

Welcome to the first MATURE partner newsletter!

The MATURE project started in April 2008 with a kick-off meeting in Karlsruhe, and has since then engaged in intensive discussions and several strands of activities with meetings in Innsbruck, Coventry, and Barcelona, among others. In this newsletter we want to give a brief insight into project progress.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Online Educa Berlin

December 3-5, 2008
Berlin, Germany

Professional Knowledge Management Conference (WM 2009)

March 25-27, 2009
Solothurn, Switzerland

I-KNOW 2009

September 2-4, 2009
Graz, Austria



ASSOCIATE PARTNER INVOLVEMENT
Ethnographic studies as a valuable foundation for the project progress

MATURE considers involvement of user at all stages of development and the grounding of conceptual work in the reality of enterprises as indispensable. One important element in the first year are rapid ethnographic studies in which MATURE project members immerse into company contexts, observe and try to understand their practices related to knowledge maturing. For a broad and balanced view, we were happy that five of our associate partners have agreed to participate in these studies:

- GISA GmbH in Halle, Germany (an IT solution provider),
- Connexions Kent & Medway, UK (advice and career guidance services for young people),
- SYNAXON AG in Bielefeld, Germany (an IT franchisor with clear commitment to wiki-based internal communication),
- Klinikum Karlsruhe (a big German municipal hospital with a training center with good reputation), and
- Swisscom AG (the biggest telecommunications company in Switzerland).

The results of the studies are currently being compiled and fed into the other strands of activity of the project, e.g., into the development work by deriving personas, or into the theory development.



"The ethnographic studies have been an important contribution to our understanding of knowledge maturing practices, and will be a valuable source of experience for the software developers"
(Ronald Maier, work package leader for the studies)

"Barriers to knowledge maturing encountered at the study sites have been remarkably similar and are now a rich source for analyzing motivational aspects and for teaching researchers and developers about the reality." (Christine Kunzmann, ethnographer)



CONCEPTS

Personal Learning & Maturing Environment (PLME)

Personal Learning Environments (PLE) are based on a learner-centred view of learning and differ fundamentally from an institution- or course-centred view of learning. Van Harmelen describes Personal Learning Environments as “systems that help learners take control of and manage their own learning. This includes providing support for learners to



Graham Attwell

- set their own learning goals
- manage their learning (both content and process)
- communicate with others in the process of learning and thereby achieve learning goals.”

Basic functional building blocks are: access/search, aggregate/scaffold, manipulate, analyze, store, reflect, present, represent, share and network with people.

A first lightweight prototype has already been realized for the associate partners Connexions Kent & Medway and Careers Scotland by Pontydysgu and University of Warwick based on WordPress: Freefolio.

Organizational Learning & Maturing Environment (OLME)

Knowledge assets (content, semantic or task structures) that are developed in an organisation are deeply rooted in the context in which they are developed. They are developed for a certain purpose and can be understood in a certain context. The focus of the PLME is on these assets from an individual or community point of view. What happens when we take into consideration the perspective of the organization as a whole?



Tobias Ley

When individuals develop them, knowledge assets necessarily come in a variety of formats, contents, and purposes, even if they refer to the same area of interest. Therefore, an organisation-wide utilization of these assets is constrained. What is needed is some form of organisational alignment. The bottom-up approach of knowledge creation is complemented by a top-down approach where organizational intentions, strategies and policies come into play.

Basic functional building blocks are: Viewing things in an organizational context, identification & discovery of patterns, consolidation/integration/abstraction, negotiation of meaning, justification, alignment/guidance, and spreading & creating awareness.

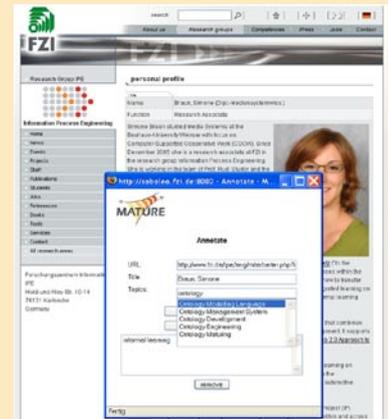
Currently, a Semantic MediaWiki-based design study is underway.

EMERGING IDEAS

People tagging & competence management

Competence management approaches have appeared as promising instruments for making transparent individual competencies and their relationship to organizational goals. However, especially on the level of individual employees, such approaches have so far not been able to show sustainable success on a larger scale. Piloting applications like expert finder or expert locator systems have often failed in the long run because of incomplete and outdated data, apart from social and organizational barriers.

The key idea of the approach is that we cannot do competence management completely without an agreed vocabulary, i.e. the competency catalog. But we have to make the process of evolving this catalog more collaborative and embedded into its actual usage by applying the people tagging approach. Colleagues can tag each other, and the resulting folksonomy can be consolidated into a competence catalog where we need a higher level of formality and legitimation.



<http://mature-ip.eu/result/design-study/people-tagging>

VOICES

What is knowledge maturing?

Knowledge as a metaphor describes...

... the processes of how different types of knowledge is typically developed and shared in different ways in different contexts as it moves between individuals, communities and organisations.

(Alan Brown, University of Warwick)



.... a macroscopical view on interconnected individual learning processes where the outcome of one process is input to others. The assumption is that not only individual knowledge is developed, but there is also an advance in collective knowledge.

(Andreas Schmidt, FZI)



.... the evolution of reflected knowledge and (summarised) individual experiences represented in reproducible digital or non-digital media.

(Tobias Nelkner, University of Paderborn)

