

# A Case For Adaptive Community Calendaring

Time Management in the Second Millenium

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A good friend of mine has mounted on the wall of her rather large kitchen an old fashioned blackboard. On it she typically writes a daily agenda for herself, husband and three daughters. This method of calendar management is, of course, somewhat labor intensive, requiring daily updates and co-ordination amongst all of their activities. This blackboard is a vast improvement over the typical paper calendar marked up with daily appointments and events and, as is the nature of chalk marks written on slate, easily updated and changed. The nature, however, of the delivery of calendaring information be it a blackboard, a whiteboard, a computer screen, or the display of a smart phone, is largely irrelevant. The real challenge is the acquisition of such content. Calendars are published both online and via hardcopy in a variety of formats, accessed through widely differing media.

In the small (Population 1200) river town I live in there are many entities that publish calendars. Municipal and county government, six churches, youth sports teams, a bar featuring live music, a business association as well as individual businesses, an environmental activist group, a library, and an organized group of dog lovers. Each of the aforementioned groups publishes a calendar of events, sometimes on a web page, sometimes not. In addition to these member/participant oriented calendars, there are job related calendars not tied to this specific geographical area. In making note of an event, an individual may indeed need to know if his work schedule would allow him to attend.

These online calendars use many different applications. Calendaring servers often allow the import of calendars that are not served by the particular server. The challenge for the calendar publisher in this case, is for the particular user to firstly, know that there is a published calendar available (Awareness) , and secondly, for the user to easily import the published calendar into their own online calendars (Acquisition).

Calendaring servers typically support several standards, amongst them iCalendar, CalDav, WCAP. Calendars published on such servers have the capability to be imported into other calendar servers. It is through these calendaring protocols that acquisition of a particular organization's published calendar into another calendar server, and therefore the ability to display heterogenous calendars relevant to an individual's life on a single display, is achieved.

Acquiring an online calendar, is therefore a mere technical detail. Calendars created on servers that support a calendaring protocol are inherently acquirable. To use Google Calendar as an example, all you need do is supply a URL of an existing calendar that supports iCal and it gets imported into your list of calendars on your Google calendar account. But how do you find said URL? What organizations, clubs and businesses in my local area that I and my neighbors are associated with provide online calendars that I care about? It would be quite a chore to find all their urls, enter them into some sort of registration scheme and import them into the calendar provider of my choice. Popular calendar providers that support the varied calendaring protocols generally offer such import capabilities. What they don't typically offer is a coherent list of available local calendars that are relevant to a family's activities.

## **Adaptive Calendaring Servers**

Like other such social networks, calendaring servers contain data that can be used to discover and exploit links between families and organizations. Once a public calendar has been loaded on an adaptive calendaring server, it has the potential to be served up as an offering to any other user that shares some characteristics with the calendar, i.e. zip code, associations with other calendars, etc. The benefits of a calendar server user's ability to easily integrate calendars for his church, sports leagues civic organizations, local businesses and venues are numerous. It encourages participation, strengthens communities and helps to fuel a local economy.

The data mining opportunities inherent in a calendaring server's dataset can be used to map networks of families within a community. A function heretofore performed in a limited way by local newspapers, can now be performed by an Adaptive Calendaring Server. Such a server can map relationships between users and events within both geographical regions as well as areas of common interest. A Craig's List type of interface, listing calendars searchable by locality and categories, (School, Church, Youth Sports, etc.) that integrates into a single point of access can be created for each subscriber using the results of such knowledge discovery available in an Adaptive Calendaring Server. Much like the way that various social networking sites mine data for advertising purposes, the data set of an Adaptive Calendaring Server can be mined to offer calendars of local organizations to a subscriber that he

may be interested in. An example of this would be a subscriber being offered a local Youth Football Calendar because he is already following a local Youth Hockey Calendar. (I imagine that offering up church calendars that are not explicitly searched for is probably a bad idea.)

A community whose denizens, or at least the tech enabled ones, have access to an Adaptive Community Calendar server will find that the process of community building becomes more robust as more become aware of what going on around them.