

Learning and Organisational Resources for Communities of Practice

Type of resource: Managing, supporting and evaluating (individual and collective, and informal and formal) learning

Type of scenario: Identity development

YellowPages: Yellow Pages and map of competences

Summary

- Objective: to introduce the CoP members through their personal knowledge and competences.
- Scenario: the members introduce themselves into a common form and then share their presentation with the other members.
- Tools: CoPe_it!, SweetWiki, eLogbook, presentation software.

Objectives

The objectives of this activity are:

- to allow members introducing themselves into the CoP;
- to identify who holds what knowledge and competences.

The coordinator can then map the knowledge and competences that the members hold together.

Scenario

1. The coordinator systematically asks the new CoP members information in order to identify them:
 - name, first name, photo;
 - contact information: email or phone or identity in online communication networks (Skype, MSN, ICQ...);
 - address of personal website or blog;
 - actual position and description of work;
 - a few reasons why they are member of the CoP;
 - assets: personal knowledge and practices, expertise on specific topics related to the domain of the CoP;
 - needs and objectives while participating in the CoP;
 - a personal presentation (one or two paragraphs).
2. The coordinator gathers the answers and publishes a page for each member (on a private website for example).
3. The coordinator maps the competences and objectives of the members with a software (Powerpoint, Open Office presentation, CoPe_it! [http://copeit.cti.gr/...](http://copeit.cti.gr/)).
4. The members could have a global view of the knowledge and competences held by the CoP and that can be shared within the community. Hence they can contact any other CoP member in case of question or issue in their professional practice.

Tools to support activity

- SweetWiki (<http://sweetwiki.inria.fr/> - <http://palette.ercim.org/content/view/160/119/>) can be used for each member creating his/her personal page. The coordinator will provide a template with the list of information to share.
- eLogbook (<http://elogbook.epfl.ch/> - <http://palette.ercim.org/content/view/155/119/>) can be used for each member creating his/her personal page.

Example of use by a community of practice

This LOR has been trialled twice, first by the TIC-FA CoP members, and then by the TIC-EF CoP. These two communities are composed of graduate students involved in an Educational Technology course. They used the SweetWiki service with the goal of letting other members of the CoP know them – in other words as an identity building tool.

The practice of filling a computer form to register to SweetWiki was not usual for all subjects. Some of them had already done similar things (by registering on so-called social web site, e-government sites, etc.), but it was a first for others. As such, the LOR helped to demythologize the use of a computer as a community tool.

Strength of this LOR is that it is easy to do and the benefits are immediately visible and obvious. ICT-aware people noticed that it was useful in that it helped them to be known by other CoP members. Less ICT-aware people had the satisfaction and instant gratification of realizing that they did create a Web page.

From the point of view of the CoP coordinator, the LOR allowed them to know CoP members in a different way. A touch of more personal information is added. This kind of ‘personal’ information, that the CoP coordinators usually do not have access to, can help the coordinator to better understand CoP members – for instance, if a member of the CoP has a full time job, it is easy to understand why she or he is often late or absent.

While the YellowPages were not seen as a competence catalogue, they worked in a different way: when people publish something, they sign their contribution using links to their homepages. By clicking on the member’s name, anybody can know more about the writer and his/her competences. Therefore, one can see it as a reversed competence catalogue (people first see the productions of members then can learn more about their competences).

The YellowPages of TIC-FA and TIC-EF can be visited at <http://sweetwiki.inria.fr/swikiulg/data/Tools/SearchBy.jsp?type=allusers>.

Further resources

- http://www.daretoshare.ch/en/Dare_To_Share/Knowledge_Management_Toolkit/Yellow_Pages proposes further presentations of a YellowPages activity in English, German, French and Spanish.