participants on the information. Tags provide valuable attention meta-data on a person's interests because the participants actively relate resources to concepts by using tags. Tag-clouds are popular and simple visualisations of this type of user-generated meta-data. This paper analyses four design studies for tag-clouds that are integrated in the ReScope framework for reflection support. ReScope provides a widget for visualising personal tag-clouds of the tags that were used with social bookmarking services. Each of the present designs addresses one of the following aspects for processing and representing attention meta-data: recency, focus, collaboration, and social connectedness. The designs are based on the findings of an earlier qualitative study about the application of ReScope for supporting meta-cognition in self-directed and incidental learning. The designs of the tag clouds are based on two design principles: "contrast" and "perspective". The present paper analyses how these principles are considered by the designs and discusses the underlying presumptions for the designs for supporting reflection using the different representations of attention meta-data. Future research will analyze these presumptions in practice.