

Connie Chan

iCampus 2011 First Round Submission Document

Project Name: CrowdSkimmer

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Need: Students often face the daunting and time-consuming task of reading articles among articles. Oftentimes, it's more efficient and effective to skim it first. Skimming texts is an art that takes time to hone. Some people have trouble learning how to skim because they don't know what and where the keywords and sentences are.

Description: My application is a Google Chrome Extension that allows users to quickly skim websites and articles by showing them the keywords and key sentences. The algorithm that I use to get these keywords is not perfect, so users are encouraged to suggest and delete keywords/sentences, which are shown to other users. The "Crowd" part of the application name is from the fact that the keywords/sentences are acquired from crowd sourcing.

Impact: This tool would help students read online texts and learn more quickly. It would be valuable to not only MIT students, but students everywhere. In addition, if it takes off and people start to edit and contribute the keywords/sentences, it could potentially be used by search engines to accurately identify the keywords of a website.

Scale Up: Currently, this browser extension only runs on Google Chrome, but I plan to expand it to Firefox and Internet Explorer. Also, the working prototype that I am submitting for this round only shows the keywords (not sentences) that can be scraped from whatever website that a user is looking at. You can click on them to delete them, but this action won't persist into a database. However, I plan to keep a database of these user-contributed actions so instead of simply scraping a webpage each time, the extension can download the words from my database. Also, the green bar that contains the keywords is currently positioned at the top of all webpages, but is covering part of the webpage itself. I plan to fix this bug as well as add the functionality to allow the user to close the green bar. Furthermore, the working prototype is also missing a way for users to suggest words, but I plan to implement that by adding a button with that feature to the green bar.

License: There are no licenses. Nothing was created using proprietary software.

Working Prototype: It can be downloaded from <http://web.mit.edu/conch/Public/iCampus.crx>. This must be downloaded with a Google Chrome browser. Install it like you would with any Chrome extension. After installation, a green bar will appear at the top of all webpages (you need to refresh any pages that are already open to see the change). Keywords (if available) will appear in the green bar. If you click on them, they will disappear (it's supposed to delete the word, but that hasn't been implemented yet).

Software requirements and dependencies: Please use Google Chrome only. There are no other requirements.