

# Folders or/and Tags? You Might Need Both to Find Your Files.

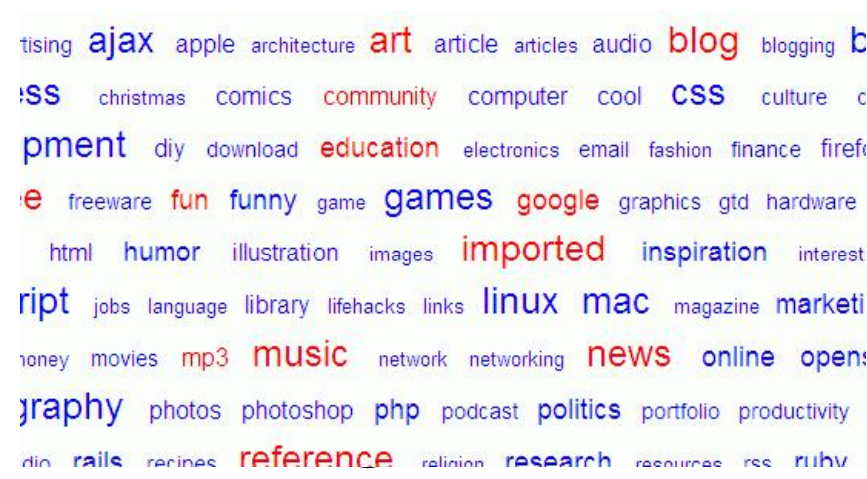
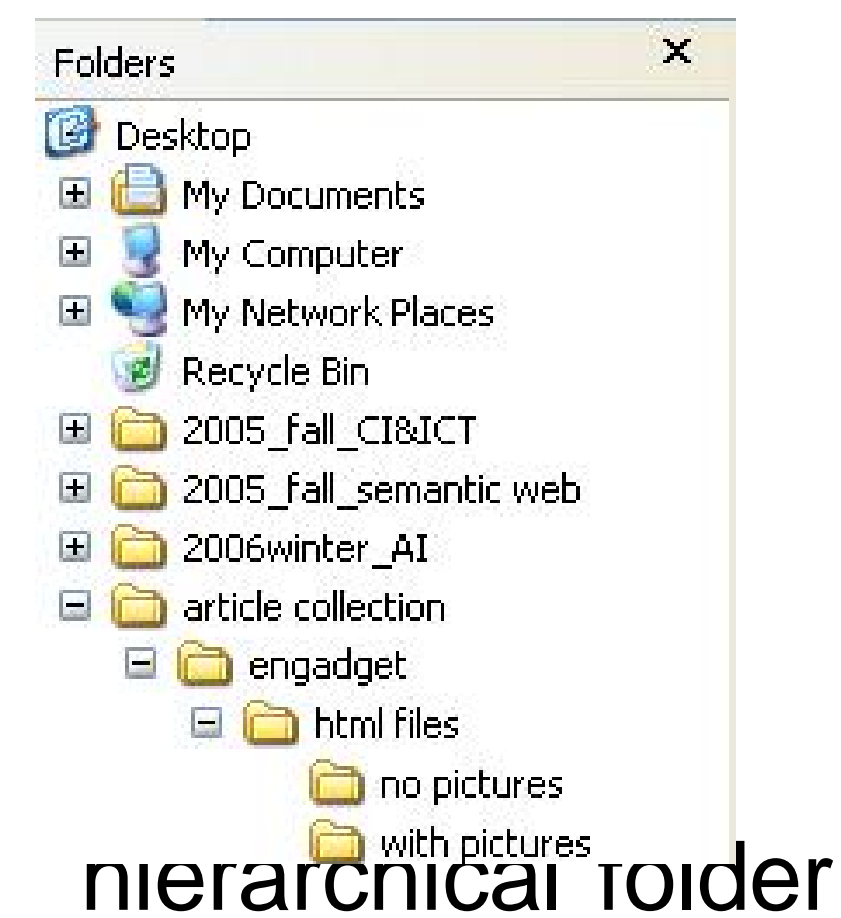
Shanshan Ma; Dr. Susan Wiedenbeck

## INTRODUCTION

Managing files with hierarchical folder structure is widely used. Files are found through a particular path that goes through multiple levels of folders and subfolders.

However, previous researches have revealed many problems with the structure. Users frequently turn to desktop search to re-find files even if they thought they had saved them in a memorable place.

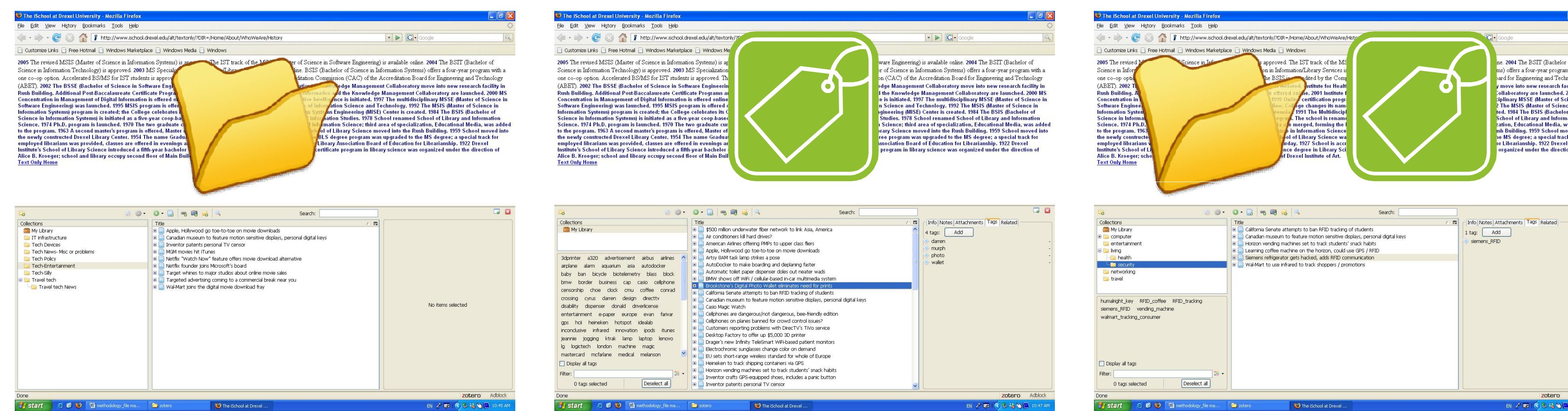
Tagging is the activity of applying users' own verbal descriptors to digital objects such as web pages, photos, and documents.



Combining hierarchical folder structure and tagging is a possible way to improve personal file management. In this research, we are aiming at exploring whether or not tagging can support file management or complement the hierarchical folder structure for file management.

## EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

### Three Interfaces

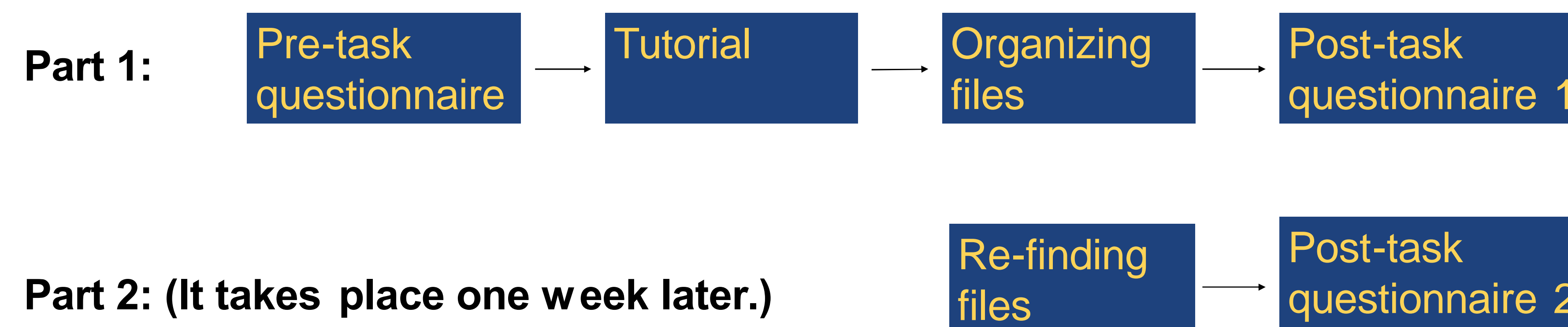


The folder interface

The tagging interface

The hybrid interface

### Experimental Procedure



### Task Description

#### Organizing files:

Participants in different groups, the folder group, the tagging group and the hybrid group, will be asked to read and organize sixty short technological articles with varied topics, including cell phones, laptops, wireless technology, and etc, using three different structures.

#### Re-finding files:

Participants will be asked to re-find a certain amount of articles based on four different types of tasks.

Task	Task Type	Amount	Example
1	Article titles	5	LG Philips announces A4 color e-paper.
2	Article summaries	5	This device does more than just telling the time.
3	Questions asking for single articles	5	What's the new way that motorists in Ohio pay the toll?
4	Questions asking for multiple articles	3	Technology enhances the way people excises and sports. Please find all the relevant articles.

## DATA COLLECTION

### Quantitative Data

- Time to complete file organization;
- Time to complete file re-finding for each task and time to complete the whole session;
- Number of incorrect trials before the correct answer;
- Number of correct answers and incorrect answers.

### Qualitative Data

- Participants' self-created organization scheme, including folders and tags;
- Participants' interaction with the computer;
- Questionnaires answered by participants.

## EXPECTED FINDINGS AND CONTRIBUTION

We expect that the hybrid structure with both hierarchical folders and tags will partially solve the deficiencies of each structure when used alone.

The primary contribution of the study is a comparison of three file management structures. Advantages and disadvantages of each structure will be revealed from a controlled experiment. Users' preference among the three structures will also be found.