



APML v0.5: Draft Specification v0.2

# APML

Attention Profiling Markup Language (APML) is an open standard that encapsulates a summary of your interests (across devices and profiles) in a simple, portable way.

**Attention Profiling  
Markup Language**

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## CONTRIBUTORS

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### COPYRIGHT

This specification is currently © 2006 by the authors and Faraday Media. At the appropriate time, however, it will be submitted to a standards body for liberal licensing. Anyone contributing to this document should understand that their work will be distributed in this manner.

### PATENTS

[Faraday Media](#) does not hold, or intend to hold any patents on anything required to implement this specification.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Martin Wells ([Tangler](#)) for his valuable advice and assistance.
- Marjolein Hoekstra ([CleverClogs](#)) for her faithful critical collaboration and support.

## INTRODUCTION

Attention Profiling Markup Language (APML) is an open standard that encapsulates a summary of your interests - across devices and profiles - in a simple, portable way.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Attention Data comes in many forms. These include specifically designed, high-resolution file formats such as Attention.XML or more familiar forms of user data storage such as IM chat logs, browser history and cache, email inboxes, documents, OPML etc.

In some usage scenarios, however, it is necessary to analyze all available Attention Data to determine an Attention Profile - a compressed, portable and open-standard description of one's ranked personal interests.

A portable Attention Profile would allow a user to own (and optionally submit) a meta view of their interests to create instant relationships with "attention aware" products and services. This creates an instantly customized user experience.

## KNOWN EXCLUSIONS

For this version of the spec we have left out 'Types'. Types might include Books, Events, People, Movies etc. We believe that while it may be important to describe interests as they relate to specific types (perhaps using Microformats as a basis), we feel the specific nature of types support might be better left for:

1. Community discussion before inclusion.
2. A second version of this specification (in keeping with the 'less is better' philosophy).

We shall leave it up to the community to help make this decision.

## FORMAT

### FORMAT SUMMARY

APML is an XML file that contains an outline of Implicit and Explicit interests and Source Rankings by Device and Profile.

### FORMAT SCHEMA

The APML format contains the following items:

#### APML

**Version** (Version number of the APML file, currently 0.5)

**Information** (URL of the APML Specification, currently <http://www.apml.org>)

#### Head

**Title** (the name given to the file by the generator)

**Generator** (the original generator of the file)

**UserEmail** (the email address of the user)

**DateCreated** (the date the file was created)

**Devices** (describes the devices used by the user – e.g. PDA, PC, Laptop etc)

#### Device

Name (a user defined value for the name they give the device)

ID (a string of the device's hardware information hashed)

Type (the declared type or platform of the device)

#### Body

**DefaultProfile** (the Profile which should be used by default)

**Profile** (allows the user to switch operating/attention modes as their needs change)

Name (a user defined value for the name they give the device)

#### Usage

##### Uses

Id (the string of the device's hardware information hashed)

**Implicit Concepts** (concepts that are auto-calculated for the user by an algorithm)

##### Concept

Phrase (a phrase representing the interest)

Rank (a ranking from -5 to 5 – Decimal Value)

**Explicit Concepts** (concepts provided manually by the user)

##### Concept

Phrase (a phrase representing the interest)

Rank (a ranking from -5 to 5 – Decimal Value)

**Source Rankings** (levels of trust the user assigns to their sources of information)

##### Source

Name (a user defined name representing the source)

GUID (a unique identifier for the source – typically the URL)

Rank (a decimal ranking of trust for the source from -5 to 5)

## EXAMPLE

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<APML Version="0.5" Information="http://www.apml.org">
  <head>
    <Title>Example APML file for apml.org</Title>
    <Generator>Written by Hand</Generator>
    <UserEmail>chris@touchstonelive.com</UserEmail>
  </Head>
  <Devices>
    <Device Name="My Home PC" ID="nFHAnMPekJ76F3XIUxtHgw==" Type="Desktop PC"/>
    <Device Name="My work PC" ID="nFH3453Hgg56e3XIUxtHgw==" Type="Tablet PC"/>
  </Devices>
  <Body DefaultProfile="Work">
    <Profile Name="Home">
      <Usage>
        <Uses Id="nFHAnMPekJ76F3XIUxtHgw==" />
      </Usage>
      <ImplicitConcepts>
        <Concept Phrase="attention" Rank="5" />
        <Concept Phrase="content distribution" Rank="4.91" />
        <Concept Phrase="information" Rank="4.82" />
        <Concept Phrase="business" Rank="4.73" />
        <Concept Phrase="alerting" Rank="4.64" />
        <Concept Phrase="intelligent agents" Rank="4.55" />
        <Concept Phrase="development" Rank="4.46" />
        <Concept Phrase="service" Rank="4.37" />
        <Concept Phrase="user interface" Rank="4.28" />
        <Concept Phrase="experience design" Rank="4.19" />
        <Concept Phrase="services" Rank="4.01" />
        <Concept Phrase="site design" Rank="3.83" />
        <Concept Phrase="television" Rank="3.74" />
        <Concept Phrase="management" Rank="3.65" />
        <Concept Phrase="media" Rank="3.56" />
      </ImplicitConcepts>
      <ExplicitConcepts>
        <Concept Phrase="Golf" Rank="4" />
        <Concept Phrase="Go Karting" Rank="5" />
        <Concept Phrase="Video Production" Rank="5" />
        <Concept Phrase="Spam" Rank="-5" />
        <Concept Phrase="Cheese" Rank="-2" />
        <Concept Phrase="Cancer" Rank="5" />
      </ExplicitConcepts>
      <ExplicitSources>
        <Source Value="TechCrunch" Rank="3" />
        <Source Value="LifeHacker" Rank="5" />
        <Source Value="The Register" Rank="1" />
        <Source Value="Boing Boing" Rank="5" />
        <Source Value="Scoblizer" Rank="4" />
      </ExplicitSources>
    </Profile>
    <Profile Name="Work">
      <Usage>
        <Uses Id="nFHAnMPekJ76F3XIUxtHgw==" />
      </Usage>
      <ExplicitConcepts>
        <Concept Phrase="Golf" Rank="-3" />
        <Concept Phrase="Go Karting" Rank="-3" />
        <Concept Phrase="Video Production" Rank="-2" />
        <Concept Phrase="Cancer" Rank="5" />
        <Concept Phrase="Cheese" Rank="-2" />
        <Concept Phrase="Cancer" Rank="5" />
      </ExplicitConcepts>
      <ExplicitSources>
        <Source Value="TechCrunch" Url="www.techcrunch.com" Rank="5" />
        <Source Value="LifeHacker" Url="www.lifehacker.com" Rank="5" />
        <Source Value="The Register" Url="www.theregister.co.uk" Rank="4" />
        <Source Value="Boing Boing" Url="www.boingboing.com" Rank="2" />
      </ExplicitSources>
    </Profile>
  </Body>
</APML>
```

## REFERENCES

## IMPLEMENTATIONS

### TOUCHSTONE - ATTENTION MANAGEMENT ENGINE

Touchstone's mission is to keep users alerted about interesting information in a way that minimizes distractions from their workflow. It does this comparing incoming content against their Attention Profile in order to determine the Personal Relevancy of the content. It then uses this ranking to make a presentation decision. The more Personally Relevant the content, the more attention the application consumes when alerting the user. This is called Escalating Alerts for Measured Disruption.

Touchstone both creates and uses an APML file

- **APML FILE CREATION**  
Touchstone indexes a user's device (typically their PC hard drive) for Attention Data (including browser history, IM conversations, emails, documents etc) and produces an APML file. This technology is called U-AR
- **APML CONSUMPTION**  
Touchstone compares incoming items against the user's APML file to determine the 'Personal Relevance' of the content in order to make a presentation decision. This technology is called I-AM.

More information at [www.touchstonelive.com/technology](http://www.touchstonelive.com/technology)

## FURTHER DISCUSSION

Please contribute questions, comments and suggestions to the specification and issues that are ratified by informal consensus will be included in the spec.

Discussion is currently hosted on the Touchstone forums at <http://community.touchstonelive.com/forums/default.aspx?GroupID=7>