

TellTable Spreadsheet Audit: from technical possibility to operating prototype

John Nash

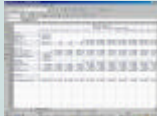
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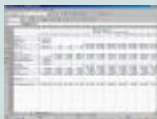
Background

1990+: JN wanted to monitor marks & student spreadsheet submissions; Audit trail idea in JN academic papers (with Tony Quon)

Nov. 2002: JN & NS discuss spreadsheet audit trail and NS shows proof of concept using OpenOffice change recording infrastructure

Mar. 2003: AA develops tools for running OO on a server so change recording is preserved

July 2003: presentation at EuSpRIG Dublin

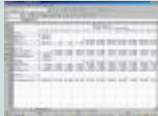


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Status in July 2003

- Principles established
- But system very fragile – various ways to crash the server (unclean logouts, not all keystrokes trapped)
- No demo to hand out
- Difficult to present demo
- Documentation and experience lacking



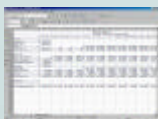
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Progress 1 – 03/09...

Pilot project – recording student marks

- Multi-section / multi-teacher courses
- Profs & TA's can all record to **central** mark spreadsheets

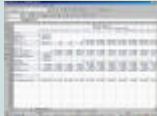


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Experience

- Fixed some server problems
 - Continuing annoyances
 - 2-step exit
 - Cut-and-paste
 - Hotmail security hole discovered
- BUT ... workable and does avoid the
“Which file is the correct one?” stress



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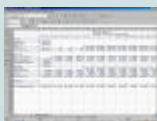
Hotmail security hole

- Example link (to server 137.122.146.200)

<http://courses.gestion.uottawa.ca/cgi-bin/etprl/slogin.pl?profid=calof&taskname=exam>

- Received by Hotmail user

http://207.68.164.250/cgi-bin/linkrd?_lang=EN&lah=0557953aab551d53a122ecf1957c0c11&lat=1070169865&hm__action=http%3a%2f%2fcourses%2egestion%2euottawa%2eca%2fcgi%2dbin%2fetprl%2fslogin%2epl%3fprofid%3dcalof%26taskname%3dexam

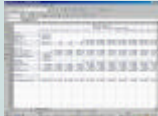


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Progress 2 – 03/10

- GOSLING – Getting Open-Source Logic INTO Government
- GTEC04 – invite to be part of PWGSC booth
- **TellTable** name / logo / web domain

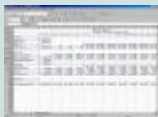


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www.telltable.com

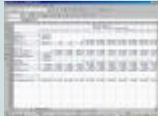


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Progress 3 – 03/11

- Moment of realization
 - Exchanges with Sylvie Noël on collaborative editing and Web Content Management
 - OpenOffice uses similar formats for all office suite files, and opens them with common launcher program
- More than spreadsheets
 - What does “audit” mean?

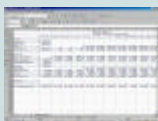


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telltable-s

- SourceForge project
 - telltable-s.sf.net
 - Code, setup script for **server infrastructure**
 - “Setup” works for Mandrake and Knoppix, but possibly not some others
 - Evolving
 - Open-source

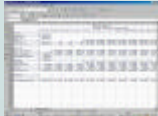


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Collaborative authoring

- *Issues in Collaborative Document Creation*, in revision
- *Knowing what was done: uses of a spreadsheet log* <http://www.sie.bond.edu.au>
- Both authored on TellTable server
 - Even on dial-up
 - Cut-and-paste more annoying when trying to build bibliographies

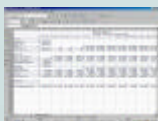


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Progress 4 – 04/02

- Begin to integrate workflow into TellTable infrastructure
 - Click to audit
 - Plan to add more management features
 - Plan to add “status” information as clients request it
- Main obstacle: perceived cost of change

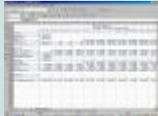


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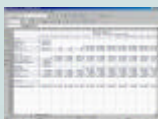
Progress 5 – 04/04...

- Want a demo disk
 - Linux, server, clients, documentation, ...
- Knoppix liveCD possibility
 - Full Debian Linux runs from CD
 - Does not write to Hard Drive
 - More work than ever imagined to achieve/tune
- Uncompressed bootable CD
 - Under investigation

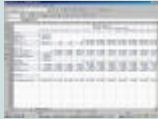


Directions ...

- Need users – especially those who will give usable feedback for improvement
 - Telltable Analyze will evolve with user needs
- Need collaborators
 - To improve usability of telltable-s
 - To widen capability of telltable-s
 - Tested on MS-Excel
 - Gnumeric collaboration in discussion



TellTable liveCD demo



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