Chapter 3.22
TEXT-COL:
A Tool for Active Reading

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ABSTRACT

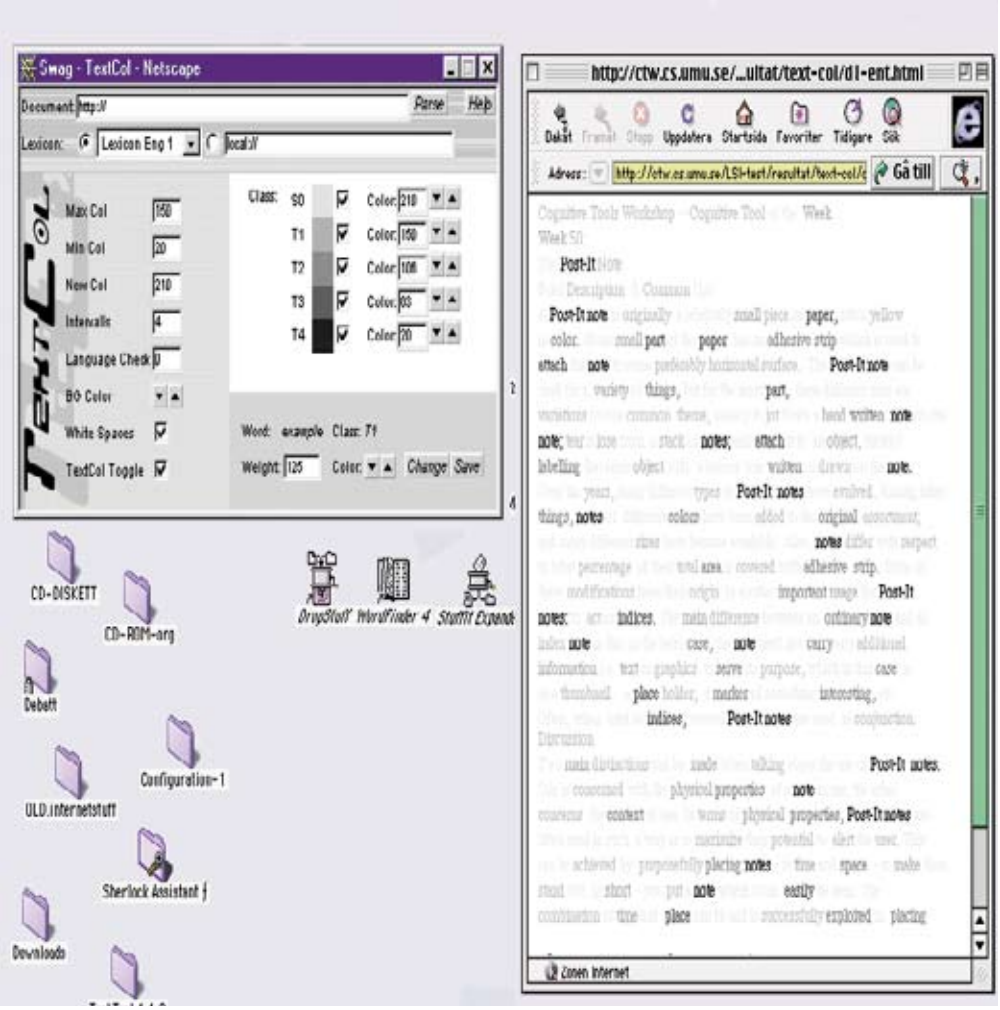
Traditionally, much of the efforts to develop computer-based tools has been concentrated on developing production or authoring tools, such as word processors, drawing programs, and so on, and not so many consumption or reading tools have been developed except Web browsers and different kinds of media players. Authoring plays an important role in the learning process, and good tools are needed, but reading—especially active reading—and exploring are is at least as important. Traditionally, computer-mediated texts have little support for an active way of reading. This means that reading computer-mediated texts, as on the WWW, tends to be a very passive form of reading. The development of Text-Col addresses this problem. Text-Col is a tool designed to support readers in deep processing of texts by letting the readers change appearance of the text based on different strategies for categorizing words. Text-Col is a reading tool and exploring tool aimed to make the reading process more active.

INTRODUCTION

The work that this chapter presents is founded in a view on learners as persons who continuously alter their conceptions and ideas by working with data, information and knowledge, i.e., to see the learners as knowledge workers. This view encourages the development of new tools aimed to support in a broad sense the learning process (Broberg, 2000). Text-Col is a reading tool aimed to make the reading process more active (see Figure 1). As a reading tool and exploring tool, it is designed to work together with standard WWW-browsers.

This chapter introduces and discusses Text-Col in order to give a sense of how one can support the readers to be more active in their readings.

Figure 1. The user interface of the Text-Col



The first section discusses the pedagogical basis for the development of Text-Col. The second section presents the basic ideas and concepts for the Text-Col tool. The next section presents the application and the interface. After that is a section that discusses how the tool can be used. The last two sections present a study of some of the basic ideas of Text-Col and summarize the discussion about Text-Col.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH TO LEARNING

Learning as a phenomenon has always fascinated people in many different disciplines, and there are many theories and thoughts about what learning is. One can go as far back as to Plato (428 - 347 BC) to find theories of learning and knowledge