

What?

To investigate the role that human memory plays in PIM. What do people remember / forget about their information objects? How can we build tools to support these memories?

Why?

Memory is important because it motivates PIM behaviour. We re-find based on what we can remember and the details we forget represent the barrier to a successful search.

How?

We have investigated what people remember about their personal photographs and studied how people prevent and recover from other types of memory lapse. We found a great deal of overlap between other types of memory lapse and those associated with PIM. Our findings inspired the design of interfaces that 1) utilise fragmented recall 2) help the user remember more as they search 3) incorporate some of the strategies observed in the memory-lapse study.

Results so far:

Quantitative and qualitative studies of our photograph interface were positive. They showed strong user engagement and improved performance over control interfaces.

We are now examining user behaviour with similar interfaces for other kinds of information object to investigate factors that may affect recollection. Does a user's filing strategy, the type of object, task etc. impact on what they remember?



Figure 1: MemoMail Email-access Interface