Dynamic Folder Icons

Introduction

The task at hand was to create a new desktop concept which conveys complex information to the user in a simple, fast and interesting way. Our group chose to explore the idea of dynamic folder icons which give an insight into the folder’s properties without looking cluttered. Our final results are presented below.

Design concept

The dynamic folders change their appearance according to the following criteria:

- **Amount of files contained:**

  Here the folder gains an increasing number of subdividers depending on the amount of contents.

  ![Folder Icons: < 20, 20 - 200, > 200](image)

- **Disk space used by the folder:**

  The folder’s displayed size adapts dynamically and can reach a maximum of 150% of the originally shown size; it also adapts non-discretely, for example a 255 MB folder really is slightly larger than a 234 MB folder.

  ![Folder Icons: 100%, 200 - 2000 MB, > 2 GB](image)
• **Time lapsed since last access:**

A spider web appears and grows the less a particular folder is used.

![Time lapse icons](image)

- < 2 days
- 2-15 days
- > 15 days

• **Time lapsed since last change:**

The frequency of actual changes made within the folder is reflected by the folder icon’s shading. The colours used for this purpose are yellow, copper and metallic silver.

![Change icons](image)

- < 2 days
- 2-15 days
- > 15 days

• **Shortcuts:**

The last used file and / or subfolder contained in the folder can be opened using the shortcut icons displayed on the folder icon; thus the user does not have to specially enter the folder and search for these documents. The small shortcut icons pop up in a larger version when the mouse is moved over them, allowing more detailed information concerning the target to be shown.

![Shortcut](image)

All in all, a dynamic folder could thus look something like this:

![Dynamic folder](image)

Please note, however, that the images used in the Flash prototype may differ slightly to those used in this documentation.