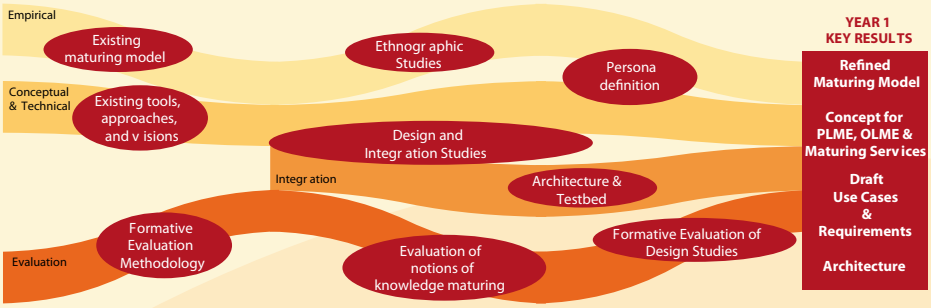
MATURE Partner Newsletter, November 2009

MATURE in its second year



After a very successful annual review in June where we presented the key results of the first year, MATURE is currently in the middle of its second year and concentrates on two major strands of activity:

- a representative study investigates knowledge maturing support, activities, and indicators in 200 companies all over Europe (and partially beyond)

- four demonstrators represent the major technical developments and show the added-value of MATURE for end users (together with several application partners from the associate partner network)

In this newsletter, we present two of the demonstrators to you as well as a first overview of the study.

EMPIRICAL STUDY
Interviews with 200 companies in Europe

Within the first project year, ethnographically informed studies were conducted focussing on organisational information sharing and knowledge maturing. The findings now need to be validated and refined in a large scale international study. For this next phase of research, we are, therefore, currently interviewing people who have been involved in organisational knowledge development, learning or collaboration.

The study is a combined quantitative and qualitative study, which allows us both to confirm or reject hypotheses from the first project year (e.g., what are good indicators for knowledge maturing), and to explore how knowledge maturing takes place in specific contexts. This helps us to learn about the influence of organizational, professional, or national culture on the knowledge maturing and associated barriers.

We will share the findings with you as soon as the data has been analyzed.

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ASSOCIATE PARTNER NETWORK
Roles for partners identified

While the flexibility to involve partners in various forms in MATURE has been very successful, it has also been difficult for associate partners to identify how they could contribute. As a guideline, we have identified four typical roles of associate partners:

Application Partners are interested in using the tools we develop in their own working environment. They have the unique opportunity to try out innovative solutions to inspire their own further developments, influence the usefulness of the tools, and in some cases even get a tool that helps their operational processes.

Technology Partners are interested in integrating MATURE solutions into their products, thus enhancing or extending them. As a partner, they get new ideas for their further product development in a dialogue with the project, and can even get the possibility to incorporate MATURE technology into their development processes.

Consultation Partners are interested in the conceptual topics and their discource as well as empirical findings and experiences. They give feedback to the project, e.g., in workshops, interviews or other forms of consultation, become part of an ongoing dialogue that is mutually inspiring. Companies can become case studies, and the project can help to moderate a reflection process and give external advice.

Research collaboration partners are interested in collaborating on specific research topics and in complementing their own research activities with MATURE. They can benefit from the MATURE scenarios as rich contexts for research, increase their impact by profiting from the visibility of MATURE and creating a community, or just benefit from exchanging experiences.

Get in contact with us to discuss further opportunities!

Contact: Scientific Coordinator Andreas Schmidt, andreas.schmidt@fzi.de - http://mature-ip.eu

DEMONSTRATORS

Assuring Quality for Social Learning in Content Networks

Tobias Ley

Jenny Bimrose

Quality assurance is a key aspect to the acceptance of agile bottom-up processes for content development (which are highly beneficial to knowledge maturing). MATURE explores community-driven quality assurance within the context of career guidance organizations. Users need to have confidence that a document is appropriate for a particular context, including their current task and profile. The organization, on the other hand, is interested in tracking, assuring and contributing to the quality of artefacts and processes.

This is achieved by providing

(i) indicators for quality assurance,

(ii) access to an overview of the knowledge base, and

(iii) possibilities for gardening the knowledge base.

The demonstrator is based on a MediaWiki for content creation and sharing, and provides a widget-based and platform independent user interface.

Maturing Process Knowledge and Learning Support in Business Processes

Barbara Thönssen

Hans-Friedrich Witschel

Modelling and automating business processes is still the major objective of many companies. However, supporting knowledge intensive tasks - as they are mainly to do in the tertiary sector - is still a major challenge for workflow management systems. The demonstrator shows how knowledge-intensive processes can be adequately supported, to guide the user actively (creating 'to dos' for him/her), checking on his/her progress (sending reminders for open issues) and providing collections of automatically retrieved, task-related resources/experiences (e.g. documents or links to experts).

Beside knowledge used in processes, knowlede about processes should be matured. In the past, this has rarely been understood as a collaborative learning process. Process models have been created and then put into production – often causing 'work-arounds' by the agent actually executing the process. The tasks performed will be analyzed with respect to process execution (e.g. have sub-tasks been created) and resource handling (e.g. what new resources have been added, what experts have been chosen). This will be the basis for a suggested modified process model.

THE HUMAN DIMENSION

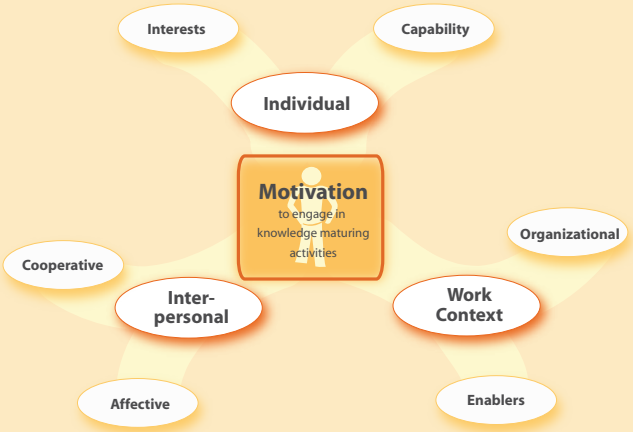
How do we integrate motivational aspects into the design process?

Christine Kunzmann

Athanasios Mazarakis

Motivation of employees has been recognized as a major factor for successful implementation of knowledge management systems, but most measures to influence motivation have so far concentrated on extrinsic motivation schemes as top-down instruments. Little investigation has been done for workplace settings: which barriers do we have to take into account there? How should supporting tools be designed for a workplace context?

Complementing the demonstrator development, MATURE addresses the motivational dimension of maturing support by lowering barriers and incorporating specific measures (e.g., feedback mechanisms) into the development.



FEATURED

What is a PLME? What is an OLME?

MATURE builds on the concept of personal learning environments (PLE), which - in contrast to organizational learning management systems - are focused on the individual and his/her taking control of the learning process. PLEs in an organizational context have to bring together two perspectives:

- the individual's perspective, who has an interest in getting the task done, to interact with others in his/her social network (inside and outside the organization), and to develop him-/herself further
- the organization's perspective, which has an interest in guiding the individual's activities towards a shared goal

MATURE has labelled these two perspectives as targetting at a Personal Learning & Maturing Environment (PLME) and an Organizational Learning & Maturing Environment (OLME), which does not imply that they are separate, but complementing each other in a work-oriented PLE.

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