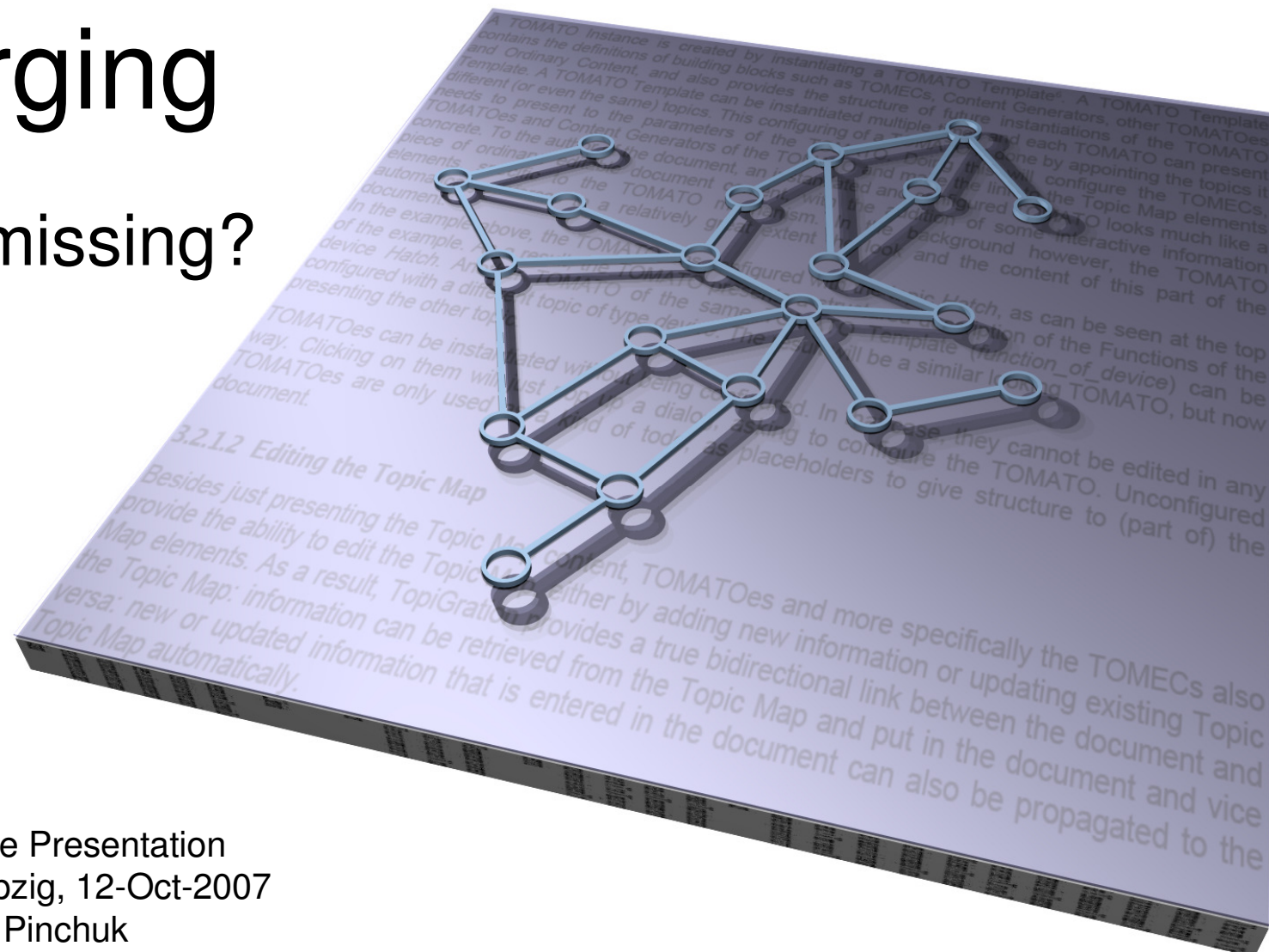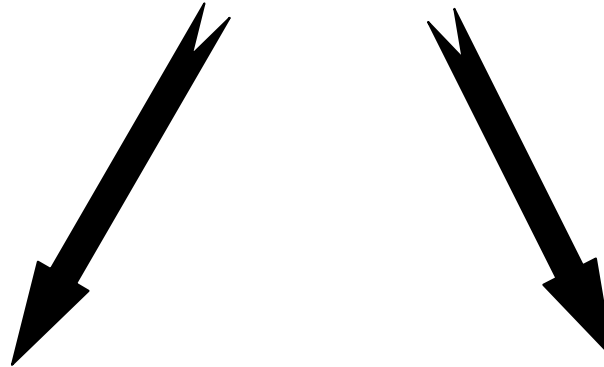# Merging

What is missing?

Open Space Presentation
TMRA'07, Leipzig, 12-Oct-2007
Rani Pinchuk
Space Applications Services

So what's wrong with merging?!?

How can two users **edit the same topic map** and then merge the results?
- What will happen to deletions?
- What will happen to changes?

How can we know what the source of information is after a merge?

The problem is demonstrated by the needs of TopiWriter

A document of TopiWriter is always associated with a topic map. Actually the topic map is saved within the .doc file.
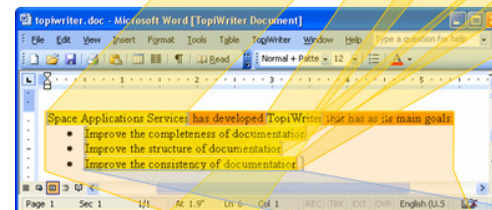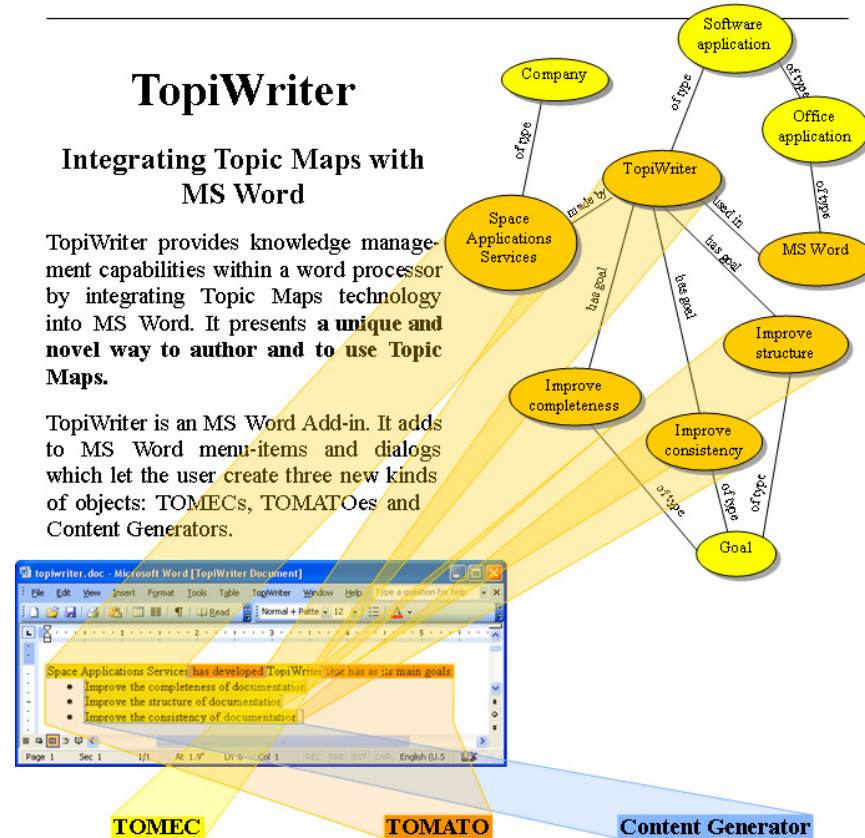➔ When the document is edited by two different people, there should be a mechanism to mark what was changed, when and by whom.

Why a solution for the problem should be standardized ?

- Currently there are **different approaches** to solve the problem (see other TMRA'07 Open Space entries as well as TMSync).
- All those solutions do not extend the TMDM but instead introduce reifying topics which means added complexity to the topic map.
- Therefore, the topic map structure is no longer human friendly unless those reifying topics are filtered out when the topic map is viewed by the user.
- And, in order to filter out (or present in a user friendly manner) the reifying topics in an automatic way, the topic map browsers have to know in advance which **approach** is used.
- Moreover, if **different approaches** are used, it is impossible to take into account the extra information given while merging.