

Case Studies of Introducing CGM (Consumer Generated Media) Technologies for Movie/Animation and Travel Portal Sites

To support the concept of creating a system that provides convenient access to users' interests and views, BIGLOBE has introduced a user participation type service that provides comment, trackback and blog functions for content located at portal sites and classified it into different genre. By introducing CGM functions, user interests and trends are analyzed systematically in order to distribute information ranked according to user popularity after editing them to a new content. This article introduces CGM functions employed for two case studies; "BIGLOBE Stream" which is a free movies and animations distribution site and "BIGLOBE Travel" which is a travel information site.

OKADA Fumikazu
General Manager,
Portal Business Division,
NEC BIGLOBE, Ltd.

HONDA Kazuhide
Manager,
Portal Business Division,
NEC BIGLOBE, Ltd.

IWABUCHI Shigaku
Staff
Portal Business Division,
NEC BIGLOBE, Ltd.

OKAJIMA Yasunori
Staff
Portal Business Division,
NEC BIGLOBE, Ltd.

Introduction

Recent Web 2.0 trends indicate that consumer web services are now shifting toward CGM (Consumer Generated Media). Introducing CGM functions to a portal site achieves three main advantages as described below.

- 1) Users can participate in the content of portal site and have the opportunity to post their personal information and can thus find new ways to enjoy sites.
- 2) Users' word-of-mouth information and their comments are added to the information provided on the portal site so that added value will be created for the content.
- 3) Site providers can be rewarded by being able to reuse data acquired from users in order to create new content and can also use such data to support cooperative ventures in marketing alliances.

Against such a background, BIGLOBE is actively introducing CGM functions to realize the means of accessing the views and interests of ordinary people.

In this article, CGM introduced case studies are described by focusing on the free movie and animation portal site "BIGLOBE Stream" and on a travel information portal site "BIGLOBE Travel."

A CGM Introduction Case Study of BIGLOBE Stream

"BIGLOBE Stream" is a no-charge movie and animation

distribution site that features on demand, high quality video¹⁾. Since October, 2006, "BIGLOBE Stream" has introduced CGM functions to their program guide pages to realize movies and animation content that users can participate in.

(1) Outline of the Introduction

Firstly, we explain the configuration of "BIGLOBE Stream." It is composed of two main factors; channels and programs. Multiple programs are classified into different genres. They are then listed on the channel guide page. Each program has its own program information page and is linked to the program contents official page and the movie page. Comment and trackback functions are introduced to each program information page.

A comment function allows viewers to post their opinions and comments regarding the program. When a viewer comment is posted, it is displayed on the program information page together with the official program information content. "BIGLOBE Stream" conducts its business by screening movie advertisements at the beginning and the end of the movie program. A program of official information and viewers' comments acquired by CGM are displayed on the same page so that the program can effectively advertise its content. Also, this function makes it convenient for viewers to narrow down a program search among the large number of programs.

When a viewer has installed trackback on his/her blog and then writes an article about the program, the trackback function automatically generates a linkage from the program information page to the blog page. BIGLOBE has employed

this trackback function to create movies and animation content in which viewers may participate. The details are described in the next section.

(2) Content Examples

In this section, “Spaceship, Porkil” is explained, which is a program introduced on “BIGLOBE Stream.” “Spaceship, Porkil” is BIGLOBE’s original space opera program. It is developed as an official story and also by stories that viewers create and post via CGM functions. These two types of stories are distributed on the program page at the same time, which is the main feature of this program.

The basic configuration of this program is described in the Fig. 1. The story of the drama is updated and provided with a movie every week on the “Spaceship, Porkil” program information page. Viewers watch the movie first and then create the next episode and post it to the blog. Once viewers have written a story on their blog page, due to the trackback function they are enabled to automatically offer it to the program producers. The program producers choose the best story among those stories that are posted via trackback from viewers’ blogs and are thus able to conveniently produce the next episode. In such way, viewers propose their stories to the program editors in order to develop a continuing dramatic sequence of stories.

With the introduction of CGM, “BIGLOBE Stream” has managed the service interactively, which is advantageous for Internet communications.

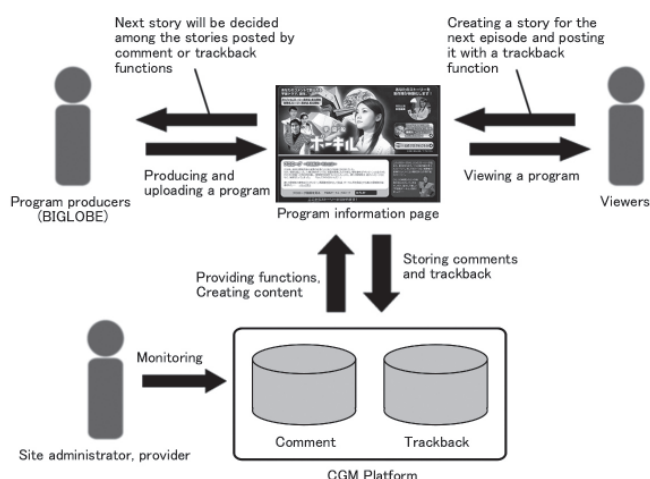


Fig. 1 Basic configuration of the “Spaceship Porkil.”

A CGM Introduction Case Study of “BIGLOBE Travel”

Since January, 2007 “BIGLOBE Travel” has introduced CGM functions to its information catalog content in order to add user word-of-mouth information and comments to its official information. This has resulted in the availability of higher quality information to users.

(1) Outline of the Introduction

“BIGLOBE Travel” is a community lifestyle portal site managed by BIGLOBE that provides a wide variety of travel information to users²⁾. The site features several types of content such as hotel/flight ticket information and specific travel information, etc. CGM functions have recently been introduced to the information catalog contents. The basic configuration of the information catalog contents is explained below (Fig. 2).

The information catalog content is a collection of web pages created automatically by the information database that contains text and image data. In the process of introducing CGM functions; word-of-mouth information, posting, rating and trackback have been added to the information catalog content. This has resulted in providing higher value content to users by adding word-of-mouth information to the official travel information.

Also, by automatically collecting and re-editing the accu-

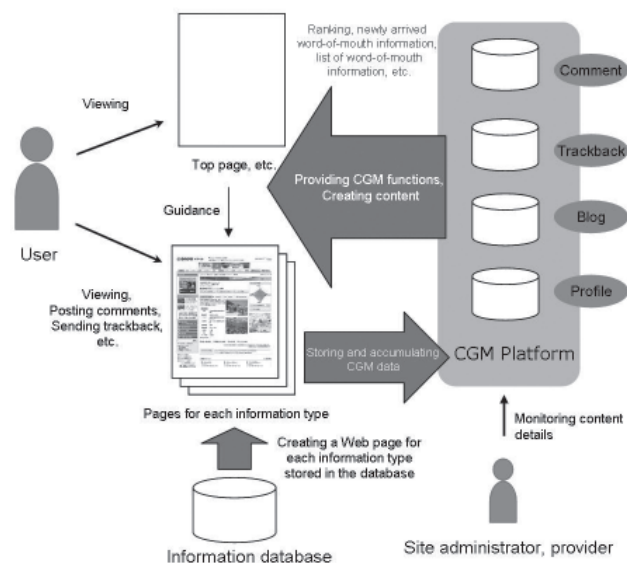


Fig. 2 Basic configuration of the information catalog content.

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mulated word-of-mouth information and comments via CGM functions, it has become possible to reuse the content as new added value content such as by providing a ranking of popular content. To operate the “BIGLOBE Travel site,” it is important to have alliances with travel related companies. CGM functions enable searching the needs of users from the analysis data in cooperation with these companies.

(2) Contents Example

As an example, we explain the case of a “Sightseeing Guide” page that is one of the information catalog contents on the “BIGLOBE Travel” site. The “Sightseeing Guide” page creates a number of “Sightseeing Spot” pages from a database of information covering more than 3,000 sightseeing spots from all over Japan and provides them with CGM functions to support users. “Sightseeing Spot” page provide basic information of sightseeing opportunities and contact information as well as user word-of-mouth information posted via the CGM functions (Fig. 3). The CGM functions introduced to the “Sightseeing Spot page” are as follows.

1) Posting and Viewing the Word-of-Mouth Information

Users may post word-of-mouth information from the “Sight-

seeing Spot” page. The word-of-mouth information is composed of several items such as a title line, main text, images and ratings, etc. The posted word-of-mouth information is displayed on the “Sightseeing Spot” page as newly arrived word-of-mouth information. The rating posted together with the main text and photos is calculated within a certain time limit and is announced on the page by a convenient radar chart showing the features of the sightseeing spot.

Every time a user posts word-of-mouth information, an authentication based on the BIGLOBE ID system is carried out. By executing this authentication system, the risk of hacker disturbance is diminished, while providing the advantage of users being enabled to communicate with each other via a profile page linked to the user ID.

2) Adding and Viewing of Trackback

Users with their own blog sites are enabled to use the trackback function to link to the “Sightseeing Spot” page each time they write a related article on their blog page. With the trackback function, a link to the article on their blog page will be created automatically on the “Sightseeing Spot” page.

Related articles written on blogs are collected on the “Sightseeing Spot” page, so that viewers are enabled to refer to blog articles together with word-of-mouth information.

3) Posting a Travel Article Blog

BIGLOBE users who have their own blogs are enabled to post their articles from the “Sightseeing Spot” page to their own blog pages. Moreover, a link to the appropriate “Sightseeing Spot” page and the surrounding map data will be embedded automatically to their articles posted on the blog page.

4) Ranking Calculation and Viewing of Popular Pages

A ranking list is displayed at the top of the page of the “Sightseeing Guide.” This ranking is automatically created from the data acquired by the CGM functions. The ranking is updated according to a prearranged time.

For example, a “Recommended Spot Ranking” is created by calculating the total grade points from the rating information acquired from word-of-mouth information. The top five sightseeing spots with the highest average grade points are automatically detected and displayed.



Fig. 3 Example of a Sightseeing Spot page.

Conclusion and Future Aspects

In this article, we have introduced the CGM functions introduced to BIGLOBE Stream and BIGLOBE Travel in order to demonstrate the challenging impact of BIGLOBE’s Web 2.0. BIGLOBE aims to realize a user participation type platform

by developing and expanding CGM functions to portal sites of different genre.

In challenging the engineering aspects, we will add more functions in order to improve usability, such as a word-of-mouth information posting function using mobile phones that features more real-time characteristics and a recommendation function based on user behavior. At the same time, by systematically analyzing user interests and trends, we will attempt to reuse content after reprocessing and editing, to upload it as new content.

BIGLOBE will aim to stimulate the portal site market and expand our business share by introducing such new CGM functions and business models.

●Related URL:

- 1) **BIGLOBE Stream:** <http://broadband.biglobe.ne.jp/>
- 2) **BIGLOBE Travel:** <http://travel.biglobe.ne.jp/>