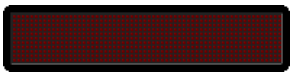
Information Visualization: Times Square Method (TSM)

What is Times Square Method (TSM)?

TSM also known as 'Leading' is a presentation technique of displaying information (usually text) dynamically in a limited space, in which the text (word or sentence) scrolls autonomously in one line and horizontally across the screen from right to left.



Above is an example of TSM visual presentation

Benefits of TSM

- Requires limited space to display text, which can address the typical design issue in mobile - small screen.
- Speed reading – Proven to be as fast as Rapid Serial Visual Presentation (RSVP).
- It facilitates visually disabled people to read more comfortably.

Limitations of TSM

- In case of smooth scrolling of text is not happening, TSM can cause stress while reading.
- In some implementations of TSM, next sentence appears only when the last word of current sentence completely scrolls to the right. Till that point the left space of the screen is unused and delay can be noticeable especially for sentences having just couple of words.
- Attentional demands are high as it is important to catch the text contents in moving sentences.

Practical Usage

- News, Stock price, etc. Widgets.
- Web Browsers - Can be used to read specific content in the web site.
- Document Reader Applications – applications that help in text reading can provide option for TSM for a selected page, paragraph or any other specific selection.

TSM Design Guidelines

- An application using TSM should provide options to turn TSM reading on/off – it should not be mandatory to read the information in the application through TSM, because all users might not be comfortable with it.
- Provide 'setting options' for TSM
  - Text size, color and font.
  - Scroll Direction.
  - Speed of scrolling.
  - Scroll by letter, word or sentence.
- Provide easily accessible option to 'pause', so that user will not miss any information during pause operation.
- Provide easily accessible option to 'scroll back' to previous chunk of information.
- Completion Indicator – Allow user to know how far they have read and how much more is remaining; use a graphical meter to show the same.

--Submitted by - Aadhar14b, 30 June 2009

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