Problem: The Internet has improved how we do many things together. Yet it seems like discussion has progressively worsened online.

What are the problems with online discussion today?

1. Scale of conversation and participants
2. Lack of context, overload, discussion siloes
3. Diversity of people, leading to tensions, fights, harassment

What are the ways we can improve online discussion?

A. Make sense of discussion with summarization
B. Situate messages in context using annotation
C. Give finer-grained control over delivery

Solution: People are adept at managing information and tailoring experiences. We need human-centered tools to give control back to people.

Systems for Improving Online Discussion

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Summarization Systems

A. Wikum: A tool for collectively summarizing and organizing threaded discussions, using recursive summarization to break up the work.

B. Eyebrowse: Annotate web pages with comments in the margins. Bump into friends and chat on the page while browsing.

C. Tilda: A tool for collectively marking up chat conversations to create sets of running meeting notes. Notes live in chat and are linked back.

D. Nota Bene: Annotate textbooks with discussions in the margins. Self-annotate messages with emojis to signal to teachers and create a heatmap over the text.

E. Pano: Annotate articles and comments with moral framing to teach readers about framing and bridge ideological divides.

Annotation Systems

F. Murmur: Reimagining the mailing list to allow group participants to more finely control what messages they receive, to whom their own messages go, as well as how.

G. Squadbox: Helping people facing harassment in their inboxes by using friendsourced moderation.

Delivery Control Systems