SmartScribo Blog Client for Windows 7

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Abstract

The SmartScribo system is a Smart-M3 application for accessing the blogosphere based on the smart spaces approach of ubiquitous computing. The initial version of SmartScribo provides blog clients only for Maemo-based mobile devices like Nokia N900. In our previous work, we started the development of a SmartScribo client for Windows-based mobile devices. This demo shows the further progress. The client has GUI oriented to mobile devices with Windows 7 (e.g., tablets, netbooks, laptops) and provides a usable set of functions for blogging with media content.

Index Terms: Mobile multi-blogging, Media content, SmartScribo, Windows 7.

The SmartScribo is a Smart-M3 application that provides access to the blogosphere by means of shared smart spaces for dynamic linkage of bloggers and blog content [1]. SmartScribo users interact with multiple blogs at many blog services using their (mobile) devices as clients. Blog data and personal information are stored in blogger's personal smart space, which is shared (partially) with other user's devices and applications as well as with other users, forming the blogosphere smart space [2].

The initial version of SmartScribo had blog clients only for Maemo-based devices like Nokia N900. In our work [3], we started the development of another SmartScribo client for Windows-based mobile devices. Its early demo was presented at the 10th FRUCT Conference (Nov. 2011). In this abstract the demo shows further progress in the client GUI development for Windows 7. The client functionality is extended with media content support in blogs and RSS support to access service in read-only mode. The code is available for free download and use at http://sourceforge.net/projects/smartscribo/.

The client logic is written in .NET Framework 4 using C# language. It implements operations with blog accounts and blog content. We use SmartSlog ADK [4] for (i) communication primitives to operate with the blogosphere smart space (ii) high-level ontological data structures to represent in the client code the knowledge objects shared in the space.

A blog service requires authorization. The recent SmartScribo release supports LiveJournal as a basic blog service; support of Twitter is in progress. In read-only mode, authorization is optional. It becomes primary when RSS is used. The latter allows accessing blogs from a wide set of blog services.

A post starts a thematic discussion in a blog. Then comments, comments to comments and so on continue the discussion. A user operates with tree-like discussions of messages, and GUI has to provide appropriate visualization and navigation. When messages include media content the appropriate media-tools must be provided.

There are several discussion trees in the multi-blogging case. They are received from many blogs at many blog services. For easier navigation, each message is assigned with a set of information such as title, author, time. Clicking a message, the user opens the message content.

A common operation suit with messages are implemented: view, add, edit, delete. Trees for identical posts from different blogs are visualized as a single merged tree.

The client GUI uses Windows Presentation Foundation GUI build system, a basic tool for fast GUI construction [5]. It separates graphical representation from source application code and provides features for the touch-screen GUI development. The GUI is implemented in accordance with the touch screen specification and has a convenient arrangement of large-size elements. It provides an easy control by fingers and supports touch- and multi-touch gestures. For example, while viewing text messages the user can increase or decrease the text size moving apart or shifting thumb and forefinger, respectively. The window layout is dynamic, automatically adjustable for variable window sizes. Figure 1 shows example screenshots. For the future development, we also consider the appearance of Windows 8 with Metro UI.

(a) (b)
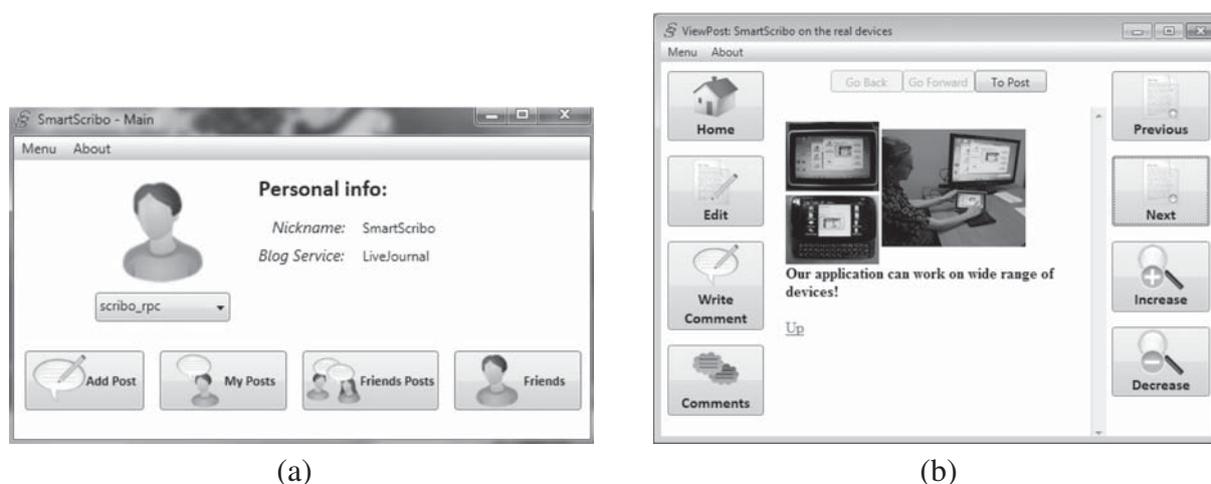
Fig. 1. SmartScribo client GUI for Windows 7. (a) The main client window on a device with landscape screen orientation. (b) The post view window on a device with square-like screen.

The demonstrated client provides several options for blogs with media content. First, adding a YouTube video to a blog message becomes easy. The user copies the link to the video and pastes it into the message text. Then the link is represented as a small icon video; clicking on the icon opens a video player. The second option is for blog messages with pictures. The user can upload image files from her/his device directly from the client to free image hosting services. Third, if a message contains hyperlinks, the user can easily follow a link retrieving its content. The client allows then going back to the initial blog message. This "back" option is also available for videos, and the user returns to the post by one click.

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