

Visualizing the Gospels Using Treemaps and the Composite Gospel Index

Presented November 21, 2005 at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (Computer Assisted Research Group, S21-15)

Information visualization is an established computer technique for providing rich, typically interactive, visual presentations of complex multivariate data. This presentation shows several visualizations of the Gospels texts, focusing on the length and overlap (or lack thereof) of their various accounts. The fundamental data comes from the [Composite Gospel Index](#), a unified index and alignment of the pericopes in the four canonical Gospels, expressed in the Resource Description Framework (RDF), an XML-based language for representing meta-data. The Composite Gospel Index as the underlying data source is briefly introduced, followed by several live visualization examples based primarily on treemaps, a "space-filling visualization" that uses size and color to effectively show complex relationships, developed by Ben Shneiderman of the Human-Computer Interaction Laboratory at the University of Maryland. Our claim is that treemaps are a novel and useful tool for investigating textual overlap within the Gospels.

[Download the slides \(MS Powerpoint\)](#)

You can run the demonstrations, or explore the Treemaps yourself, by:

1. Downloading [the Treemap software](#) from the University of Maryland Human-Computer Interaction Laboratory site. Note this software is only available for non-commercial use.
2. Downloading [the dataset](#). The file `sources.1.3.tm3` contains the basic data for the [Composite Gospel Index](#), formatted for reading by the Treemap software. In addition, there are 5 different files with the `.tms` extension that define views corresponding to the presentation (all based on the same data set).