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Utilizing the next-generation Web for enhanced communication

The Web was created about 15 or 16 years ago. Today, blogs and SNS (social networking services) have expanded widely, making everyone a transmitter of information and changing the way people communicate. When everyone makes information available to others, many things that weren't possible before become possible. I'd like to explore the potential of information exchange methods based on such personal networks.

Cultivating RSS readers

RSS is a Web feed format used to publish updated text content summaries. RSS readers represent a convenient Web communication tool. RSS readers expand the scope of communication to make it easier to use blogs that appear in various formats and designs, making it hard to locate the desired information. The RSS reader we've developed in our research is called "glucose." It's been downloaded more than 700,000 times and is used by many people. We receive many user responses, and I'm busy resolving technical issues and handling maintenance while trying to pursue my research at the same time. I'd like to incorporate the comments from users into my research and product development.

Realizing a semantic Web

The Web offers mountains of information. Search engines often return results that are too profuse to be useful. In my research, I study systems that allow computers to perform optimum searches.

One is the semantic Web, proposed by Tim Berners-Lee in 1990 to make the growing Web

easier to use. This concept calls for attaching meaningful labels to hyperlinks written to join texts. In my current research, I plan to build semantic Webs for specific fields.

I became interested in the Web as soon as it was created. I studied computers in university and graduate school. Recent research interests have broadened to the area of sociology. In the future, I'd like to develop tools that support communication in various forms and formats.

(Interviewed and summarized by Asako Murakami)