TAO Handbook

Contents

Articles

Introduction

TAO

TAO is about engaging older adults in online activities...

TAO Handbook

You're looking for information on how to involve older adults in your community's activities?'

In our handbook, you'll find background information, descriptions of best practices and other things you need to know if you want to make your online community a great place for older adults and tap into older people's experience and collaborative energy. And you can add your own experiences!

For community managers, managers of educational institutions, teachers, volunteer co-ordinators, instructors, moderators, facilitators, consultants, and other people interested in getting older people to play an active role in the web2.0 world.

Contents

TAO Community of Practice

You want to meet and exchange with other people who work with online communities and older adults?

We're building up a community of people from various backgrounds who are ready to share their experiences and to provide mutual support.

Join us for common learning, research and innovation activities in order to promote the active participation of older people in online communities and online collaboration projects.

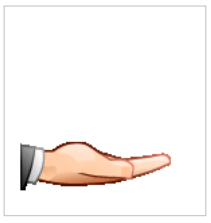
People&Learning Activities

Choose your Entry Point

For staff members in a managing or co-ordinating function

For teachers, instructors, moderators, facilitators

For people who would like to support the community



You don't fall in one of those categories?

Tell us about yourself

Welcome to the work space of the project TAO

TAO is both a placeholder for the Chinese ideograph 道 (Pinyin: **Dào** [source]), meaning **way** or **method**, and an acronym for **Third Age Online**. The main target of the project is to highlight the ways in which the access of older persons to the opportunities offered by online communities can be facilitated. At the same time, the project aims to profit from the growing number of older persons to advance charitable projects of online communities. - Learn more about the project by checking out its official website [1].

As part of our project we are planning to use Wikiversity as a platform to:

- **develop a handbook** for online communities and operators of community platforms, containing effective strategies for an improved inclusion of older people in online communities and online social networks
- **set up a community of practice** with various stakeholders from different backgrounds around the topic "e-inclusion of older people in the web 2.0 era", with a special focus on online communities and online collaboration

TAO consortium members: You can still access the outdated version of this start page.

References

[1] http://www.thirdageonline.eu/

TAO/Handbook

Content

For expanding the list click "show".

You can also get a “ready for printing” version of the handbook, it always represents the current state of the work done on these pages.

Background Information *General information on older adults' internet use, online communities etc.*

- Target groups
- (N)Onliner & Offliner
- Fostering older adults' online participation
- Older adults and online communities
- Volunteers: Roles, transparency, recognition, motivation, care / management
- Usability
- Online communities
- TAO Survey Among Older Adults - Wave 1

Activities *Case studies of activities involving older adults and online collaboration*

Some notes on different types of activities:

- Activities initiating older adults to meaningful use of the internet
- Activities with volunteer instructors: practical experiences

Examples of activities:

- Facebook Activities (online community, workshops)
- Free Cruise on the Internet (online skills, online collaboration, workshops, volunteers)
- Online learning activities (online collaboration, intergenerational, reading)
- Silver Knowledge (Wikipedia, mentoring, workshops)
- Wikimedia Seniors Outreach
- Online Co-Creation (online collaboration, workshops)
- SeniorWebNL's online contact services (online collaboration, workshops)
- Seniorweb.ch (e-Learning from Seniors for Seniors)
- terzLivingLab

Online tools *Some tools that will help you implement your activities*

- Online tools: general remarks, approach and requirements
- Collaboration: working together, online and in real-time
- Web conferencing: communicating over the web
- Virtual classrooms: remote teaching

General Conditions *Information on how to organize events, projects and find appropriate funding*

- Business Models
- Public Relations
- Sponsorship and Fundraising
- Communities of Practice

Methods and Practical Tools *Strategies for evaluating, implementing and planning seminars*

- Co-Creation with Older Persons (online collaboration, mentoring, workshops)
- Methods for cooperation and seminars

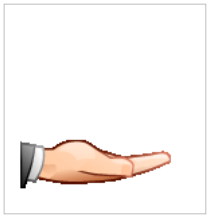
Problem-oriented access

- You don't know how to motivate the members of your community?
- You don't know how to build up a financially sustainable community?
- You're not sure how to manage your volunteers in the best possible way?

You want to contribute? Find Tips on how to work with Wikiversity and on Technical Issues here:

- Contributing to the Handbook: Learn how to edit pages in Wikiversity and what to consider when you're contributing
- TAO/Concept: Development of the Concept of TAO/Wikiversity (CoP & handbook)
- TAO/Brainstorm: Page for input, raw ideas, things to be done later in the project.
- TAO/Languages: information about how to handle the different language versions of this project.
- TAO/Overview: list of pages belonging to of in focus of the project (us it to not loose the overview).
- TAO/Templates: collection of templates, which are recommended to use.

Choose your Entry Point

For staff members in a managing or co-ordinating function	For teachers, instructors, moderators, facilitators	For people who would like to support the community	You don't fall in one of those categories?
			Tell us about yourself

TAO/Handbook/Welcome

Welcome to the TAO Handbook!

The TAO [1] Handbook is a collection of practical and background information on how to involve older adults in online communities and online collaboration.

It was conceived primarily for two types of users:

- managers of online communities and people in charge of online collaboration (in an educational setting or other);
- trainers and multiplicators in online communities and collaboration.

A special characteristic of the Handbook is that it still can be edited by anyone. As it was created within the Wikimedia project Wikiversity you possibly hold in your hands a printed edition of the Handbook, however there may already be a version containing additional material available on the web.

If you want to go on online right now follow this link http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/TAO/Handbook".*We would be glad to also benefit from your experience!*

Contents

The Handbook contains several chapters that treat different types of information.

We start out with a chapter containing background information on several relevant topics. To start with, the chapter outlines features of the group targeted by the Handbook users: older adults. Information is given on their internet use, motivation to join an online community and how they may benefit from it. Different strategies to foster their participation are outlined. Then, the important role of volunteers and a general information on usability issues are presented. The chapter closes with a definition of online communities and communities of practice, giving ideas on how to manage both types of communities.

The following chapter presents activities that have been implemented by partners of the TAO project and evaluated within TAO. Introductory remarks are given on different types of activities. Behind the name of each activity, you will find some key words that will help you see right away what the activity was about.

A chapter on online tools presents some basic properties of tools for online collaboration and aims to give hints for evaluating their usefulness according to the needs of a online community.

In “General Conditions”, you will find some information on how to organise projects and activities, as well as hints on how to build a financially sustainable community and raise funding.

"Methods and Practical Tools” contains concrete methods you can use during activities, to teach older adults, evaluate activities or solve problems.

You've found a mistake or think something is missing? Don't hesitate to edit or add new elements!

Contributing

Our Handbook was set on a collaborative platform for a purpose. We think that you have a lot of relevant experience. Help us make this Handbook better, and add your own information! Find out how in the next module.

Links

Learn more about the project the idea for this Handbook came from.

The Handbook is part of the AAL project Third Age Online (TAO). Read more on the project's website. [1]

Read more about the Ambient Assisted Living programme on its website [2].

References

[1] http://www.thirdageonline.eu
[2] http://www.aal-europe.eu

TAO/Handbook/Contribute

The Handbook needs your input!

Our knowledge is limited. Help to make this Handbook more useful for others!

– *The Authors who already contributed*

The TAO Handbook aims at giving useful information on older adults and online collaboration. Its initial contents are based on the research results of the project it sprang from, Third Age Online (TAO). The consortium has done its best to do research from various angles. Besides desktop research, focus groups and surveys, it has evaluated many different activities. But despite the consortium's thorough work, the research results cannot possibly involve all relevant information in an ideal way.

We know that the readers of this Handbook have experience that could help others a lot. Maybe you have organized a workshop on an online community that targeted older adults – here, you can share your experiences! Maybe you have been working online with (other) older adults for years – many people will be interested to find out how you keep them motivated.

This Handbook is set on a collaborative platform so that you can contribute. Anyone may add their own articles, comments or amendments – and anyone can correct mistakes or make improvements to existing texts. Editing is actually very simple. Find out how to do it in the next section.

How to contribute: Technical issues

These are very brief instructions on some basic technical issues of contributing. For more details, see the Wikiversity support pages [1].

Registration: You choose

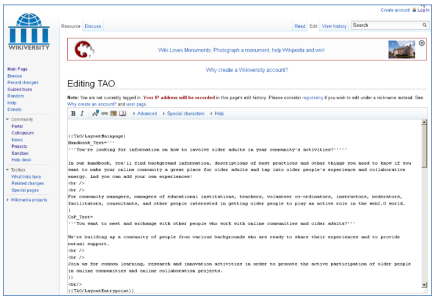
You can edit the Handbook as a registered or non-registered user. If you are not registered and logged in while making the changes, your IP address will be saved and shown next to the changes. If you register, you can choose the user name that will appear next to your edits. You'll find the link leading to the registration form in the upper right-hand corner of the page.

There are different aspects to consider when choosing a name. Under the following links, you'll find more information on…

… some good reasons to create a user account.

… which user name to choose.

Editing an existing text



Editable version of Wikiversity article

As you open an article in the Handbook, you will first see a text in which you cannot make changes.

Click on the tab “Edit” on the right side above the text. You will now see the editable version of the text in a box (see picture on the left).

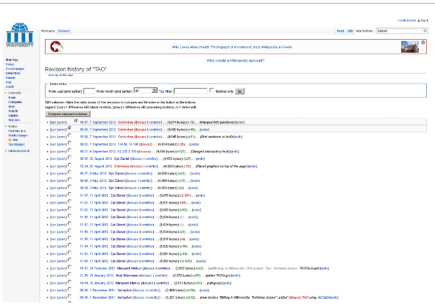
Apart from the actual text, the text elements that regulate the appearance of the writing will also be visible. This can seem a bit confusing at first. Don’t let it worry you.

Once you have identified the parts of the text you want to adapt, you can simply make changes directly in the box. Should you want to change styles, you can use the buttons above the box.

Just before saving the page click on “Show Preview” to see the changes you have made as they will appear for other users. This gives you the opportunity to correct mistakes (especially in formatting) before they are put online.

Once the preview satisfies you, click on “Save Page”. That's it, your edit is now online!

All edits are recorded!



Editing history of an article in TAO Wikiversity

All versions of the page or section that have ever existed are saved in Wikiversity, along with a list of changes. This list shows when a change was made and by whom (user name or IP address). See the screenshot on the right for an example of such a list.

You can access this list by clicking on the "View History" tab above the text, right next to the "Edit" tab. This comes in very handy as you will not be able to “destroy” anything by accident.

Creating a new module

Creating a whole new module is only a bit more complicated than editing an existing one. Find a detailed instruction on how to do so on the Wikipedia support pages.

How to contribute: Writing for your target group

The texts for the Handbook should be useful for the target group, that is stakeholders in online communities working with older adults. When you drafting contents, it is important to keep them in mind.

One strategy not to lose sight of your target group is working with personas. In marketing and user-centered design, personas are fictional characters created to represent different user types within a targeted demographic, attitude and/or behavior set that might use a service or product in a similar way.

Personas are useful in considering the goals, desires, and limitations of costumers and users. Their use fosters empathy among the authors, and help them to avoid structuring their product according to their own needs and expectations. Furthermore, by making assumptions about the users transparent, they allow for an open discussion and questioning of stereotypes, based on empirical research.

The TAO team has created several personas that you may consider before and while drafting your contents. There's a useful overview of the different groups the Handbook targets including personas that you'll find intersting.

Individual personas include the following persons:

- Heiko, manager at a community center
- Marianne, volunteer instructor for new media courses for older adults
- Simona, a consultant for an adult education association
- Bernhard Hofer, researcher in Zurich
- Guillaume Jacquemin, project manager at Wikimedia France

You can also create your own persona, corresponding to the needs and difficulties that you or some of your colleagues may have. A module on creating personas explains how to do so.

Links

Editing an existing module (in Wikiversity)

Creating a new module (in Wikiversity)

Wikiversity Help Desk

Target groups of the Handbook (including personas)

References

[1] http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Help:Editing

TAO/Handbook/Description of the idea

What's this Handbook about?

Topics

This Handbook gives information on how to involve older adults in your online community or projects of online collaboration. It includes background information, practical examples of activities and some principles of organisation and business planning. Participating in online communities is an interesting opportunity for older adults and the communities themselves – the authors hope that this Handbook will encourage their inclusion.

Target groups

This Handbook is a tool for anyone working with older adults in the context of online communities or collaboration. Specifically, it includes information for...

... managers and staff of online communities;

... people in charge of of online collaboration (in an educational setting or other);

... trainers and multiplicators in online communities and collaboration.

Creation of the Handbook

This Handbook is open to your experiences and ideas!

Set in Wikiversity, it is drafted in a collaborative manner – this means that anyone can edit any part of it and add new information. You'll find more information on this in the chapter "Sharing your know-how with others - How to contribute".

Its first contents are the results of the project Third Age Online (TAO). TAO's main target is to highlight the ways in which the access of older persons to the opportunities offered by online communities can be facilitated. At the same time, the project aims to profit from the growing number of older persons to advance charitable projects of online communities. The main focus of the project is on two important challenges that pertain to the enhancement of older persons' participation in online communities:

- To develop effective methods and measures for **motivating older persons to participate** in online communities and fostering the intergenerational integration of these communities.
- **To adapt the design** of the user surfaces and the functionalities of online platforms to the specific needs of older persons (all the while considering the needs of the existing community).

TAO lasts from 2010 to 2013. The project is co-funded within the European Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) Joint Programme.

Links

How to contribute to the handbook

Website of the project TAO [1]

Website of the AAL programme [2]

TAO/Handbook/Examples of users and communities

Statements

"The growing number of active older persons, their life experience and their knowledge are a potential that the online encyclopedia Wikipedia should make better use of."

– *Pavel Richter, executive director, Wikimedia Germany*

"Approximately one half of Swiss citizens above the age of 65 believe that the internet would be used more frequently by older persons if it was more age-appropriate."

– *Hans Rudolf Schelling, executive director, Centre for Gerontology, University of Zurich*

"Together with older persons we want to find out how the internet can open an additional window to the world and how it can help to retain freedom and independence in older age."

– *Markus Marquard, research associate, Centre for General Scientific Continuing Education (ZAWiW), University of Ulm*

Pavel Richter, Foto: Die Hoffotografen, Berlin, CC-BY-SA 3.0

“Joining an online community is an excellent opportunity for making new contacts, learning, finding interesting tasks, involving yourself, and finding out about new technologies that facilitate and enrich one's everyday life.”

– *Alfons Bühlmann, Seniorweb Switzerland*

“Online communities let people learn from each other and help each other. They can expand their social network and get to know people they wouldn’t have met otherwise. All this enriches their daily lives.”

– *Kai Grabenhorst, SeniorWeb The Netherlands*

Testimonials

Wikipedia (e.g. Silver Knowledge)

“I include my know-how of 25 years of university lectures in nature sciences to the Wikipedia. Initially I only improved some articles, meanwhile I also could publish a number of new articles.”

“My start in the Wikipedia community was simply a coincidence. I had heard about this »encyclopedia to write along« and liked the idea. My first contribution was the correction of a spelling error and I haven't stopped contributing ever since.”

– *Statement of a 60 year-old woman*

Senior author, Ulm 2011, Photo by Elvira Schmidt, CC-BY-SA 3.0

Facebook

“About two years ago I took notice of Facebook. I can learn more about new friends, I'm interested in their profiles and their friends. I also can rediscover old, forgotten contacts. The registration process is not so pleasant, one also needs to get acquainted to Facebook's structure. I often feel mislead, sometimes I needed a lot of time only receiving an unsatisfactory result if Facebook tells me that »friends« expect me. What is meant by friends in Facebook? Would this kind of Facebook friends be ready to help me if I would move house? I miss specialized fields or rather subjects to start with. If Facebook is used goal-oriented I don't want to go without it!”

– *Frank L., AK Media of ZAWiW* [1]

Seniorweb Switzerland

“I stumbled upon Seniorweb while surfing the internet. I was intrigued by the announcement of an excursion to the museum of communication in Bern. After meeting members of Seniorweb in real-life, I joined the regional Seniorweb group in my home canton. We have regular offline get-togethers. As I got to know the other members of the group I became more interested in meeting them online as well.”

– *Statement of a 69 year-old active user of Seniorweb* [2]

References

[1] http://www.forschendes-lernen.de/media
[2] http://www.seniorweb.ch/

Background Information

TAO/Handbook/Target Groups

Take care!

There is a difference between the 'target group of the research activities' or the 'research subject' (which are the older adults) and the 'target group for the research findings' (which are staff of online communities and course instructors). In this chapter, the 'target group' is defined as the 'older adults'. The 'target group for the research findings', or in other words the expected readers of the Handbook, are defined in the Handbook introduction.

Introduction & overview of chapter

The target group of this research project consists of older adults (mostly 60-70 years), who are interested in participating in online social communities (e.g. Facebook, Seniorweb) and online collaboration projects (e.g. Wikipedia). Via these online initiatives, older adults (which until now have been underrepresented on online platforms) can use new possibilities for social interaction and participation.

This Chapter first describes the target group into more detail (in 2), then clarifies the current situation, the (non) internet use by older adults (in 3), explores the possible benefits for older adults who actively participate online (in 4) and finally makes some suggestions as to how online communities can encourage these benefits for older adults (in 5, also linked to the Chapter 'Usability').

Target group: Older adults interested in participating in online communities

The general target group of older adults (mostly 60-70 years) can be divided into three subgroups: passive visitors of online communities (the so-called 'lurkers'), participants of internet-courses, and older adults in existing clubs (e.g. hiking clubs) who have only used offline communication until now. For every sub group, the goal of the TAO-project is to make them aware of the benefits that participating in online social interaction can have for them. Below, each sub target group is described in greater detail.

Sub target group 1: Older passive users of online communities and/or their products ('lurkers')

This group consists of older adults that visit online communities or collaboration-websites (e.g. reading the information on Wikipedia), but who do not actively contribute to these websites (e.g. not writing on Wikipedia themselves). Many of them are overwhelmed by the broad range of activities and content on online communities. When trying to contribute themselves, new users may get frustrated by the communities' complicated rules, technical hurdles or the sometimes harsh communication style.

Sub target group 2: Older participants of internet courses

This group consists of older adults who have shown their interest in learning to use the Internet by participating in corresponding classes. However, many of these course participants are not aware of the existence of (and the opportunities provided by) online communities. Moreover, even when they know the online communities, they may lose their interest if these communities do not provide offline (real life) social interactions, as e.g. a monthly dinner with the other community members.

Sub target group 3: Older adults in existing social clubs that rely on offline interactions

This group consists of older adults in existing clubs of which have until now mostly relied on offline interactions (e.g. ornithological clubs, hiking clubs, etcetera), but who are interested in using online communication as well. Such clubs may need specific incentives to maintain online activities, as they do not necessarily rely on them.

Very diverse target group

As is shown above, the targeted group of older adults is highly diverse. This diversity holds consequences for online communities who want to focus on this group of older adults. As addressing this group is non-trivial, online communities have to consider who they exactly want to reach (age, gender, level of education, profession, etcetera), what they have to offer as an online community, and how this offer matches the addressed target group.

Older adults & Reasons for non-use of internet & online communities

Current situation: use of the internet by older adults

The share of older adults who are online has risen sharply in the course of the last ten years. Nevertheless, older adults continue to use the internet and online communities far less frequently than younger age groups . It is important to note that the use of online technologies does not only differ according to age; also gender, physical challenges, marital status and level of education play an important role. In the case of older adults some of these factors may come together, which makes the barrier to use the internet greater for them .

Reasons for non-use of the internet by older adults

- Misconceptions about internet: Many authors see the main reasons for older adults' non-use of the internet in "misconceptions" about the internet. The internet is viewed as being dominated by pornography and illegal activities . Moreover, there is a widespread attitude among older adults that the internet should be left to the younger generations .

• Anxiety & impairment: Internet non-use can also be rooted in perceptions of inadequate efficacy and computer anxiety . Obviously, functional impairments (e.g. reduced view) can also be a reason for non-use of the internet . • Problems of sociability & usability: Concerning online communities, most barriers are related to problems of sociability or usability . Sociability includes the purpose of the community, the ways in which people are allowed to interact and, finally, community governance, which is characterized by formal and informal policies. Usability, on the other hand, refers to the easiness and intuitiveness with which the technology of the online community can be learned and used. • Doubt about meaningful exchanges: In addition, many older adults have reservations against using the internet as a place for meaningful social exchanges .

What's in it for me? Possible benefits for older adults of active online participation

When older adults actively participate on the internet or in online communities, they are expected to profit in terms of social capital and human capital (health and well-being, but also skills and knowledge), improved possibilities for online activities, and a larger array of online content which is targeted at their needs.

Concrete benefits of online participation for older adults

Online social communities (e.g. Seniorweb) and collaboration projects (e.g. Wikipedia) offer a large palette of possibilities for meaningful activities and social interactions; both online and offline. People can choose in which activities they engage, and how fast and intensely they want to do this – which is often appreciated by older adults. Activities in online collaboration projects stimulate social interactions, the sharing of ideas and access to new knowledge. It is expected that the participation in online activities has a positive impact on the mental and social

health of older adults. Furthermore, the possible intergenerational exchange may help people of different ages to broaden their horizon and to profit from improved relations.

Research findings about the benefits of online participation

How an older adult is affected by the internet depends not only on age but also on a number of other factors, including socio-economic status, level of education, personality, experiences of self-efficacy and personal biography . Results of studies on the positive effects of internet use are mixed. There is evidence that the use of online communities can help cope with stress . Moreover, computer and internet usage by older adults has shown various positive effects, namely an expansion of connections to their social network, a better integration into the current social discourse and an orientation towards the future, and a frequent attribution of human traits to the computer, i.e. a perception of the computer as enabler of “good things”. On the other hand, randomized controlled studies could not prove that computer training and internet use have measureable effects on cognitive functioning, wellbeing and autonomous living.

How can online communities encourage these benefits for older adults?

Online communities could take policy measures to promote the inclusion of older adults. This should ideally be done in such way that it enhances their physical, psychological and social well-being and improves their skills. At the same time, this could have a positive impact on the quality of the content and the interaction) within the online community. By developing user interfaces and functionalities adapted to the special needs of older adults, online communities could enhance the access of older adults to the Internet, and allow them to master new tools faster. Following this line, it is expected that older adults who regularly use the Internet will develop the necessary internet skills to also stay in contact with family and friends when they become (in a later life phase) physically less mobile.

Links

Other Handbook chapters:

Chapter ‘Usability’

External links:

Link to the study of the TAO project on "Older Persons and Online Communities: Motives, Incentives and Barriers" [1]

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References

[1] http://www.thirdageonline.eu/project-tao-2/research/older-persons-and-online-communities/

TAO/Handbook/(N)Onliner & Offliner

Onliner

A person who uses the Internet.

Offliner

A person who uses a computer that is not connected to the Internet.

Nonliner

A person who very rarely, or never, uses the Internet, mostly because they do not have access to it or the possibility to have access to it. With the countries involved in TAO, there is a small chance that a persons is actually not having any possibility to have access to the Internet, with the exception of some very remote locations with no connection possibilities. Therefore, most of the people who do not have access to the Internet will be considered as offliners.

TAO/Handbook/Fostering Older Adults Online Participation

The Problem

Even though the number of older adults participating in online activities, online social networks and online communities has been growing in the past few years, the representation of older adults in these areas of internet usage remains sub-proportional (Zickuhr, 2010; Initiative D21, 2010; European Commission, 2010). Our activities and research in the TAO project show that many older adults have strong reservations against online participation. Apart from fundamental problems of access and technology we also find security concerns and often a lack of support from persons‘ social environment. Moreover, many older persons cannot imagine what personal benefit for their everyday lives they could draw from a participation in online communities. An online community is relevant to an older person’s life if it helps to fulfill a certain desire, is in line with personal beliefs and values and serves to attain goals and plans (Bishop, 2007). Some “young-old” persons have the image of an online community as being useful only for socially disintegrated, immobile, “old-old” persons. It is interesting that many older persons do identify a concrete benefit for the “older old”, for instance for preserving independence in case of limited mobility. Many “younger old” state: “When I am older I can imagine using online communities but there‘s still time!” (Sourbati, 2009). Therefore, a central challenge for persons in charge of an online community or for online community trainers and multiplicators is to demonstrate the potential personal benefit to be gained from online collaboration and online communities. While the benefits of online participation and collaboration may be obvious to digital natives they must be explicitly communicated to older adults who did not grow up using the internet. Work carried out in the TAO project indicates that using or not using online communities is less a question of technological barriers (usability) but rather a question of motivation and the expected benefit, especially concerning social integration in older age. For this reason, working with role models and good examples is crucial.

Approaching the target group

Regardless of the specific approach you take when addressing older adults, your focus should be on older adults’ resources (knowledge, competences, skills) rather than on their possible lack of experience with using online media. Ask yourself: What can we offer older adults? You will find that in order to answer this question you will need to know more about the values, interests, needs and activities of your target group. In that respect it is important to remember that older adults are far from being a homogeneous group of people. Rather, the diversity of lifestyles and interests tends to increase among older adults because older adults today enjoy many more years of life in good health and independence than was the case 20 years ago. It is important to note that this diversity includes the experience and skills in using the internet. In other words, it is all but impossible to address older adults “in general”. This makes it all the more important to define your target group more narrowly.

Collaborative methods of learning and online community development

If you are intending to have older adults collaborate actively in your online community or other online social networking site it is beneficial to view older adults as stakeholders. In order for older adults to integrate easily into your online community or to become more active you probably need to innovate. Rather than teaching or instructing older adults on how to use your existing online product you instead focus on initiating a mutual learning process. The goal in using so-called co-creation methods is to create a user-driven open innovation ecosystem which enables users to take an active part in the research, development and innovation process. You allow members to share,

combine and renew each other's ideas, opinions and findings through forms of interaction and learning and you involve members in innovating the existing and developing new services and applications. An important methodology in this respect is design thinking. The concept of 'Design Thinking' was developed at Stanford University by Larry Leifer, Dave Kelley, Terry Winograd. Design thinking is primarily understood as a step-by-step learning process during which the goal is for stakeholders and developers to interact for the sake of generating new knowledge and to take this knowledge as a starting point for the development of improved solutions (see figure 1 for the distinct phases of the Design Thinking process). The Design Thinking approach allows to clearly distinguish the different phases of an innovation process, to consciously alternate between concrete and abstract thinking and to put humans at the center of attention. It is particularly suited for design challenges that focus on developing empathy, promoting a bias toward action, encouraging innovation, and fostering active problem solving.

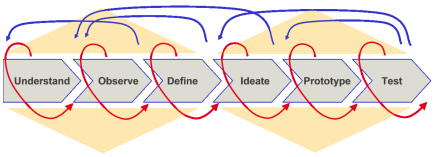

Figure 1:Design Thinking Process: The blue lines represent the possible iterative backward steps, the red lines the solution cycles for each phase

In the TAO project, the design thinking method is used for the development of e-learning modules. Design thinking is also the method of choice for developing the handbook that you are looking at right now. In a similar vein, online communities willing to innovate in order to become more attractive for older adults can work with a co-creation approach called Living Lab. A Living Lab is a user-driven open innovation ecosystem which enables users to take an active part in the research, development and innovation process of a company or organisation. These co-creation sessions might result in discovering new and emerging behaviours and user patterns, while involving all relevant players of the value network. Thus, the Living Lab approach provides managers of online communities with important insights on how to adapt the online community in order to be better equipped for attracting older adults. Notice that these kinds of collaborative methods are especially suitable for problem solving and innovation, in which all participants have an equal say. Participating older adults are regarded as competent stakeholders and not mainly as learners of particular online media skills.

Working with older adult volunteers

Integrating new users into your online community can be very time-consuming. This is one of the reasons why many online communities work with older adult volunteers. These volunteers are members of the online community and can serve as interesting examples for the target group. Volunteers can be active in a number of different roles, namely as course instructors or tutors, as user supporters, as ambassadors at promotional events, etc. Working with older adult volunteers has a number of advantages. It allows for taking a peer-to-peer approach which avoids the situation where "competent" younger adults instruct "incompetent" older adults on how to use online media. It makes use of the fact that in many online communities there are older adults who are willing and able to work as multipliers and disseminators of the benefits of online communities. Volunteers who organize community "group activities" help facilitate the identification of new community members with the community. Group activities also foster the empowerment of older adult community members. Managers of online communities choosing to work with older adult volunteers should be conscious of the fact that they are initiating a bottom-up process that has the potential of changing the culture of the online community and they should be willing to support this process. Moreover, with an increased number of volunteers, online communities need to focus more on questions of volunteer management.

Working with manuals and handbooks

Using manuals and handbooks remains an important channel for disseminating important information about interesting Web 2.0 offers and their usage. In order to be easily accessible, manuals should be written in a practical language that is tailored to the older adult. A method used in the framework of the TAO project is the Visual Steps Method (or Visual Steps concept). In using this method attention is paid to the special needs and requirements of the target group. For example, the Visual Steps publications contain easy to understand, visually oriented, step by step instructions and feature practical, useful information, tips and helpful hints (cf. www.visualsteps.com).

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TAO/Handbook/Older Adults and Online Communities

Aims of this learning activity

- To identify the dominant obstacles for persons aged 60 to 75 years in using online communities.
- To infer how online communities could become more attractive to potential users of that age group.
- To describe solutions for promoting older persons' use of online communities.

Target groups of this learning activity

Intermediaries: Persons operating online communities and wishing to attract a greater number of persons aged 60-75 years.

Teachers: Persons wishing to point out how online communities can become more attractive to persons aged 60-75 years.

Older Adults: Older adults wanting to learn about the potential benefits of online communities.

Key Findings

Usability problems are abundant: The tested online communities all had considerable usability problems leading to unsatisfactory user experiences. Usability issues included unattractive content, lengthy and complex registration processes, insufficient overview of the whole website and the specific community features as well as difficulties contributing to and thus becoming involved with the online community. At the root of these usability problems is a lack of user guidance and fundamental explanations.

Active users have found their niche: Users of online communities have found a particular niche, i.e. the participation in the online community fulfills a particular need or desire, corresponds with important beliefs or values and is accordingly perceived as beneficial. Active users entered online communities either by introduction through close family members, by "ideological affiliation", i.e. contributing their knowledge to a cause in accordance with their values or beliefs, or in order to be informed about social real-life activities with people sharing their interests. All of them derived a personal benefit from using a certain online community. They were either very motivated to overcome any hurdles in joining the respective communities and/or were supported by family members in doing so.

Link to everyday life decisive for further community usage: In spite of the mentioned difficulties, 5 out of 12 community beginners (3 intenders and 2 hesitators) decided to keep on using the tested online communities after the study had ended. They had managed early on to establish a link between their everyday lives and the respective communities and were able to focus on a limited number of tasks within the community offers. Others did not find content that made them want to return or held perceived risks, such as possible loss of control or privacy and security breaches, accountable for not continuing to use online communities. A lack of reciprocity as well as a general dissatisfaction with the contacts established in the online community were also among the reasons for discontinuing usage.

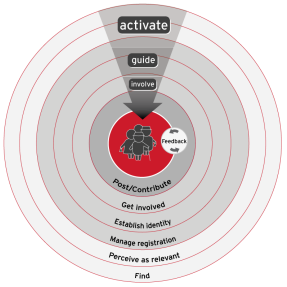
User profiles: Age not the decisive factor: Users of online communities are not a homogeneous group. Motivations, interests and hobbies as well as real-life social network activities differ as strongly between persons aged 60 to 75 as they do between members of younger generations. Only a small number of participants appreciated a community focus on older age groups. Many perceived risks were similar to those mentioned by younger user groups and discussed by ICT professionals. Thus, online communities do not simply appeal to one particular type of senior user. Rather, online communities are a means to an end and its users benefit from specific domains.

Opportunities for social integration through online communities: Persons having a hard time making social contacts in the "real world" may also find it more difficult to participate in an online community than persons who are socially well integrated. Nevertheless, online communities can contribute to social integration by helping to organize and structure everyday life and by assisting to maintain social integration after retirement. Online communities can also motivate to engage in certain (offline) activities and connect people with similar interests. In addition, successful participation in an online community can strengthen one's self-efficacy and self-esteem.

Recommendations

A model of action: attracting and retaining (senior) members of online communities: In order to turn potential users of online communities into active ones, it is necessary to take action on three levels. Firstly, users have to be attracted and activated by attractive content and clearly framed and communicated benefits. Secondly, they have to be guided through the process of registration and familiarization with the online community. (User-centered design is an approved process for reaching these aims.) Thirdly, new members have to be rewarded swiftly for their first contributions and efforts in the community. A good moderation of the online community is needed in order to deal swiftly with conflicts or rough discussions that might intimidate beginning users.

Success through collaboration of different stakeholders Making use of online communities for social integration requires efforts from many different actors. Community operators face the challenge of developing an attractive platform by investing in high quality content for the target group, by providing a proven-to-be user-friendly application and by building trust through adequate, well-tailored communication. Current community members, offline organizations, businesses from the private sector and the media will be in charge of creating a supportive framework for the development of online communities and their contributions to social integration.



A model of attracting and retaining older adults in the context of online communities

Quality guidelines needed It is essential that quality guidelines for effective online communities are set, legal protection of privacy is ensured and that quality improvement in services offered by non-commercial and commercial stakeholders is promoted. This can be achieved through establishing and promoting a database of user-friendly communities and by initiating regular checkups and incentives (e.g. awards) for existing online communities.

Where is the knowledge about this topic derived from?

Knowledge about the topic was gathered by conducting a qualitative empirical study [1]. The study was carried out with 18 internet literate persons aged 60 to 75 years from the German speaking part of Switzerland. The sample included 6 active users (3 f, 3 m) of online communities, 6 persons (4 f, 2 m) expressing an interest in joining an online community (intenders) and 6 persons (3 f, 3 m) not showing an active interest in online communities (hesitators). A group of 6 skeptics (refusers; 1 f, 5 m) were interviewed by phone. Means for age were 64.5 (SD=3.8) for active users, 65.7 (SD=2.2) for hesitators, 70.0 (SD=5.1) for intenders and 65.0 (SD=2.1) for refusers. The participants were diverse with regard to place of residence (German-speaking Switzerland only) and concerning professional and educational background. Since the sample consisted of “younger” seniors, access to the internet was not an issue. Two participants each worked with either seniorweb.ch, facebook.com or de.wikipedia.org. Active users were treated to one usability test session while intenders and hesitators went through two usability test sessions. Each test session included a series of tasks (scenarios) and was preceded and followed by a semi-standardized interview. A semi-standardized telephone interview conducted four weeks after the second test session marked the end of the study.

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TAO/Handbook/Volunteers

Introduction: Definitions & outline of the chapter

This chapter focuses on the possible role of older adults as volunteers in online communities, the mutual benefits for volunteers and communities and lists concrete recommendations about the management of these volunteers.

Although the definition of volunteer work may slightly differ internationally, volunteering could generally be described as “the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community; the environment; or individuals outside one's own immediate family. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain" . The more specific term ‘volunteers for online communities’ refers to people who voluntarily work for an online community, and who may perform either online tasks (e.g. preparing a newsletter) or offline tasks (e.g. organizing media courses).

Following questions are answered in this chapter:

- Which volunteer tasks can older adults perform for online communities? (in 2, Possible Tasks)
- How can older adults and online communities mutually benefit from volunteer work? (in 3, Mutual Benefits)
- What are hands-on recommendations for the cooperation with older volunteers? What motivates older adults to perform volunteer work, and how can online communities adapt to that? What are practical do’s & dont’s about the recruitment, binding and activation of older volunteers? (in 4, Recommendations)

Possible tasks for volunteers in online communities

The scale of possible tasks for older volunteers is huge and could range from offline tasks (e.g. teaching a computer class, outreach activities, education, lobby on national policies, and so on) to online tasks (e.g. adding a picture to a Wikipedia-article, creating websites, preparing translations, taking care of the administration, consulting in forums or via email and so on). Online volunteering especially makes sense for tasks that deal with processing information and that do not require team work . It is also a modern option to experience engagement - especially for persons with limited mobility. However, many online communities need volunteers for online as well as offline tasks.

Within the TAO-project, many older adults actively volunteered for various online communities, either in online or offline tasks. Some examples to illustrate the variety of volunteering roles for older adults:

- Outreach & educational activities: community ambassador, teacher, course assistant, …
- Web contact services: moderators, hosts, web contact, …
- Lobby: member council, group discussions, panels, …

Often, older persons are not aware of the different kind of (especially offline) tasks they could perform for an online community. Therefore, the latter must actively approach these people and inform about (a combination of) the different online and offline tasks.

Mutual benefits: how could older adults and online communities benefit from their volunteer work?

Once retirement begins, many older adults reflect about their wishes for the next period in their life and question their place in society. Voluntary engagement could possibly offer a response to such questions. Voluntary engagement is a possible way for older adults to “continue to experience themselves as productive, can expand their skills and experience themselves as competent (…), which in turn plays a role in the development of their identity.” (Steinfort 2010, p.61 ff) Moreover, a voluntary engagement does not only allow older adults to develop (a different form of) self-recognition, they are also recognized for it by others.

How could older adults benefit from their volunteer work in online communities?

More social contacts:

- The volunteer work in online communities provides ample opportunities for contacts to other volunteers and other participants, possibly persons one would not meet otherwise.
- The volunteer work contributes to their social network, and positively effects their well-being (cf. Charles & Carstensen, 2009).

Being active:

- The feeling of being active is generally considered a positive experience.

Experience self-competence:

- Being active in an online community provides experiences of personal competence (self-efficacy).

Being part of greater purpose

- The involvement in an online community lets people be part of a greater purpose (e.g. free knowledge, empowerment). The activities in the online community may be meaningful and can be deeply satisfying.

How could online communities benefit from the volunteer work of older adults?

Profit from competences:

- Online communities profit from the competences, perspectives, and the experience of the new older adult members.

Flexible time resources:

- Older adults are generally not as heavily involved in professional activities anymore and can use their time in a more flexible way than younger persons.

Access to new funding:

- Involving new groups of older adults may give an online community access to new funding resources.

Recommendations: best practices in the management of (older) volunteers in online communities?

This paragraph provides some best practices and concrete do's and don'ts concerning the management of older volunteers in general, and in online communities in particular. We first list the (non)motivating factors that should be taken into account, then the specific responsibilities of the manager of the volunteers, and we conclude with hands-on do's and don'ts regarding the activation, binding and recruitment of older adults volunteers.

Motivation of older volunteers

As diverse as all other volunteers

Older adults have diverse desires and needs (as do younger persons), and meeting these various expectations is a challenge for online communities. The range in motivations and expectations of older volunteers (>66 years) is not any different to those of any other age group age 31 and older . Therefore, older adults should be addressed via their personal interests, not as part of an age group. This being said, older volunteers may nevertheless be more motivated by altruism, social duty and personal satisfaction than other age groups.

Stimulates the motivation:

- Good social relationships inside the organization, personal contact
- Support from the organization staff
- Positive evaluation of the job one performs
- Training one receives, development of volunteers' competencies and empowerment

- Interesting job with some autonomy
- Culture of open feedback and information
- Recognition of volunteers' value
- Establishment of clear rules that are binding for everyone

Decreases the motivation:

- Overcharging the volunteer
- Lack of support
- Climate of harsh criticism
- Lack of a clear strategy (i.e. what goals are we working for?)
- Lack of clearly structured program for beginners

Responsibilities for the manager of the volunteers:

Online communities should develop a strategy of volunteer management that is well accepted in the community. There should be attention to following stages in the relationship with a volunteer: attracting, accompanying, keeping him/her active, rewarding, saying goodbye. General principles of volunteer management are applicable to all age groups. However, they need to be adapted to the needs of the specific older adult target group that is being addressed. Good volunteer management requires a certain extent of professionalization in the online community.

The responsible for the management of the volunteers, has following tasks :

- identify activities that can be performed by volunteers
- assess which of these tasks would be actually appealing for volunteers
- specify the time requirements and the necessary skills for these tasks
- set up meeting with volunteers to list specific general terms and conditions
- come to a mutual agreement
- introduce the volunteer to his/her task, based on an orientation plan
- provide the volunteer with information about the future colleagues, offices, rules, goals and the organization's mission statements, materials, etcetera.

Recruitment of older adult volunteers

Do's	Dont's
Find volunteers in senior clubs or interest clubs	Do not put too much emphasis on the membership in the online community
Be modern and sexy (in the middle of the society)	Raise curiosity
Have an appealing website: Attractive Informative Clearly structured	
Have an interesting newsletter	
Get the help of "warm experts" (acquaintances which they trust) to approach the older adults.	

Activation of the older adult volunteers

Do's	Dont's
Distribute an interesting newsletter	External communication about internal conflicts
Provide training or education	No training or time to get acquainted with the organization
Have an active community management (plan and organize activities)	Leave the volunteers on their own, not asking for their experiences
Stimulate the volunteers & take them by the hand	No loyalty among employees and volunteers
Engage in personal interaction	Engage in disputes or professional discussions
Create links and connections	Overpriced service & under-priced service
Detect barriers and try to remove them	

Binding of the older adult volunteers to the online community

Do's	Dont's
Enable the exchange of experiences	Anonymity
Provide training or education	Heavy criticism (destructive)
Arrange open encounters	Excessive demand
Provide coaching and training	Overload of (irrelevant) information
Reward, praise and appreciate the volunteers	Unclear orders
Provide role models (e.g. of the same age)	No value for money
Provide an user-oriented offer	

TAO/Handbook/Usability

What is Usability?

The term usability is a combination of the verb "to use" and the noun "ability" and is usually employed to refer to the user-friendliness of an application (Göbel, 2009, p. 39). The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) defines usability as "[t]he effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction with which specified users achieve specified goals in particular environments." According to Nielsen (1993) usability comprises

- learnability,
- efficiency,
- good memorability,
- error tolerance and
- satisfaction.

Another important aspect is the emotions of the users: Is the use of the application pleasant or even enjoyable?

Usability in the Context of Online Communities

Preece (2001) argues that most barriers to using online communities are related either to usability or sociability. Usability refers to the easiness and intuitiveness with which the technology of the online community can be learned and used. Sociability includes the purpose of the community, the ways in which people are allowed to interact and, finally, community governance, which is characterized by formal and informal policies. Good usability is widely understood to be crucial for the success or failure of an application or service. However, because of their very nature

as virtual social spaces, questions of sociability may be more relevant for participation or non-participation in online communities than questions of usability. Preece (2001) proposes four main usability issues for online communities.

1. Dialog & social interaction support,
2. information design,
3. navigation,
4. access.

Dialog & social interaction support refers to all aspects of the used surface that promote interaction. How easy is it to execute commands? Can avatars be moved without difficulty? Information design deals with whether the community information is readable, understandable and aesthetically pleasing. A good navigation will allow the user to move easily and to find that which he or she is looking for. Many online communities face problems of insufficient compatibility between imported software modules and the website housing the community. Access to the online community is dependent on the prerequisites of a full usage of the community software. This includes questions of required bandwidth and state-of-the-art hardware and operating systems. Text versions of community information should be available as alternatives. If certain prerequisites are essential, it should be made clear how they can be fulfilled (Preece, 2001).

In the framework of the TAO project (cf. Bennett & Loetscher, 2012) a broad concept of usability was applied:

- Are the planned functions really useful (utility)?
- Do users accept and use them (user acceptance)?
- Are the business model, contents, terms used within a site as well as its name understandable and credible (branding aspects)?
- Is the user satisfied with the possible options?
- Do users feel intimidated by unexpected or unwanted contents and functionalities?
- Is the user's image of the brand being distorted by the experience he has?

Rubinoff's reasoning (2004) is similar and includes content, branding and functionality as parts of a satisfactory user experience.

Do Older Adults Have Particular Needs With Regard to the Usability of an Online Community?

There is evidence that older adults take longer when using typical functions of online communities or simply when surfing the internet than do younger persons (Buss & Strauss, 2009). This is not because older adults are per se slower than younger adults. Rather, the reason for this is that younger persons tend to have more knowledge about and more specific experiences with online communities than do older adults. So what in fact many older adults need is a very clear navigational framework, easily interpretable error messages and unequivocal terminology (Buss & Strauss, 2009). When asked directly, beginning older adult users may not name very many particular usability problems. It would, however, be short-sighted to conclude from this that they did not encounter any such problems. Because of their limited knowledge about online communities it is difficult for beginning older adult users to pin down verbally their experiences so that they can be categorized easily. Rather, they often express a kind of general uneasiness or insecurity about their dealings with online communities. It does not seem far-fetched to assume that usability problems play an important role in creating these feelings even if they are not voiced in a concrete manner.

What Are Typical Usability Problems That Older Adults Experience?

Registration processes are difficult to manage

Lengthy and complex registration processes are bound to set back even the most highly motivated user right from the beginning.

A Lack of orientation for new users

An insufficient overview of functionalities and central community features can put a swift end to older persons' beginning involvement in an online community. These problems tend to be rooted in missing or unclear process indications especially concerning the different possibilities of taking action (e.g. imprecise naming, poorly perceivable links, suboptimal design of error messages and references, poor marking of optional action steps, complex password requirements, non-readable "CAPTCHA"). A lack of coherent information architecture and user guidance is also a common problem. This refers to the clustering and labeling of content, the characteristics of navigation, the use of orientation aids, and the integration of specific functionalities.

Fundamental Features of the Online Community Are Difficult to Use

It should go without saying that in a community all functions of social exchange (e.g. contacting other community members, sharing content, answering others' requests) should be easy and inviting to use. However, the upload of content such as photos or the creation of blog entries is often experienced as difficult by older adults.

Participants lose interest due to insufficient quantity and quality of the content

This is especially true of online communities with a low level of activity and slow or even missing responsiveness. Sometimes these problems are worsened by poor graphic design and an unclear separation of paid-for and user-generated content.

Lack of a clear concept for providing different modes of access

Quite frequently, too little thought is given to the different pathways through which various target groups should be able to access the online community. In addition, the different stages of the process that new users of the online community will have to go through are often not addressed sufficiently well (e.g. finding the online community, comprehending its content, deciding on whether to participate, taking action, sharing content).

What Can You Do to Make Your Online Community More Usable for Older Adults?

Excellent usability is the essential prerequisite not only for a satisfactory user experience but also for an initial buildup of trust in the online community. Keep in mind: Basic usability rules apply to users of all ages. So check your communities concerning:

- Quality of content: Choosing the right topics is useless if the quality of the content is unsatisfactory. Many "one topic" online communities suffer from outdated content, a lack of contributions and insufficient quality assurance. Only content of quality can attract quality contributions from users. Thus, less will often turn out to be more.
- Coherent information architecture: The basis of a usable online community is a stringent concept for the structure of the site in order to allow users to get an overview of content and functionalities easily and to facilitate orientation. This is achieved by choosing the right classification of content and distinct labels as well as providing the adequate navigational features. The core community features must be highly visible and must not be buried under piles of other information and features.
- Sufficient user guidance: It is very important that users are guided intuitively. I.e. they have to know at all times where they are, what their options for action are and how they can get where they want to go. Steps that require previous knowledge have to be explained to the users. Finding out about those needs implies that community operators know their target group well.

- Elaborated processes: All processes have to be thoroughly defined. I.e., it must be clear to users how to start, where in the process they are currently standing, which steps are optional and which ones are essential and how the process will be completed.
- Good graphical design: A suitable graphical design is needed that supports the usability of the online community in an optimal way.
- Applying user-centered design for creating user interfaces and processes in an online community is a promising strategy of designing online communities for everyone. The operator will involve users in the development process. This approach has a high probability of creating community features and processes, which guarantee that persons regardless of their age will be able to use community features successfully.
- Building trust through communication: Media reports about privacy breaches in certain online communities influence users' expectations of online communities in general. Thus, communities have to address the perceived risks, in particular concerning privacy. Users should easily be provided with transparent information concerning the data that are visible to others and on how they can change respective settings. The default settings after registration should be restrictive.
- Tell us about you: Persons are motivated to participate in an online community if they feel that this community is congruent to their own values. Thus, in order to create a clear profile, an online community should be able to communicate its values. Vice versa, administrators of online communities should know something about the values of their target group.
- Moderation and motivation: Once a person starts to contribute, they will return to see how other community members have reacted. It is thus of great importance that new members start contributing as quickly as possible – even if their contributions are only minuscule – and that they receive feedback.
- Talk about benefits: Persons will continue to use the online communities if they see a very clear personal benefit in doing so and if this benefit is greater than the perceived "cost" of contributing. Clearly communicating this benefit is mandatory for online communities aiming to attract new members regardless of their age. Moreover, it is important to point out that online communities are not only about getting to know new people, but that they provide manifold other possibilities (e.g. simplified communica-tion, an agenda for joining offline activities, an opportunity for sharing knowledge with others, etc.).
- Promote active users in the target group: Target well integrated senior users and their networks first, in order to attract the necessary number of members from that particular age group. Probably, the most promising approach in this respect is using models or positive examples, i.e. by demonstrating how persons who are similar in important respects (personality, interests, age, level of education etc.) profit from their participation in online communities. This, however, requires a detailed definition of the target group so that the persuasive messages can be tailored fittingly.

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Links to Other Handbook Chapters

Chapter on "Target Groups" (gives an overview of older adults as a target group for online communities)

TAO/Handbook/What is an Online Community?

Community as a Psychological Entity

Omoto & Snyder (2002) define a community as a psychological entity or conceptualization, rather than a geographically bounded area. An important feature of such a psychological community is the existence of a *sense of community*, which can be described as a feeling of belonging, connection, confidence and esteem that is attached to a psychologically identifiable community or grouping. Although the academic debate about what defines a "sense of community" is ongoing, it is advantageous to consider communities in such a psychological way. This conceptualization comprises the aspects of membership (sense of belonging), influence (refers to mutual influence among members), integration and need fulfillment (the community fulfills members' needs, including need for status, success and protection) and shared emotional connection (value of shared experiences). The sense of community contributes to individual and collective action: members tend to feel obligated to work on behalf of the community, and to be good team players. Moreover, a sense of community increases people's readiness to engage in volunteer activity (Omoto & Snyder, 2002). McMillan & Chavis' (1986) model of Sense of Community has sparked a large amount of research and is empirically well validated. Recently, Peterson, Speer & McMillan (2008) delivered evidence through confirmatory factor analysis for the four dimensions of the model, which include needs fulfillment (the community meets members needs), group membership (best characterized as a feeling of belonging), influence (the sense, on the one hand, that one can make a difference and, on the other hand, that the community is important to its members), and emotional connection (a feeling of attachment, which is based on members" shared history and experience). In a reappraisal of McMillan & Chavis" (1986) model, McMillan (1996, p. 315) mentions the following four elements as characteristic of a sense of community.

1. a spirit of belonging together,
2. a feeling that there is an authority structure that can be trusted,
3. an awareness that trade, and mutual benefit come from being together, and
4. a spirit that comes from shared experiences that are preserved as art.

Art, in this sense, symbolizes a collective heritage (e.g. in song and dance). The spirit of belonging together is dominated by a feeling of friendship between members of the community. This creates a setting which allows community members to express unique aspects of their personality (McMillan, 1996, p. 315). Members of a community can be themselves and can see themselves mirrored in the eyes and responses of others (p. 316). McMillan (1996, p. 316) believes that “the first task of a community is to make it safe to tell “The Truth””. This is dependent on a number of preconditions, namely community empathy, understanding, and caring. In a community that is built on trust there exists a certain order (McMillan, 1996, p. 319). It is a community that has norms, rules, or laws. This order allows members to predict, plan, and commit. In fact, a sense of personal mastery (McMillan, 1996, p. 319) is only possible if one knows a community's norms and laws. McMillan (1996, p. 321) makes it clear that communities establish a “social economy”, which is based on shared intimacy. The unit of exchange in this economy is self-disclosure. The value of a trade can be measured according to the personal risk involved in self-disclosure.

McMillan (1996) is convinced that this risk is only taken on if community members feel safe from shame.

Commonalities of Online Communities

There is no commonly agreed on definition of online community. Nevertheless, it seems helpful to mention some of the commonalities of online communities as well as some of the criteria that have been used to distinguish different types of online communities. We can start out by using the broad definition provided by Preece (2001) who defines online community as “any virtual social space where people come together to get and give information or support, to learn, or to find company. The community can be local, national, international, small or large” (p. 3). To Döring (2001, quoted from Schaffert & Wieden-Bischof, 2009, p. 11) an online community is an alliance of people with common interests who exchange information and build contacts on a regular basis and with a certain reliability [my translation]. Schaffert & Wieden-Bischof (2009) propose that an online community consists of persons with common interests who use the internet and other communication technologies for regular exchange and/or to jointly develop content. They thereby develop strong mutual attachments and experience themselves as belonging together (p. 12) [my translation]. Online communities are virtual communities because they use the computer as medium to carry out the activities that define their community. From Preece's (2001) definition we can derive that what all online communities have in common is:

- The provision of a virtual social space where people come together
- The possibility to engage in multiperson social communication

What takes place in an online community is normally a many-to-many communication. Thus, today's online communities provide users with the facilities to produce “significant social activity” (Butler, 2001, p. 346). The central mechanism of a web 2.0 application is that the activity of users leads to an *organic growth of information*. One could call this the collective intelligence of the network. Persons with information needs can pose fully phrased questions to a community. This clearly differs from the search process applied to a search engine where frequently the format of the required information must be defined beforehand (Godfrey & Johnson, 2008, p. 638).

Distinctive Features of Online Communities

Let us now turn to the question of distinctive features of different online communities. One criterion by which online communities can be distinguished – at least to a certain extent – is their function. Accordingly, one could ask for the main purpose that an online community is supposed to fulfill. In this respect, Preece's (2001) definition offers the following elements:

1. Exchanging information and/or support,
2. learning,
3. social interaction (finding company).

Exchange of information and/or support usually takes place inside the boundaries of specific topics in which the members of a community share a common interest (e.g. health). Hagel & Armstrong (1997) used the term *“community of interest”* for communities with that kind of main purpose. While learning is certainly an aspect of communities of interest it need not be their main function. *Knowledge communities* (Bürbaumer & Mellacher, 2009), on the other hand, can be defined as just that, namely communities who engage in communication in order to acquire and provide knowledge – usually about a specific topic. *Communities of practice* (Wenger et al., 2002) can be localized at the borderline of online communities of interest and online communities of knowledge. Their main purpose is, on the one hand, to provide information and support among a like-minded group of persons (often professionals) and, on the other, to facilitate mutual learning. The term "practice" indicates that members of the community engage in a common – usually rather complex and frequently professional – activity. What draws members to online communities of the mainly socially interactive kind is the possibility to get into and stay in contact with persons they know and like and to meet new persons who appeal to them. Often members are offered

the chance to follow up and comment on each others' activities. Hagel & Armstrong (1997) would call these communities *"communities of relationship"*. Some communities of relationship are limited to specific societal groups. For instance, there are online communities aimed specifically at older persons. This relationship-oriented type of online community is sometimes also referred to as an *online social network*. Online social networks are online communities that emphasize affiliations of its members (geographical, shared background, common social interests) more strongly than their topical interests. Online social networks can also be characterized in terms of their form of information exchange. It is "ad hoc, informal, personal, often anecdotal, largely unregulated and potentially unreliable" (Godfrey & Johnson, 2008, p. 638). Nevertheless, Godfrey & Johnson (2008) believe that online social networks have the "potential for empowering individuals and citizens and developing and strengthening communities..." (p. 638).

Type of online community	Main function	Predominant form of communication	Content	Examples
Communities of interest	Exchange of information and support concerning a specific topic or a cause	Informal; personal	Advice, reports mostly based on personal experience; potentially unreliable	progressiveexchange.org [1] haustiercommunity.de [2]
Communities of practice	Exchange of information and support and mutual learning concerning a profession or a practice	Formal; expert discussion	How-to-information; instructions, guidelines; best practices	myplan.com/careers/chiropractors/community-29-1011.00.html [3]
Knowledge communities	Collection and retrieval of information; knowledge management	Formal; expert; impersonal	Structured, reliable, factual information	community-of-knowledge.de [4]
Communities of relationship	Staying in touch; making new social contacts	Formal; expert; impersonal	Personal information; conversations; potentially unreliable	facebook.com [5]
Business communities	Creation of value for businesses and customers	Professional; client-customer communication	Information about products, business partners and customers	smallbusinessonlinecommunity.bankofamerica.com/index.jspa [6]

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Links

- Facebook Activities
- Communities of Practice

References

[1] http://progressiveexchange.org
[2] http://haustiercommunity.de
[3] http://myplan.com/careers/chiropractors/community-29-1011.00.html
[4] http://community-of-knowledge.de
[5] http://www.facebook.com
[6] http://smallbusinessonlinecommunity.bankofamerica.com/index.jspa

TAO/TAO Survey Among Elderly - Wave 1

The purpose of this survey was to get insights into the motivations of not using the Internet and to assess how non-usage in this age group affects social inclusion and well-being. This first wave survey provides us baseline data for the assessment of mobilizing opportunities and barriers, e.g. in terms of differences between groups regarding Internet skills, preferences and usage patterns. The TAO onliner survey targeted Internet users at an age of 50 or more years. The geographical scope has covered the countries of the TAO consortium members, i.e. the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland. The purpose of the survey was to get insights in Internet usage patterns and motivations and to assess how Internet usage in this age group affects social inclusion and well-being. With the TAO offliner survey non-Internet users at an age of 50 or more years were targeted in the same geographical scope.

Methods & data

The online survey was set up via the Web-Application 'Survey Monkey'. Survey languages were Dutch and German. Due to subtle differences in the wording and differences in the educational systems two German versions were developed, one for Germany and one for the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Several Dutch, German and Swiss Internet- and gerontology-related organisations were asked to distribute the surveys' URLs to their members and to their wider networks. The offliners paper and pencil survey was distributed via personal relations of the research team. The BUAS team in Switzerland, for example, asked faculty and staff members to distribute the questionnaire to relevant persons. Additionally, elderly residents of care facilities were approached. However, it became obvious that recruitment of elderly offliners becomes a more and more difficult issue due to the widespread Internet use in this age group. The questionnaire was developed by the use of different sources. It was intended to rely on well-known and tested questionnaires and instruments as far as possible (e.g. Mental Health Index 5[1], the Psychosocial Consequences Scale (PCS)[2], the GVU WWW User Survey[3]).

Limitations

The results of the TAO-survey need to be interpreted keeping several limitations in mind. First, and most important, the sample is a convenience sample which is certainly biased by the channels through which the URLs were distributed. However, the respondents were also recruited without any organisational link. Second, a lot of difficulties were faced while recruiting offliners. The offliners' sample size is surely not optimal in comparison to the large onliners sample.

Socio-demographics

Onliners

Overall, 2912 persons participated in the online survey by the beginning of March 2012. The share of Swiss and Dutch respondents was approximately 20% each, respectively 561 and 426 respondents, while the share of German respondents makes up 60% with a total of 1925 respondents. Overall, the respondents are on average 68.57 years old and 60% are male. As expected in this age group, the overwhelming majority of the respondents are married (70%). 12% are divorced and 12% are widowed. Over two thirds of the respondents live in a two-person household, roughly one quarter in a single household, and 7% live in a household with more than two persons. The largest share of respondents (40%) has a university degree (including university of applied sciences). Compared to the results of the European Social Survey we see overlap with regard to our results of the questions on gender, marital status and living situation. With regard to education we see that our sample has a higher education.

Offliners

The offliners' sample size is surely not optimal in comparison to the large onliners sample. The offline respondents tend to include more female respondents, that are older, have a lower educational level, that live more frequently outside big cities and that are more often widowed or divorced than the online respondents of our survey. On the other hand, the offliners show no differences from onliners with regard to the frequency of meeting friends. The offliners even indicate more often than onliners that they meet friends and that they have a person to talk to about personal issues. The offline respondents seem to be less involved in clubs, associations or non-profit organizations (charity activities) compared to online respondents. Something that does stand out is the mental health index, which is slightly lower.

Beginners

Beginning Internet users (less than 5 years of Internet use) seem to have specific characteristics that differentiate them from longer-term Internet users. They differ on many sociodemographic characteristics, social inclusion, mental well-being and Internet use patterns from those who have used the Internet for more than five years. In several sociodemographic regards, beginners are more similar to offliners than to other groups of Internet users.

Online Survey: Well-being and Social Inclusion

The mental health index consists of five items which mainly cover emotional states (e.g., feeling happy, down or nervous). In general, the sum score is positively skewed. Across the countries the mean score seems to be very positive, too. There is only little variation between the three countries. Our analysis reveals that the survey's respondents are socially well-included and have on average a good mental health.

In order to investigate further what intentions are behind the respondents' Internet usage they were asked to assess the importance of the Internet with respect to aspects relevant for the well-being and social inclusion. The sum of the scores on a 5 point Likert scale across the 18 items ranges between 18 and 90. Higher scores indicate that more positive psychosocial consequences are experienced. Overall, the ICONS score for all respondents is generally high, and there are only little differences between this overall value and the country-specific ICONS scores (Clark & Frith, 2005), as the score for the Swiss sample is 63.03, the score for the German sample is 62.63, and the score for the Dutch sample is 61.17. In general, our respondents have on average made very positive experiences with using the Internet.

Conclusions

The TAO onliner and offliner survey has revealed a number of interesting insights into Internet usage and its impact on social inclusion and well-being. This first wave survey provides us baseline data for the assessment of mobilizing opportunities and barriers, e.g. in terms of differences between groups regarding Internet skills, preferences and usage patterns. In stylizing words, onliners are about 69 years old, rather male than female (ratio: 60:40), usually live in a two-person-household and have a relatively high educational degree. Offliners are more likely to be female, older, and show lower levels of educational degree. Offliners are also more often divorced or widowed than onliners, but they are not at all isolated, as indicated by their contacts to friends and other social aquaintances.

Another distinction that turned out to be meaningful in our survey is between Internet beginners and long-term Internet users. Regarding many sociodemographic features, social inclusion and mental well-being Internet beginners seem to have more in common with offliners than with experienced onliners. Apparently, their characteristics seem to shift from offliner to onliner attributes.

We could observe different Internet usage patterns between the respondents, though they are difficult to explain by differences with regard to the respondents' social inclusion or state of well-being. These causal relationships have to be examined and answered in the second wave of the survey.

Overall, our findings suggest that reluctance towards active Web 2.0 usage is widespread among individuals at the age of 50+. However, we also found that those persons within the target group that are active Web 2.0 users seem to form what we call elite users that have a lot of expertise to share and are willing and able to spend above average shares of their time on these activities.

With regard to predictors for Internet and social media use, we identified age, gender and educational degree as the factors having the highest impact on these activities, whereas the impact of social inclusion and well-being factors is inconclusive, most likely depending on overall context conditions of the respondent's living situation.

Taking these results together, the TAO survey has found a number of aspects that deserve to be considered when the "silver market" is targeted by – commercial or not-for-profit – activities that aim to tap the potential of this group. These aspects provide a number of suggestions for segregating this target group into meaningful subgroups that obviously differ significantly with regard to their expectations and needs and their capacities and preferences to interact and collaborate with others. This is of particular importance because interaction and collaboration, namely in form of 'co-creation', is considered to be the most promising way to adapt society and economy to the fundamental changes induced by the demographic shift towards ageing populations.

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[1] The 'Mental Health Index 5' (MHI-5) (Berwick et al., 1991) is part of the SF-36 (Short Form 36), one of the most used Quality of Life-instruments in health sciences world-wide. This instrument has been tested with elderly respondents and has revealed sufficient psychometric quality (Friedman et al., 2005). The MHI-5 has been validated as a screening instrument for depression in elderly, so the results may hint at whether the respondents in our sample have a more positive or negative emotional state. Because the MHI-5 has previously been translated and tested in Dutch and German as part of the SF-36, there was no need for translation. In our sample, the scale's internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) was good (0.8121).

[2] The Psychosocial Consequences Scale (PCS) is an 18-item subscale of the Internet Consequences Scale (ICONS) (Clark & Frith, 2005). This scale covers possible psychosocial effects of Internet use, e.g., isolation, self-esteem and frequency of communication. The PCS has been translated and has been cognitively tested with elderly respondents. The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) was excellent in our sample (0.9018).

[3] The questions on the Internet use were based on several questions and aspects of the Graphic, Visualization, & Usability Center's (GVU) WWW User Survey , developed by Schlosser and Pirolli (n.y.).

[4] http://www.thirdageonline.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/D5-1_Survey_First_Wave_v1-0.pdf

Activities

TAO/Handbook/Initiation and Meaningful Use

How can older adults be initiated to a meaningful use of the internet?

One of the important elements of initiating older adults to a meaningful use of the internet is by making clear from the very beginning that the internet is not something that has to be absorbed passively but that can actually be adapted and designed by the individual according to his or her interests and needs. Thus, instead of presenting "the internet" to older adults it makes sense first to ask about the more general interests and needs of a specific target group of older adults and how these needs and interests can be addressed with the options that the internet has to offer. Two categories of internet usage that are often not well known by beginning users 60plus are online collaboration and the opportunity to network with other persons (online communities). Behind this approach lies a vision of older adults' media competence that is not limited to knowledge about how to use the internet but that includes the stimulation of an autonomous, critical and needs-based approach to the internet.

What activities are suitable for initiating older adults to the internet?

Activities can be of a more traditional kind including classroom courses and seminars, individual user support or PR events. The more traditional type of activities usually takes place in a face-to-face setting. More innovative types of activities, on the other hand, tend to take place online and can encompass newsletters, virtual learning projects, online mentoring, mutual work on articles or other user-generated content and collaboration in virtual groups. While the more traditional face-to-face approach is useful to introduce older adults to mostly new and unfamiliar online activities, the new online activities are suitable to address older adults who already have considerable experience with internet usage. Table 1 shows different types of activities that can be used when addressing older adults.

Table 1: Types of activities for approaching older adults for increased online participation

Face-to-face	Online
Promotion and (local) advertising	Online promotion
Courses and workshops (face to face)	Online courses and e-learning (incl. Blended learning)
Individual support and assistance (face to face)	Online support and assistance
Seminars, meetings and other events	Online collaboration, online community

Further important aspects to consider when planning an activity

What is your target group?

When planning an activity it is crucial to develop a clear definition of your target group. Are you more interested in addressing a broad array of older adults? Or do you have certain criteria that older adults need to fulfill in order to be part of your target group? These kinds of questions have repercussions on how you communicate about your activity.

Age-mix of your target groups

- Homogeneous age groups in courses, events and online activities
- Intergenerational settings in selected (online-) activities

From face-to-face to online offerings

- From the familiar (face-to-face) to the unfamiliar (online)
- Settings mixing face-to-face and online approaches (for instance, blended learning)
- Face-to-face support for online offerings
- Broad addressment of older persons through general advertisement activities (example Free Cruise on the Internet)
- Target group-specific addressment for the recruitment of authors (example Silver Knowledge)
- When planning an activity it is important to formulate a clear goal. These goals should be in line with the so-called SMART critieria. That is, it should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely.

Examples of Initiating Activities

Free Cruise on the Internet (Switzerland)

Activities on Facebook (Germany)

Further Information

Older Adults and Online Collaboration: Types of Users and Motivation

How to foster older adults' online participation

Why do or don't older adults use the internet? (link to module (n)onliners)

TAO/Working with Volunteer Instructors: Best Practices

TAO & Volunteers: Practice oriented expertise

In the project TAO, we closely work together with voluntary instructors who teach older persons about online communities. Many of these instructors are of senior age themselves. Over time, we gathered a great experience in preparing these instructors for their courses, and facilitating them in the course creating process. Together with the broader academic support and feedback, this experience forms a strong expertise. Several of the activities presented in this chapter involved volunteers. We hope you will find the experiences of our partners useful for your own projects.

This module leads to **practical experiences with volunteers**. For a general overview on working with volunteers, see our module on Volunteers in Online Communities.

Examples of projects involving volunteers

Following practical experiences described in this Handbook involved volunteers and may be interesting for people wishing to work with volunteers themselves:

- Free Cruise on the Internet (Switzerland)
- Silver Knowledge (Germany)
- E-Learning Activities of Seniorweb.ch (Switzerland)
- Intergenerational Reading Project "Cold Times" (Germany)

Do you have experience with working with volunteers? You are very welcome to add tips, feedback and remarks from your own experience with courses for older people ("this worked for me, this did not …").

Find out how to add new modules here.

For whom?

The information in the project descriptions could be interesting for (senior) voluntary instructors who teach older people about new media in general, and about the use of online communities more specifically. Such instructors could for instance belong to:

- TAO community partners (Wikimedia CH, Wikimedia DE, Seniorweb NL, Seniorweb CH)
- Other senior communities (e.g. Pro Senectute, ...)
- Other (senior) communities (e.g. hobby clubs, ...)

A Seniorweb volunteer instructs seniors on how to make a photo book

Material for working with volunteer instructors

Within the TAO project, many (older) persons work as an instructors to show their peers how to participate in online community sites. For these volunteer instructors,

TAO has accumulated practice oriented information to help them with the preparation and organization of the courses.

Available theoretical documentation:

- Do's & Don't's (practical scenario for workshops)
- Methods for Seminars and Workshops
- Relevant background knowledge for working with volunteers

Presentation of Wikipedia for potential third age contributors

TAO/Creating a Glossary of Common Terms in a Community

- **Mission**: Gemeinsames Verständnis von Grundbegriffen in einer Community entwickeln
- **Zielgruppe**: Senioren, Mitglieder von Communities (online oder offline)
- **Vorgehen**:

1. Erklären der Aktivität
2. Brainstorming der Keywords
3. Priorisieren der Keywords
4. Artikel zu den Keywords erstellen
5. Artikel diskutieren und redigieren (Abstimmungsprozess innerhalb der Gruppe)

- **Form**: Plenum, Einzelarbeit, Gruppenarbeit
- **Zeit**: Prozess takten nach Phasen
- **Tool**: Wiki, Forum, Flipchart, Worddokumente,
- **Qualität**: Reviewprozess durch Community (online oder offline)
- **Test**: Kreuzworträtsel (fakultativ)
- **Beispiele**: Beschreibung von Anwendungsfällen

TAO/Facebook Activities

Background

Facebook-logo

Social networks experienced a huge growth in use for the last few years. Nowadays 42% of the internet users participate in a social network or any other online community. However the vast majority of them is 30 or younger. But there is an awakening interest from the older internet users in contributing and participating in these social networks. A problem coming up is the change of the appearance of the communities happening quite often, which is a problem both for the older users that have to adapt to the new surface and for the people creating learning material that has to be up to date

Goals

The goal is developing a basic training concept for initiating the use of online communities for older people. This concept will be tested with different senior target groups and on- and offliners. The results documented will be provided in the handbook.

Used Methods

- Online courses for interested persons, showing the different uses and problems related to social networks.
- Training seminars for seniors interested in teaching others. The experience made during the seminars will be shared by them afterwards.
- Information on Facebook and Google+ will be provided on different communities and networks like "Senior-Internet-Initiativen Baden-Württemberg" (Sii BW) and "Virtuelles und Reales Lern- und Kompetenznetzwerk älterer Erwachsener" (ViLE).

Future Plans

- The creation of materials directly on Facebook. These provided materials should also be suitable for printing.
- Direct an offline group towards Facebook with the use of an own Facebook group. Besides the offliner some active users of the network should be included in the group for providing help and know-how.
- Creating activities on federal level and expand activities beyond the solely use of Facebook to other social networks like Google+ or else.

Partners

- ZAWiW [1]
- Sii BW [2]
- ViLE [3]
- "Digitale Chancen" [4]

See Also

- What is an Online Community

References

[1] http://www.uni-ulm.de/uni/fak/zawiw/
[2] http://www.netzwerk-sii-bw.de/
[3] http://www.vile-netzwerk.de/
[4] http://www.digitale-chancen.de/

TAO/Free Cruise on the Internet

Aims

The project 'FFI – Freie Fahrt ins Internet' (Free Cruise on the Internet) aims at the improvement of older adults' online skills. The original partners of the public-private partnership were Berne University of Applied Sciences, Swisscom (the main telecom company in Switzerland), Coop (a wholesaler), seniorweb.ch (Switzerland's largest non-profit online community aimed at older adults), and ProSenectute (a foundation providing expertise and services on all matters regarding aging and old age). Meanwhile, the setup of partners has undergone some changes. The activities are strongly based on co-creation [1] with volunteers. The activity-based workshops for teaching basic skills are developed and taught by a teaching team of older adults. The teaching environment are cafés or other easy-to-access venues in shopping malls in several cities of German speaking Switzerland. In addition to the courses, a Help Point was established, aiming to provide general internet support to older adults.

Target Groups

Older adults with basic computer skills (e-mail and Google search) seeking a first experience of different online applications.

Approach

The first edition of Free Cruise on the Internet took place from October 2010 to June 2011 and consisted of the following phases :

- Ideation [2]: Based on the belief that the involvement of the stakeholders leads to better solutions, a broad discussion within the project steering board and the group of volunteers was started.
- Test: Validation of the developed concepts in real-life situations in a shopping mall.

Workshop Setting in a shopping mall in Bern.
Author: Willy Vogelsang

- Consolidation: From February to May 2011 4 workshops per week were carried out and a Help Point was provided during 3 days per week.
- Evaluation: During the consolidation phase participants', volunteers' and steering board members' satisfaction was evaluated.
- Multiplication: The same concept was implemented in further shopping malls in the German speaking part of Switzerland. At a later time, it is intended to transfer a similar workshop concept to retirement communities in the country.

The project is organized according to the following organizational units and/or roles:

- Ambassadors: Persons in this role are in charge of the Helpt Point. Their task is to encourage older adults' active use of the internet with face-to-face contact and to provide support outside the framework of the workshops.
- Instructors: For each workshop one person is in the lead with regard to planning and implementation.
- Assistants: Each workshop has two assistants. Because the focus of the workshop is rather on learning-by-doing than learning-by-teaching, the assistants move through the "classroom" and provide hands-on support.

Evaluation

The main results of the evaluation can be summarized as follows:

Participants

- Overall satisfaction: FFI-courses were highly appreciated by participants: most participants were(very) satisfied and praised the open attitude of the workshop moderators and the way they interacted with participants.
- Content: The content was appropriate for most of the participants. In future FFI-courses, participants would welcome ‘social media’ and the ‘connection between mobile phone and internet’ as new learning topics.
- Level of expertise: Participants suggested that the future FFI-communication should clearly indicate beforehand which level of expertise is recommended for each workshop. This would help avoid the great differences in computer skills observed in participants, which sometimes slowed down the flow of the workshop.
- Expectations: Male participants were somewhat less satisfied and their expectations somewhat less well met. The evaluation questionnaire could however not reveal the reasons for this. In any case, until these reasons are clarified, it would be useful to specifically ask for participants’ expectations during registration and/or at the beginning of the course.
- Sustainability: A month after the course, most participants indicated not to be using their new knowledge at home. The new skills had clearly not become a routine yet. Although the participants claimed to know “how it works”, the threshold to try it out by themselves was still quite high –and the older the participant, the higher the threshold. For some participants, there is a need for supervised practice-classes, in which they could freely experiment and refer to a tutor in case of questions.

Volunteers

- Overall satisfaction: The majority of the moderators, assistants and ambassadors perceived the first edition of FFI as a successful campaign. Most of them were willing to continue their commitment in the next edition of FFI. As they were not paid for their work, they appreciated specific other forms of recognition of their work from the management (e.g. structured feedback, sufficient time for chatting with other volunteers, coffee coupons, etc.).
- Content: The volunteers developed the workshop materials themselves. Some of them felt overchallenged by this task. But in the end they agreed that the process was useful and that they had produced reasonable results. Especially, the mix of a small amount of theory and a lot of practical exercises was acclaimed.
- Level of expertise: The disperse level of expertise among participants led to difficulties in the workshops. Proposed solutions are: Make the prerequisites of the workshops more explicit in the advertising; reserve enough time for the assisted exercises; provide different levels of complexity; provide a glossary of internet terminology.

- Organization: The volunteers asked for a continuation of the chosen path with a transparent flow of communication from the management and the steering board to the actors in the field.
- Sustainability: The volunteers expressed the wish for a development of measures to ensure the sustainability of FFI courses. For example, the creation of a strong knowledge management system to share expertise would greatly facilitate their efforts. They also agreed to apply the same workshop concept in other learning environments.

Recommendations

Based on our experience the main critical success factors can be summarized as follows:

Volunteers

- 'Seniors for Seniors' as the vision and motto
- Enthusiasm of the volunteers
- Group activities (co-design, co-creation) for the development

Teaching

- Learner-centered teaching with a lot of hands-on activities
- Guiding the learning process more by asking than by telling
- Handouts with simple, self-explanatory instructions and exercises

Workshop Instructos Are Assisted by Two Additional Volunteers. Author: Willy Vogelsang

Organization

- Committed sponsors
- Low-threshold location
- Use of mass-media as a booster for publicity
- Centralized administration and decentralized training of new workshop instructors
- Development of a PR strategy
- Establishment of a community of practice for workshop instructors and other interested parties in order to track and disseminate the lessons learned and to provide new instructors with the necessary information

Further Information

"Free Cruise on the Internet" on the website of TAO [3]

References

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Co-creation
[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ideation_(idea_generation)
[3] http://www.thirdageonline.eu/project-tao-2/community-activities/free-cruise-on-the-internet/

TAO/Online learning activities

Here you find activities specially designed for elders and to take place online or being accompanied by online activities. Persons interested in creating new modules are welcome to also present these here.

An Intergenerational Online Reading Project: "Kalte Zeiten"

Goal of the activity

The activity familiarizes pupils with the incidents happening in Poland at the end of the 2nd World War. Topics like what defines the place you call “home” can be discussed vividly on the background of the confusion the evictions caused in the post-war era, especially if the elders are able to bring in their own experiences.

Target Groups

The group that gets the information was mainly consisting of pupils in the 9th grade with 2/3 of them having a migrant background. The group providing the information was made up of seniors, who, in the some cases, were native polish or having a polish background. The whole activity was made up of roughly 40 people.

Process of the Activity

The activity is based on the book “Kalte Zeiten“[1] (German for cold times), which describes the troubles a young girl has to stand in Poland of the war and post-war era. The girl, Lena, born in Germany has to cope with forced labour, being separated from her family and never having known her original home. Her character is based on a true story.

Most of the exchange between the pupils and the elders took place in forums of the website kojala.de, so the elders could get in touch with internet forums in a closed space and give their views and experiences to pupils who got a chance to understand the book in another way than they would have through sole reading. In addition to this mostly open exchange there were some tasks the pupils had to execute and document in the forums, so some work on texts that traditionally takes place in class room was moved to the forums and “supervised“ by the seniors (and also the teacher). Besides the online exchange, so called "Story Telling Cafes" were held, at which both groups could meet each other face to face.

The project was held from April to July 2011 and repeated in another course at the end of 2011.

Partners

The partners for this project were

- ZAWiW Ulm [2]
- Elly-Heus-Realschule Ulm [3]
- Association „Virtuelles und reales Lern-und Kompetenznetzwerk älterer Erwachsener (ViLE) e.V.“ [4]

The project was supervised and supported by TAO.

Results

The evaluation of the virtual old-young learning project “Kalte Zeiten” is based on concomitant observation, statistics on participation and interviews with the participants.
Using the statistics on participation (posting of comments and page views), the dynamics of the virtual learning project can be shown as a curve (see graphic below). The orange curve shows the amount of page views in the forum. The blue columns represent the number of new comments (per day). The green lines stand for impulses (work assignments) given by the team or the teacher, e.g. by e-mail. The light blue line marks an “ErzählCafé” (story telling

cafe), in which the participants met personally. The learning project was bordered by school holidays.

It is obvious that the participants visited the project website quite often at the beginning of the project. Active comments were left far less often. The impulses (assignments, café) resulted in an increase of activity. It is interesting to see that work on the project continued during the holidays. Generally, the pupils rated the project positively. Of 25 interviewed pupils, 18 thought the project was an interesting addition to their usual lessons, and only one judged it clearly negatively. The seniors were generally also satisfied with the contact between young and old. Yet, it showed that technical problems made a regular participation in the project difficult for them, especially in the starting phase.

The topic of the project was interesting for seniors. It allowed them to tell their own experiences. Reflecting their own past and memories was deemed beneficial by the seniors. They thought the contact with younger people to be motivating, but would have preferred more opportunities for personal meetings. The old-young project not only shows that personal relations are particularly valued by participants in intergenerational learning processes, but also that these can be created online. The careful construction of intergenerational and online learning projects plays a very important role in this context. This is especially true for the form of collaboration (e.g. tandem, group work), the use of technology (e-mails, forums, chats, videoconferences etc.) and the support of the (self-) learning process through impulses.

References

[1] Kalte Zeiten, Werner Toporski, Random House / cbt Jugendbücher Verlag, ISBN 3-641-01023-3
[2] http://www.zawiw.de
[3] http://www.ehr.schule.ulm.de
[4] https://www.vile-netzwerk.de

TAO/Silver Knowledge

TAO/Silver Knowledge

Target groups:	representatives and multiplicators of senior- or education- institutions
Time window:	2011/11 to 2012/3
Completion [%]:	10%
Primary Language:	German
Maintainers:	User:Marquard_Markus

Aim of this learning activity

The Aim of this Learning activity is to support the multiplying and internationalizing of the actitivities of Silver Knowledge. The target group are representatives and multiplicators of senior or education institutions which want to take part in the project Silver Knowledge. This learning activity should be accompanied by the Wikipedia contributor and the TAO Researcher.

Starting point for Silver Knowledge

The international surveys of Wikipedia authors show that “age” is a very significant predictor of active contribution. Only 6.3% of Wikipedia authors are between 40 and 49 years of age, and people between 50 and 85 years – a span of more than three decades – make up only 5.2% of authors (Gosh, Glott 2010; http://www.wikipediasurvey.org).

The project Silberwissen is led by the association Wikimedia Deutschland e.V. in the framework of the AAL project TAO. The Centre for General Scientific Continuing Education (ZAWiW) of Ulm University consults and supports Wikimedia scientifically in its coordination of the project Silberwissen.

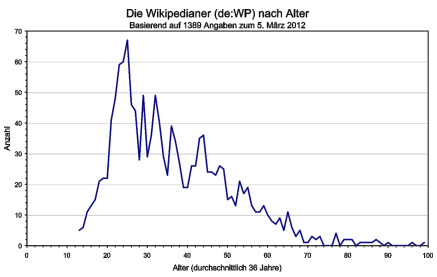


Diagram of the age from de.wikipedia-users, based on the site de:Wikipedia:Wikipedianer/nach Geburtsjahr

Objective of Silver Knowledge

The objective of Silver Knowledge are

- To win over and activate older persons as Wikipedia authors.
- To coach and support Wikipedia authors at regular meetings, to take part in editorial groups, workshops, and the mentoring program.
- To find additional locations of activity in cooperation with institutions, initiatives and local educational bodies, and – if possible – establish permanent structures.
- To develop community activities ensuring a sustainable activation and integration of senior authors in the Wikipedia community.

Activities of Silver Knowledge

As an initial stage of Wikipedia author training, interested seniors took part in a motivational presentation and a multi-part course or workshop at the different locations of activity. In selecting the locations a deliberate effort was made to choose cooperation partners that varied with regard to the type of institution, the range of offers, the main focus and target groups, and the priorities in the course of the project.
In the further course of the project seniors will continue to acquire competences and skills for the production of Wikipedia articles. This will be done at the respective locations by following an approach of small steps and sticking to a low-threshold communication. Apart from being trained as authors of original Wikipedia articles the activity options will also include new roles/tasks, e.g. the correction and amendment of existing articles (orthography and grammar), entering links to other sources and web pages, carrying out tasks of categorization as well as getting involved in related projects such as Wiki Commons and Wiki Sources etc.

Different approaches on several places

The activities of Silver Knowledge on several places have different approaches concerning to the organisation and the target groups.

To the Wikiversity site "Comparison of different locations of activity" [1]

Information for cooperation partners

On the basis of previous activities a checklist/an instruction was created for carrying out Silver Knowledge activities together with cooperation partners. It addresses the cooperation partners but it is as well useful for the Wikipedia speakers.

To the Wikiversity site "Information for cooperation partners" [2]

Senior authors, Berlin 2011, Photo by Elvira Schmidt, CC-BY-SA 3.0

Development of materials

For example a short introduction to write the first article in Wikipedia:

step for step to the first Article

1. Lemma (name/titel of the article): it must be short!
2. a good introduction: short and concise; Make the Importance clear at the beginning (relevance, for example performance or achievement by people)
3. write in a neutral tone (no enthusiasm, facts speak for themselves)
4. reduce to significant (no anecdotes, important facts, sometimes less is more)
5. provide evidence and references
6. only links with an actual connection
7. categories, personal data etc. could be made by experienced Wikipedians
8. Make articles well known (link)

Testimonials

"In Wikipedia bringe ich mein Know How aus 25 Jahren universitäre Lehre in den Naturwissenschaften ein. Zunächst habe ich nur einige Artikel verbessert, inzwischen konnte ich auch eine Reihe neuer Artikel publizieren."

Senior author, Ulm 2011, Photo by Elvira Schmidt, CC-BY-SA 3.0

References

[1] http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/TAO/Silver_Knowledge/Comparison_of_different_locations_of_activity
[2] http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/TAO/Silver_Knowledge/Information_for_cooperation_partners

TAO/Silver Knowledge/Comparison of different locations of activity

Comparison of different locations of activity

Several places with different approaches will be presented on this site to get an impression of the activities of Silver Knowledge. It is about the locations Worms (senior academy), Hilden-Haan (Volkshochschule) and Ulm (senior university), that will be compared with each other.

> *The comparison refers to a master´s thesis with the focus on researching the activities of Silver Knowledge concerning the methodical-didactic approach with regard to the activation and integration of seniors in Wikipedia. The analysis is based on individual interviews with coordinators of different institutions, Wikipedia speakers and participants as well as on an observation of the events.*[1]

Recommendations

Overall Recommendations

Recruiting suitable institutions

- The initial sceptism of an institution towards the project Silver Knowledge must be expected (e.g. because of a possible participation free of charge). Wikimedia Deutschland can dispel initial doubts by presenting the project at a local institution that gives information about the project.
- An esteeming attitude towards older people and their experiences seems to be an important link between an institution and the project Silver Knowledge.

  The identification of the institution with the idea of Silver Knowledge may facilitate a successful continuation of the project.
- The recruiting of an institution for the project Silver Knowledge and furthermore is connected with a successful recruitment of participants. A successful recruitment of participants and consequently an enlargement of the number of participants contributes to the willingness of an institution to carry on with the project.

Recruiting participants

- An identification of participants with an institution can make the recruitment of participants easier. A straight approach of established members especially in the field of the “Volkshochschule” (= adult education centre in Germany) could make sense for a successful recruiting of participants for future measures.
- If older people in employment should be addressed it should be ensured that all events take place at an adequate time.
- A wide choice of communication of the project is recommended, e.g. by an announcement of the project in the offering of an institution (e.g. in the program, on the institution´s website, etc.) or in the communal calendar of events. Newspaper articles in the local press including interviews with seniors who have already shown an interest in the activities may also be possible. Moreover a personal contact with potential participants as well as the correspondence with other local adult education centres or senior institutions should not be neglected.

  Existing connections to former participants in form of address or mailing lists can also be used. Furthermore, the deposit or distribution of flyers might be an option to make the project known locally.

Setting of the activities

- The setting of the activities, consisting of a motivational presentation and two workshop dates, seems to be adequate as a first step towards the implementation of the project at a location. Not only people who are from the beginning interested in getting a Wikipedia author, but also seniors who are just interested in Wikipedia´s mode

of operation as a user would feel concerned and may possibly discover their interest in getting a Wikipedia author in the course of the events.

- For participants who really want to get a Wikipedia author, three events are not enough, because many important matters can´t be discussed because of lack of time. It is therefore not recommended to let the participants be left to their own devices immediately after these events. Moreover the seniors should be assisted by an experienced Wikipedia author until after the measures.
- The implementation of a workshop should not last longer than four hours. A break is recommended in any case.

Content

- Some participants are especially interested in getting actively involved in the production of Wikipedia articles and less in being part of the Wikipedia community. But the integration in the Wikipedia community can be a helpful incentive for a senior to get active as an author in Wikipedia regularly. Therefore an own user account for every participant should be created in any case. This makes the participation in different Wikipedia sister projects and in writing Wikipedia articles much easier even for those authors, who are less interested in the community idea. In doing so, the created personal user namespace can be used as a sort of “sandbox” particularly in the context of the first steps as an author without having to expect the automatical cleaning or the overwriting of the content by other testing users.

Methods of instruction

- A round of introduction at the beginning of the first part of the course is recommended. Thus the participants will have the opportunity to present their experiences with Wikipedia and to name a topic which they could imagine to write a Wikipedia article about. This can also help the speakers to identify the fields of interest of the participants and the motivation behind their participation in the workshop. According to this, the realization of the course can be adapted. By realizing such a round of introduction the participants can also learn more about the other seniors and discover fields of common interest. It can even contribute to create a relaxed atmosphere, in which each participant feels free to ask or to comment on something.
- Some seniors have difficulties with the method of a step-by-step demonstration and they are not able to follow the speaker´s instructions straight away and at the same time work with their own computer. This is for example indicated by the repeated demands of the participants for a repetition of the demonstrated steps. Therefore, especially before important explanations are given, the participants should be required to only watch the demonstration before reconstructing the steps on their computer.
- In order to introduce the seniors to editing an article it makes sense to use the “sandbox” of their personal user namespace, since the changes that are carried out are not threatened by deletion as much as it occurs in Wikipedia articles or the general Wikipedia sandbox. This way of introducting is also recommended as the editing of an existing article takes much more preliminary work before the editing can actually be made.
- To illustrate the possibilities of collaborative working in Wikipedia the speakers may suggest to the participants that they swap the computer workstation in the classroom. Thus, the seniors will realize that after the successful editing of an article it is now available on every computer using the internet and can be edited by any user.
- Homework that can be done voluntarily can be considered as a specific tool to use the limited time during the events more effectively and to prevent the participants from forgetting the previously discussed topics.

  This preparatory work can also lead to an increased motivation, as in this way the participants’ individual interests can better be picked up in the workshop and in addition to that a feeling of success can be expected earlier.

Use of media and materials

- Using a presentation at the beginning of the first event is helpful to communicate the most important background information about Wikipedia, that are not easily accessible to the participants, such as the idea of free content or the ideals behind other Wikipedia ideals.

As soon as it refers to the integration of the seniors as Wikipedia authors, the “live” broadcast of Wikipedia should be used, since Wikipedia is an interactive project that keeps changing and never looks the same.

- In the workshops the use of their own laptop computer is recommendable for some participants. These seniors often don´t complain as much about the handling of the computer as those participants using someone else´s computer (e.g. of the institution.)

Participants with a common field of interest

- Indeed a common field of interest may increase the sense of belonging of each individual in the group of participants, but if the speaker pursues an individual support of the participants in the workshop it is less important than in teamwork practices.
- But if there are common interests in a group of participants, they certainly can be used for cooperative practices, and thus relieve the speakers in their duties. Therefore thematically focused groups of participants seem to be predestined for cooperative learning in a team.

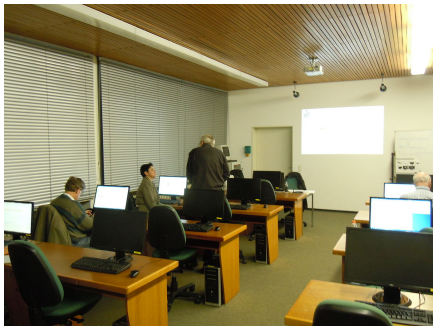
Relationship between the participants and the speakers

- Creating a relaxed personal relationship between the participants and the speaker is very important. It can help to increase the impact of the educational measures by maintaining the intrinsic motivation of the participants. It also contributes to a pleasant learning environment in which the participants have no inhibitions about asking questions. Furthermore it can enhance identification of participants with the institution.
- The interviewed participants associate the speaker´s effort to create an atmosphere of trust with the fact that he tries to pick up all their questions. For the participants the reports on his own experiences as a Wikipedia author indicate as well, that the speaker is trying to create a relaxed personal relationship. These reports may also transfer to the seniors the speaker´s enthusiasm as a Wikipedia author.

Relationship between the participants

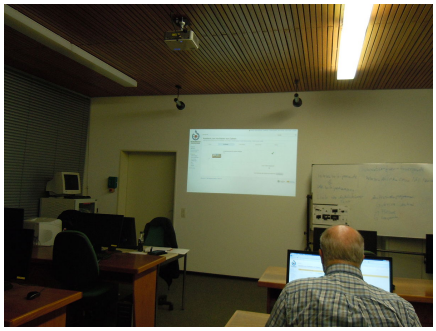
- The fact that the participants of a measure already know each other is extremely valuable in some speaker´s estimation, because in this way the participants are often less self-conscious and are not afraid of making a fool of themselves. Moreover, the willingness to help each other is higher than among strangers. Activities that strengthen the personal relationship among the participants (e.g. rounds of introduction, breaks in which they can communicate with each other, etc.) may therefore be recommended especially in groups in which the participants have not met each other before.

Location of activity in Hilden-Haan (Volkshochschule)



Silver Knowledge event in Hilden-Haan

Noticeable problems



Silver Knowledge event in Hilden-Haan

Location of activity in Worms (senior academy)

Location of activity in Ulm (ZAWiW: Spring academy)

Silver Knowledge event in Worms

References

[1] Annette Kintzi (2012): Seniors and online communities: analysis of educational measures to activate and integrate seniors in the online community Wikipedia within the framework of the project >Silberwissen<. PH Heidelberg.

TAO/Silver Knowledge/Information for cooperation partners

Information und check list to plan a series of "Silver Knowledge" events for Wikipedia

Logo "Silver Knowledge"

A Silver Knowledge course addresses interested persons 50plus. The idea behind is to make them known participation possibilities in the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia (e.g. http:// / en. wikipedia. org) as well as to explain the goal and meaning of "free content". At the same time this offers serves to increase the attractivity of your institution.

A course consists of three parts (modules):

1. Workshop, part 1 (What is the Wikipedia and how does it work?)
2. Workshop, part 2 (e.g. basic knowledge about editing in Wikipedia)
3. Workshop, part 3 (e.g. adding own photos)

The participants should come from the institution's target group. But PR work it is recommended as well to address a wide public for the participation in the course. The modules of the course are based on each other and require the participation in all three events. Interested persons who would like to work collaboratively and who are ready to contribute are addressed.

Speaker for the three modules is an experienced Wikipedia author. The contact will be arranged by the national chapter of Wikimedia. It is expected that the event will be well prepared. The speaker is a freelancer of the national chapter of Wikimedia. As soon as a speaker is found for your event you may contact him for arrangements about dates and details.

At first general basics about active use of the Wikipedia and if necessary sister projects will be communicated, e.g. editing in the Wikipedia, uploading of own photos and linking with articles. Furthermore it is possible to offer events about specific subjects respectively for advanced learners after an appropriate agreement.

The following checklist serves to plan and prepare the event:

Basic conditions

Premises:

- good transport links and well perceptible accessibility inside the building (if necessary signpost the way), if necessary access suitable for disabled,
- a room equipped with computers and sufficient workplaces for all participants
- usual good conditions, ideally an area for breaks

Technical equipment:

- a computer with mouse per participant (touchpads are possibly difficult for older persons), a computer with mouse, digital projector, projection surface, moderation material/flipchart/pinboard for the speaker according to the agreement with him, access to the Internet for speaker and participants
- please contact in advance the speaker to arrange and to coordinate the technical equipment, used standards, software, access data etc. in details
- stable Internet connection/Wi-Fi

Times:

- between 2.5 and 5 hours, enough time for explanations and exercises, duration per workshop to be arranged individually, also according to the expected staying power of the participants
- the exact temporal scale should be arranged with the speaker
- the three dates should be arranged with the speaker and should be in close temporal connection, separate days are possible or e.g. a whole weekend
- if there is the need for further exercises and for questions we check the possibility for further workshops with pleasure

Contents

- the speaker is responsible for the contents, learning materials will be provided by him or by the national chapter of Wikimedia
- basic information about Wikipedia, free content and collaborative possibilities are in the foreground
- specific wishes about subjects need to be arranged in advance and in time with the speaker, if necessary further dates need to be arranged or experts from the pool of speakers need to be found

Target group

- the events should be accessible to all interested persons of the target group 50plus - they shall be gained as authors of Wikipedia and its sister projects [e.g. Commons for media data (http://commons.wikimedia.org) for example for photos; WikiSource as a collection of source texts (e.g. http://en.wikisource.org)]
- maximum ten persons should be gained as participants per workshop to safeguard the individual support of the participants. The minimum number of participants is five. Please arrange this with the speaker, too.

Public relations

- in time dissemination of the invitation with dates and places by the usual media of the institution (printed, website, mailinglist, entry of the date in an online community, ...)
- press information
- flyers, posters
- reporting about the project before its start or after the event
- if nationally available you may receive a flyer about Silver Knowledge from the national chapter of Wikimedia

Evaluation

If an institution evaluates Silver Knowledge events please support it. Also the speakers and the national chapters of Wikimedia are interested in feedback. Please support them, e.g. distribution of questionnaires if you receive them.

Prospect

The national chapter of Wikimedia aims at considering the series of events at your place as starting point for a long-term Wikipedia project there. If for example the participants see the need for further meetings/exchange of experiences or if they are looking for advice of an experienced speaker it would be nice if you could provide adequate rooms for this purpose.

For the German chapter of Wikimedia the contact persons for questions are:

Dr. Elvira Schmidt or Cornelia Trefflich

E-Mail: silberwissen@wikimedia.de [1]

Tel: +49 30 21 91 58 26-0

Silver Knowledge is called in German Silberwissen. It is a project of "Wikimedia Deutschland - Gesellschaft zur Förderung Freien Wissens e.V.": http://wikimedia.de/wiki/Silberwissen.

Information about the German chapter of Wikimedia: „Wikimedium“ (in German, http:/ / wikimedia. de/ wiki/ Vereinszeitung).

References

[1] mailto:silberwissen@wikimedia.de

TAO/Wikimedia Seniors Outreach

This page contains an overview of approaches pursued by various organizations and individuals to gain seniors as contributors to Wikipedia and its sister projects. The list of projects may not be complete - if you are aware of any other approaches, please add them or leave a note on the talk page.

Courses and workshops to gain seniors as contributors

Several chapters and individual Wikipedians have developed courses or workshops targeted at older adults in order to encourage them to become active contributors to Wikipedia.

Silberwissen, Worms

Wikimedia Germany: Project Silberwissen

(multiplication; transfer to other countries?)

- Offline lectures and courses (workshops) of various formats at various locations
- 2011: Collaborations with 4 Universities of Third Age (Volkshochschulen / Seniorenuniversitäten), 3 thematic groups, and 1 senior group; Goal for 2012: Activities at 20 locations.
- 2011: 20 presentations/workshops with 125 participants; Goal for 2012: 40 presentations/workshops with 240 participants
- 2011: 14 presenters/instructors from within the Wikimedia/Wikipedia community; Goal for 2012: 30 presenters/instructors
- 2011: 1 train-the-trainers workshop, online forum for instructors; Goal for 2012: Development of the train-the-trainers programme
- Result 2011: Only few participating seniors became active contributors; Goal for 2012: Conversion rate of 5%

Further information: Silver Knowledge

Contact person: Elvira Schmidt, Wikimedia Germany (elvira.schmidt@wikimedia.de)

Amical Viquipèdia Association, Catalunya: Talks and workshops at elderly centers

(multiplication)

- 2011: 19 talks were held at 19 different locations throughout Catalonia, mostly at neighborhood elderly centers (ca. 200 participants)
- 7 volunteer editors participated
- Positive experience for both participants and volunteers
- For 2012, follow-up events are planned in some of the centers. Focus: easy ways of contributing. Extension to further centers.

For further information see:

- 2011 Report

Contact person: Kippelboy

Wikimedia CH: Wikipedia introductory courses to gain new contributors

(pilot phase)

- Offline courses and workshops for seniors
- A first series of courses was carried out in fall 2011 at the University of Third Age in Lausanne - with mixed success

Poland: Wikimedia courses to gain older people as contributors

(pilot phase)

Wikipedia Workshop

A series of Wikiworkshops for people aged 50+ were undertaken in Łódź, Poland in January-April 2012. It was organized together with local cultural center's senior club "OKG [1]". Around 20 people who had basic, paid, computer course before, participated in the free Wikipedia workshops. They listened to the lectures and editing presentation with great interest, but found editing very hard. Among others - they had no idea about what to write. There were only two exceptions - a former policemen who started editing articles about Polish legal system, and the member of local heritage association who started to upload some pictures and expanding articles about local monuments. Except Wikipedia - also other Wikimedia projects were presented - especially Commons and Wikisource. A former teacher found interesting Wikisource and started proof-reading/writing text in Polish Wikisource. In order to activate the rest of the people a mapping party - together with people from OpenStreetMap Poland was organized. It produced a lot of fun for participants, but editing OpenStreetMap was found by them even harder than editing Wikipedia.

See

- Page on Wikimedia Polska website [2]

- Page on OKG center [3]
- Category on Commons [4]

OpenStreetMap mapping

Using Wiki Loves Monuments (WLM) to reach out to older adults

Several chapters have used the Wiki Loves Monuments Photo Contest to Reach out to Seniors. For an overview of activities carried out in relation to the 2011 contest, please refer to the Summary Report [5]

Wikimedia CH

- Official partnership with a online community for seniors (www.seniorweb.ch): communication to its members via newsletter, article in online magazine, official blog for the contest, official "liaison" person within the seniors community to ask questions to the WLM project manager, contributions in the photographers' forum of the seniors online community

Report on WLM-related seniors outreach in Switzerland in 2011

Wikimedia Germany

- WLM-workshop with one of the Silberwissen groups in Potsdam

Contact person: Elvira Schmidt, Wikimedia Germany (elvira.schmidt@wikimedia.de)

Wikimedia Netherlands

- Partnership with an online community for seniors (www.seniorweb.nl): usability testing of the upload forms, communication to its member base via newsletter (ca. 140'000 subscribers), organization of its own photo safari, mobilization of members for photo safaris organized by Wikimedia NL

Associating seniors to the writing of WP articles without asking them to become active on the platform

Yger (Sweden): Contacting Local Heritage Associations

- Objective: Write an article about each of the 2500-3000 local parishes in Sweden
- There are around 2000 local heritage associations for these parishes, mainly made up of old persons (70+, 80+)
- Very uneven IT-knowledge, many don't know how to handle e-mail correctly
- Approach chosen: consult each local heritage association about the article about their parish (with mixed results, only 15% responses, some valuable, but often not)
- New approach: Get GLAM institutions actively involved in providing info to Wikipedia (good progress); tell old heritage associations they are part of the GLAM sector and that they should follow suit (they have high esteem of museums etc, but low esteem of IT ”brats”)

Strategic partnerships with senior organizations

References

[1] http://gorna.nazwa.pl/SENIOR/index.php
[2] https://pl.wikimedia.org/wiki/Warsztaty_OKG
[3] http://gorna.nazwa.pl/INFORMATYKA/WIKIMEDIA/index.php
[4] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Wikiwarsztaty_%C5%81%C3%B3d%C5%BA_2012
[5] http://www.thirdageonline.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Wiki-Loves-Monuments-2012-June.pdf

TAO/Online Co-Creation

In 2011, research was conducted on the current usage of SeniorWebNL’s web contact possibilities, which has given the organization insights in present context and practices of the offered services such as forums, mailing lists and their corporate social networking site ‘Trefpunt’. Within this part of the research project SeniorWebNL needs to determine the functions and user requirements to fulfill the needs of their members with regard to the development and reformation of the web contact possibilities. Therefore, two co-creation sessions were organized: an offline ‘world café’ and this explorative variant of the same research methodology online (further referred to as ‘online co-creation’).

Methodology and data

In order to explore the participatory potential of an online variant of the research method ‘world café’, similar group discussions were organized in an online co-creation environment around the same topics as the offline world café: doing & sharing, how & why and learning. The aim of this setting for informal, open collaboration between participants is to share and generate new ideas about the web contact services by SeniorWebNL.

The choice of an appropriate online co-creation platform was based on several requirements.

- First, the platform had to facilitate real time communication between multiple participants, in order to simulate an offline group conversation as good as possible. Features like voice over IP, webcams and a shared workspace or desktop were considered necessary to accomplish this.
- Second, supportive features for structuring group communication such as chat possibilities were desirable. Also, the interface of the platform had to be user-friendly to seniors, which excluded too complicated platforms with too much features that would just confuse the senior participants.

- Furthermore, the platform had to work on both Apple and Windows operating systems and be accessible through different Internet browsers.

The platform 'Adobe Connect' was chosen because it matched these criteria and was already available in the project.

The initial research methodology was based on the online co-creation by participants from their individual home settings. This way, it would be possible to gather insights in the potential usage of this methodology in the future by SeniorWebNL to co-create with their members in an online, open, informal way. The advantage of such an online platform for participation of members in SeniorWebNL's innovation processes is that they do not have to attend a physical location anywhere in the country, which can possibly form a barrier to participation due to senior's reduced mobility.

However, in mutual consultation between the researchers and SeniorWebNL was decided to first explore the potential of online co-creation from a more controlled environment than the members' individual home settings. This decision was based on the grounded belief that technological challenges and difficulties could stifle online co-creation between participants and, in a worst case scenario, could cause undesirable agitation in SeniorWebNL's members' community. Therefore, it was decided to simulate several home settings at SeniorWebNL's headquarters in the city of Utrecht, where participants all were offered their own room and a researcher to assist with technological difficulties if necessary. The given assistance and the safe, controlled environment should be taken into account in regard to the results and conclusions based on these explorative sessions.

During the first session, the research methodology was explored in its most open form of online co-creation between the participants, without interventions in the group's conversation and work. Therefore, the first session was peer-moderated by the participants, enabling a better and more natural social climate within the group dynamics. Contrarily to the first session, the second was not peer-moderated but moderated by a discussant, a role performed by one of the present researchers.

Qualitative research data from the two organized online co-creation sessions was gathered mainly by screen capturing and audio-recording of the sessions. Also, a short printed survey was taken among the participants and comprised background control variables such as age and gender and a self-estimation by participants of their experience with online communication software like voice over IP and chatting.

Complementary, as a try out for the non-simulated real home settings from the participants, a third session was planned to take place with some of the participants from the first two controlled-setting sessions. Unfortunately, they indeed encountered too may technical difficulties and this is why the third online session had to be cancelled after 15 minutes.

Recruitment

Both SeniorWebNL's members and ambassadors (volunteers that take care of training, assistance and teaching) were invited to voluntarily participate in the online co-creation sessions through SeniorWebNL's newsletter mailing, which goes out to over a 100.000 members, and through the so-called 'members panel'. A special notion was made in the invitation that in particular seniors with some experience in online communication tools were invited to participate, but less-experienced seniors were not to be excluded. In the first and second session, respectively four and five members participated.

Procedure

Both the online co-creation sessions were organized on the 18th of April 2012 at SeniorWebNL's headquarters in the city of Utrecht, where five separate rooms were available to simulate the distance of the seniors when participating from their home setting. All the rooms in this controlled environment were equipped with a desktop computer with microphone and webcam, on which the Adobe Connect platform was pre-installed and tested already.

Before the start of the sessions, one held in the morning and one in the afternoon, the groups were welcomed and requested to fill in the short survey. Then the session started with a short introduction to the research project and a plenary introduction to Adobe Connect, its features and the topics and assignments. We have also requested permission to record both the screen (video) and audio during the sessions.

Participants then had to split up and go to their 'own' room, accompanied by a research assistant who functioned as a facilitator, offering assistance when the participant encountered technical problems with the microphone, webcam, etc.

Both the peer-moderated session and the discussant-moderated session took about 2 hours. In this time, the peer-moderated group of participants focused on assignments about 'doing & sharing' online and the topic 'how & why'. The other group focused on assignments for the topic 'learning'. The assignments were designed as presentation slides in the collaborative workspace in Adobe Connect, where participants could each write or draw their own input. Each session was closed with an evaluation of the session with the participants.

A third online session was organised on the 3rd of May 2012 to evaluate the first two sessions online with the available participants. This created also the possibility to verify whether the participants were able to work in an online environment in their home situation, i.e. a non-controlled environment.

Topics

For each online co-creation session, one or two topics were assigned, comparable with the offline world-café sessions. The topic 'doing & sharing', applied in the first session, was focused on the current online activities of the participants, which activities they would like to perform together with other SeniorWebNL's members and what kind of information they would like to share. The second topic 'how & why', also included in the first session, was focused on how members would prefer to have contact with each other online and why in that specific way. The second session was entirely dedicated to the topic of 'learning', which is one of the key topics in SeniorWebNL's services. Here we focused on the potential of learning online, together with fellow SenioWebNL members, and the subjects one would like to learn about.

Data processing

Both the online co-creation sessions were, with the permission of the participants, recorded by screen- and audiocapturing. The evaluation conversation with the participants afterwards was also recorded in both video and audio file format. All these qualitative data files were processed anonymously and used in addition to the notes taken during the sessions.

The very small quantitative dataset collected with the short printed questionnaire was processed in a database with IBM SPSS Statistics.

Analysis

The results of the two online co-creation sessions with SeniorWebNL's members are analyzed per session and topic. In the first session, 5 members participated of which three men and 2 women, with an average age of over 68 years old (M = 68,50, SD = 10,53). The second session's participants group consisted of three men and one woman with an average age of 70 years old (M = 70,00, SD = 2,94).

Evaluation

An important observation points to the reasons why and how online applications are used by elderly. Whereas SeniorWebNL (SWNL) as an organization also aims at increasing the use of online applications to build relationships and stimulate online collaboration between their members, participants repeatedly indicated that they use SWNL's online applications mainly for practical reasons. According to SWNL, members of the organization can benefit from their online applications, as they offer a great variety of services available. Nevertheless, older persons appear to use the organization's services mainly to solve problems, raise questions, and obtain information about developments within the organization. During the different co-creation sessions all participants mentioned not being open to having contact with other members for social reasons. However, in their private lives they frequently contact relatives through various online applications. Yet, this is often also because of a practical point of view. The fact that the idea of increasing engagement in online activities is based on a somewhat incorrect assumption is self-evident.

Another important observation includes the use of online applications. The online co-creation sessions allowed us to observe and analyze how older persons deal with non-daily used computer applications such as Adobe Connect. The differences between the first and second session were noteworthy, since - during the second session - the participants were unable to install their microphones, leading to an early end of the session. The preconceived image which was included in the research method appeared as rather true. Nevertheless, one can question whether the participants' knowledge of installing hardware is applicable to all older persons. The problems could also be generated by a lack of knowledge on how to assist elderly online. Evidently, it appears that this method is more appropriate for the comparison of research methods than for obtaining relevant output, as the concrete output regarding the improvement of web contact services was less satisfactory.

TAO/SeniorWebNL's online contact services

Members' analysis

Before implementing any actions or activities, UM-MERIT and SeniorWebNL conducted a study on the demographics of the SeniorWebNL members and the use of SeniorWebNL's web contact services. The purpose of this study was to identify patterns and structures within the SeniorWebNL members that could later possibly help to tailor new services and products better to the needs of the target group.

The current web contact services that are offered by SeniorWebNL through their website are the following:

- Mailing lists
- Forum
- Trefpunt, a social networking feature
- Fotowedstrijd, a photo contest
- Vraag & Aanbod (or Marktplaats), a classified advertising site

Besides those interactive web contact services, the more passive web contact possibility of PCHulp, PC assistance, is also included in the analysis. The reason to include these (partly offline) activities in our analysis is that obviously these services are very effective means for SeniorWebNL to attract new members, to bind members over time, and to acquaint members with the online offerings of SeniorWebNL [1]. The PC assistance has two features, either online, via the website, or offline, face-to-face at home. At the same time, especially the mailing lists and the forum also offer SeniorWebNL members the possibility of IT learning and solving IT problems.

Methodology and data

For the analysis of SeniorWebNL's members' demographics and the use of SeniorWebNL's web contact possibilities several databases were formatted into CSV files and these were merged into one single SPSS database. The different databases included the regular members' database, the ambassadors' database (ambassadors are the volunteers of SeniorWebNL that give trainings, PC assistance and classes) and the various databases of the website, the online forum, Trefpunt and mail group platforms. The collected data were also processed in SPSS. Not the complete history of the different databases could be checked, simply since some of the data only started later or was reset in the past years. In general most of the data are from the past 4 to 6 years.

The member database had 114.003 members at the moment of analysis (February 2011). This database (with geographical and demographic information) was combined with the user databases of the mailing list system, the forum, the photo contest, Vraag & Aanbod and Trefpunt and also the archives of the PC assistance database.

Members' analysis

Analyzing the SeniorWebNL members' database, among other observations, the share of males is slightly bigger than the share of women, and most members join SeniorWebNL between the age of 65 and 75 years. Interestingly, SeniorWebNL manages successfully to attract also a considerable share of persons in the so-called fourth age (76 and older), a group that is usually considered to be aligned with diseases, inactivity and isolation. Assumably, SeniorWebNL's services capture the need of those in the fourth age that are still active and healthy enough. Since TAO focuses on persons in the third age, this phenomenon was not further investigated in our study and remains thus as a subject for future research. The Fourth age is defined 76 and older with reference to Lähteenmäki & Kaikkonen (2004), Lamdin & Fugate (1997) and Williamson & Aslab (2009). Besides the aforementioned, there are no particular observations that really stand out as interesting.

Web contact services

In the following table an overview is presented of the different web contact services and compared to the general SeniorWebNL members database:

- The percentage of users using the service
- The percentage of male and female users
- The average age of the users
- The percentage of the different age groups

For the active users (users of mailing groups, forum and/or Trefpunt), 10.522 are using only one web contact service. 2.773 members and 665 members are using respectively two and three services. In total, 13.960 members (12,2 %) are users of the SeniorWebNL web contact services.

In the following part we will present several observations per web contact service.

	General	**Mail lists**	**Mail groups**	**Dig classes**	**Forum**	**Trefpunt**	**Marktplaats**	**Photo**	**PC Assistance**	**PC Assistance at home**	**PC Assistance via Internet**
Users	114003	6923	5558	1721	4917	6223	1838	1771	30046	12388	24023
% users	100,0%	6,1%	4,9%	1,5%	4,3%	5,5%	1,6%	1,6%	26,4%	10,9%	21,1%
Gender	n=113300	n=6910	n=5548	n=1717	n=4904	n=6208	n=1835	n=1771	n=29945	n=12352	n=23945
Male	56,5%	47,3%	46,9%	47,4%	63,2%	60,6%	58,1%	51,3%	63,7%	57,8%	66,9%
Female	43,5%	52,7%	52,9%	52,6%	36,7%	39,4%	41,9%	48,7%	36,3%	42,2%	33,1%
Age	n = 109916	n = 6761	n = 5435	n = 1675	n = 4810	n = 6099	n = 1797	n = 1737	n = 29133	n = 11971	n = 23342
Avg. age	70,6	70	70	71	70	70	69,8	68	72	73	71,7

Mailing lists: Mailing groups & digital classes

For our research we split the mailing lists topic-wise to mailing groups (social contacts, hobby clubs and interests) and digital classes (learning groups for software and/or hardware).

- 6923 members make use of the different mailing lists SeniorWebNL offers.
- For all mailing lists, i.e. both mailing groups and digital classes, more women are making use of this web contact service.

Forum

- Almost 80% of the forum users (who subscribed to the forum) did not post anything or only once.
- There is a very small ‘elite’ of 17 members that all posted over 1000 messages.

This observation seems to suggest that the forum is rather used as a passive “news service” by the vast majority of the SeniorWebNL members than as an interactive communication platform. If this interpretation is true it might have implications for the introduction of Web 2.0 services, which are designed for interactive usage. If the members’ behaviour at the forum indicates a general reluctance to interactive services it is likely that Web 2.0 services will face significant ignorance or even resistance. However, it might also be the case that the forum and/or its contents do not attract others to share their opinions and suggestions. Whether or not the activities that have meanwhile started to implement Web 2.0 services will have success and incite more members to actively create and share content will be proven within the next months.

Marktplaats

- Marktplaats or Vraag en Aanbod, the classified advertisement part of the website, counts 1838 users.
- These users posted 3737 ads, which is almost two per user.
- The average user is slightly younger than most SeniorWebNL members.

Photo contest

- The photo contest counts 1771 users of SeniorWebNL's current members.
- The database counts a total of 1946 members and these members uploaded a stunning amount of 37446 photos.
- With an average of 68 year old, the photo contest user is also a bit younger than the average SeniorWeb NL members.

PC assistance

- 12.388 members already made use of PC assistance at home.
- The PC assistance at home team got 24892 calls of which 23343 got solved, i.e. 93,8%.
- Almost double as many members, 24.023, made use of PC assistance via Internet.
- Here, 94646 out of 101984 calls got solved, i.e. 92,8%.
- Almost 40% and 60% made different calls for respectively PC assistance at home and via Internet.
- With 30.046 unique members making use of PC assistance, this service is by far the most popular interactive service from SeniorWebNL (26,4% of the members use it).

Google Analytics

With regard to the forum and Trefpunt, the number of created profiles does not reveal the real use or about the activity of the participants. There are not only many members who only created a profile, but also quite some lurkers. The website visitors and page view statistics are more conclusive for this purpose. To analyse these statistics, Google Analytics was used to compare the different web contact services.

The biggest differences between amount of users and amount of visitors and page views can be found at the forum and at Trefpunt. Trefpunt has a very limited number of users, with 5.5% of the members having a profile. But only 2% of website visitors visit this part of the website. SeniorWebNL already indicated that this is a self-built application they have on their website and the maintenance and answering the questions by staff members cost a lot of time. The forum scores the best ratings (7%). Especially after publication of the newsletter there are always peaks in the amount of visitors and page views. On the other hand, only 0.9% of the members post messages.

From quantative to qualitative data

SeniorWebNL web contact services are offered in different flavours. More than 10% of the members and visitors use these services. They fulfil several functions:

- Help / learn from each other
- Expanding social network and the member's life world (one can talk to people he would not meet in his traditional environments)
- The web contact services serve as the human face of SeniorWebNL as an association, this is the best opportunity for the members to have direct interactions with the organisation.
- Opportunity for the members to express themselves in new forms and contexts (e.g. photo contest) and to gain reputation that cannot be gained at home or in circles of the family or friends.

To analyse and elaborate on these functions, complementary qualitative research is needed. In the second part of the exploration phase and preliminary research this is provided by several focus group conversations.

Focus group conversations on web contact services

Methodology and data

In order to analyse the motivations behind the usage of the web contact possibilities, different series of focus group conversations were organised with SeniorWebNL members. Focus groups have been introduced by Merton et al. in the 1950s. They study people in an atmosphere more natural and relaxed than a one-to-one interview and this setting creates the possibility to explore unanticipated issues as they arise in the discussion. Focus groups are useful for introducing and discussing new technologies, since the group interaction is used to "produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group" (Morgan, 1988, p. 12).

In the following sections we give more information about the recruitment of the respondents, about the followed procedure and the central themes of the conversation. Finally, we give a word of explanation about the processing of the data.

Recruitment

Through a small poll on the web contact possibilities of SeniorWebNL members were asked to fill in their usage and interest in a focus group conversation. The recruitment for the focus group conversations was done on the basis of these poll results.

For every web contact possibility (mailing groups, forum, Trefpunt) a separate focus group conversation was organised and next to that, conversations were set up for multi-users, being members that use all three web contact possibilities, and non-users, being members that do not use the web contact possibilities, or that are drop-outs from these possibilities. The obvious purpose of the selection of these groups was to capture different typical groups with regard to usage patterns of SeniorWebNL's offerings.

The following planning was handled:

- April/May 2011: Setting up focus group target groups
- Creating topic list and survey
- May/June 2011: Selection and invitations
- 20/6/2011 - Focus group: mailing group users (Maastricht)
- 21/6/2011 - Focus group: forum users (Utrecht)
- 27/6/2011 - Focus group: multi-users (Utrecht)
- 27/6/2011 - Focus group: non-users (Utrecht)
- 28/6/2011 - Focus group: Trefpunt users (Den Bosch)

Procedure

The focus group interviews always applied the following procedure:

- Reception of the participants;
- Request of permission to record the conversation (audio and video);
- A short presentation about the project, the goals of the focus group conversation and the upcoming topics;
- A round of introducing each other;
- Discussion about the several topics (see below);
- Completion of the interview after 1.5 to 2 hours;
- Acknowledgment of all participants and issue of incentives.

Topics

For focus group conversations it is recommended to be flexible with the questionnaire. Thus, better responses can be expected in the natural dynamics of a group discussion. The focus group interviews in this research were structured according to various topics and their related questions. The overarching themes are the same themes that are used in this analysis.

The topic list for the focus group conversations:

- General online use and web contact
- Web contact possibilities SeniorWebNL
- Online contact possibilities outside of SeniorWebNL
- Future: remarks, improvements, comments, compliments

Data processing

One researcher and one employee of SeniorWebNL were present during all focus group conversations. All conversations were recorded with at least one camera and an audio recorder. The conversations are summarized in accordance with the themes.

Analysis

SeniorWebNL general

The SeniorWebNL members are very satisfied with the service and very loyal. The website provides a protected environment (technical and personal) and is experienced as a very reliable experience. On the other hand the invited SeniorWebNL members are quite conservative. The participants do not want change. Proposed changes of the services are therefore not really appreciated.

Web contact services

Apparently, the SeniorWebNL members are quite picky. They typically use no other senior or computer (learning) websites. Most of them only use one web contact service offered by SeniorWebNL and stick to that. The participants agree that learning from and helping each other is very important. They experience it as a stimulant. They want to discover all aspects of using computers and the Internet (together) and not stay behind.

Personal contact is perceived as very important by the users of the web contact services. The atmosphere and the usefulness of the information are decisive factors in the continued use of a service. The participants do not mind ‘lurkers’, since they do this themselves a lot.

According to the participants, the web contact services fulfill two important functions:

- To encourage, learn & help
- Social contacts, friendships, also offline (to overcome loneliness)

Experiences with the web contact services:

- Mail groups users experienced receiving emails in their mailbox as a stimulant, it is experienced as more personal than reading emails or posts on a website.
- Forum users favoured that you only read the threads or posts that you're interested in.
- Trefpunt users appreciate the coziness and the superficiality of the service.

For beginners, it is difficult to get used to these services (probably true for all of SeniorWebNL). They are technically not experienced with these services, but are easily helped with tips and tricks from experienced users (for example how to create an additional email address for the receiving post from the Mail Groups). Also with regard to a personal level of contact it would be better to get started with a little help, since beginners often have the impression to join a close circle of friends, where it is difficult to settle. Finally, quarreling and brawling deters many participants.

Social media and other Web 2.0 services

SeniorWebNL's services are - compared to other social networking sites (SNS) - experienced as very user-friendly. Other SNS, such as Facebook, Hyves and Twitter, are seen by many participants as a threat to privacy, as impersonal and as something you will never get rid of. Members who make little or no use of SNS consider avid users (such as children and grandchildren) as addicted to the Internet. All participants read Wikipedia articles, but never wrote or edited.

Thresholds and drivers

Thresholds for using web contact possibilities:

- Abundance of (irrelevant) information
- Not user-friendly interfaces
- Fear of violation of privacy
- Fear of becoming addicted
- Online disputes between SWNL members

Drivers for using web contact possibilities:

- Connection to a personal interest/hobby
- Fast solution to or support with computer problems
- Pleasant contact with other SWNL members
- Learning and keeping pace
- Offline meetings

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TAO/Seniorweb.ch

Background

Seniorweb.ch is a platform that targets an audience ages 50 and up. It offers opportunities for collaborative and self-directed learning. With e-learning seniors can learn at any time and any place, the subject matter can be selected based on individual preferences and they can take breaks and repeat the material as often as they likes. Seniorweb helps:

- to introduce offliners: People, who are currently not active online or who are hardly ever online, are shown the possibilities the Internet has to offer and especially introduced to the wealth of opportunities that seniorweb.ch provides;
- to support beginners: Show beginners the possible forms of use, develop simple online tools and provide support to them in their first steps to becoming independent;
- to socialize skilled users: Show skilled seniorweb.ch users the possibilities an online community has to offer and motivate them to actively participate in a collaborative learning arrangement;
- to organize active users among themselves: Teach active members the skills they need to develop and offer new learning arrangements on their own.

Concepts

Technical tools

There are three categories of technical tools. The tools depend on the educational objectives and the didactic methods:

- “You know that” (Distribution): The purpose of the first category of tools is to convey knowledge within a sense of a teacher oriented and instructionalist approach. The objective is to tap into new fields of knowledge.
- “You know how” (Interaction): This category involves tools that emphasize human-computer interaction. For example, simulation programs re applied to practice certain skills.
- “Knowing in action” (Collaboration): Here, the Internet is used as a communication medium. The focus here is on mutually developing new knowledge or solving problems in collaboration with others.

Target groups

The following target groups are proposed:

- Beginners: People who have already successfully taken the first steps going online, yet who still need support in exploring the latest tools.
- Advanced users: Members of Seniorweb, who would like to make use of the collaborative potential of the online community.

Volunteer work and self-organized efforts

Volunteer work and self-organized efforts enable Seniorweb:

- to handle its limited resources: Seniorweb must build upon an organizational form that is based on the principle of being self-organized and of making use of volunteered resources;
- to achieve a user-friendly web-based program: Potential users are integrated in the structure at a very early stage based on the “senior for senior” principles.
- to form a community: The common development is in itself a collaborative form or problem solving and encourages internal coherence within the community.

Methods

The development of Seniorweb ist based on the idea of **'Action Learning'** and 'Design Thinking'. Learners here are not simply passive recipients of knowledge, but they are active in developing it. And at the end of the learning process, the result is not only theoretical background knowledge and knowledge of the methodology, but also specific results that can be used on an practical level.

'Design thinking' means nothing more than applying a step-by-step learning process to find one's way toward the needs of stakeholders. The learning process is not simply linear, but instead it is iterative. What this means is that it is sometimes ok to take a step backward in order to integrate insights from the development process.

Based on the principle of developing user-driven solutions and based on the Stanford Design Thinking model, following steps are proposed:

- Understanding: In an initial stage, it is important to understand the essential needs an underlying conditions of the project idea. Only this way is it possible to develop solutions that not only consider the needs of the users, but which are also technically feasible and are economically viable.
- Observing: In the next step, the participants need to develop their skills further to become experts in the needs of the users. Essentially, the work involved here is performed by surveying and especially by observing users.
- Focusing: Once the analysis has been completed, one will need to explain whether the problem was correctly understood and whether the objectives are clear. Or, would it be better to take a step bake in order to obtain more information?
- Brainstorming: When formulating ideas, various creativity techniques are used to consciously break free from prevailing mindsets in order to be able to penetrate the scope of solutions to the widest extent possible. In the process, unusual ideas and even those that seem impossible at first view are specifically welcome.
- Prototyping: In this phase of developing solutions, the focus is on structuring and visualizing. With the aid of simplified illustrated representations of the planned product, prototypes form the basis for a concrete discussion, the purpose of which is to stimulate one's imagination thereby generating new ideas.
- Testing: The ideas for a solution that were created are compared to the requirements as early as possible and continuously compared throughout the process. Assessing the ease of use by involving real users is critical for the success of the project.

Findings: Dos and don'ts

- Educational objectives: The question relating to the technical implementation has cost quite a bit of time. Focusing the attention even more on the educational objectives may help to target more closely on the learning activities. In the process, as per the "design thinking" approach, one need to zoom in even more strongly on what it is that users really want.
- Didactics: As concerns the didactic concept, the challenge here is to be able to elaborate in more detail on such content and methods that as compared to classic teaching methods are able to provide added didactic value.
- Monitoring and learning process: Up until now, focus has been especially on means to convey educational content. In the future, we would like to give more attention to the issue of how learners can receive feedback un their learning success.
- Marketing: The products that have been developed are currently not very well known. In this regard, there is considerably potential in communicating the benefits to the public, as in "do good and talk about it".
- Workshop form: Providing educational content in the form of workshops that involves working on specific products has proven to be a successful approach. The time window for working in the groups, however, proved to be a bit too short and only allowed the dynamic in the groups to evolve to a limited extent.
- Knowledge managemet: Up until now, the exchange of knowledge between each of the workgroups has been assured by the person who has led the workshops. In view of working in groups that are more spread out in the future, more consideration should be given to systematically structuring and exchanging knowledge.

TAO/terzLivingLab

Background

Currently, what is understood as innovation is undergoing a fundamental change. Innovations are no longer developed exlusively ‘inside-out’ from the point of view of a company or a service provider, but increasingly ‘outside-in’ from the point of view of the user or in general the stakeholder. Keywords of interest in this context are ‘user centered design’ and ‘co-creation’. The second term especially expresses that users are involved in the value creation process at a much more active rate than they were in classic market research of the past. This involves partnering with users to find solutions in a cyclically repetitive process, whereby needs are uncovered one step at a time, by generating ideas, developing concepts and coming up with preliminary solutions, which in turn are then measured based on the needs of the users. This process goes on until a solution has been found that is satisfactory to the potential users.

Concept

The purposes of a Living Lab is (Erikson et al, 2005; CoreLabs, 2007; European Commission, 2009):

- to uncover behavioural patterns and gaps in innovation based on observations in real-life situations;
- to recognize what needs to be done early by interacting with users directly
- to make use of the users’ creative potential and do so preferably in the earliest stage of the innovation process, not during final testing;
- to develop new solutions in a collaborative process using artifacts such as drawings, models, prototypes, etc.;
- to validate ideas for solutions and business models at an early stage.

A Living Lab can be seen as a methodology with which various stakeholders (end users, developers, decision makers, etc.) are involved at a very early stage in the innovation process.

Methods

The following method involves observing potential users (terzScouts) to discover how they make use of a prototype or a finished product. It is based on an in-depth discussion in a workgroup consisting of six terzScouts and on a detailed study of available literature on the subject matter has proven to be the most feasible approach. The test persons are asked to find solutions to typical tasks that need to be performed when using the web site. Typically, in addition to the test person, there is also at least one other person who moderates the process and one who observes it (keeping at log). What you must keep in mind is that the moderator must not affect the process.
To roughly describe the process, a usability test involves taking the following steps:

Organizing the observation

- Who will be observed? (inhomogeneous group of potential users)
- What will be observed? (characteristic tasks and activities)
- Which behaviour will be observed? (natural behaviour, forced behaviour)
- Who should be included in the observation process? (developers, marketing professionals, etc.)

Infrastructure needs

- A comfortable room with a PC and two chairs (test person, moderator)
- A screen recorder and a microphone (a program that records the mouse movements and comments)
- A screen sharing programm and speakers for the observation room
- Lunch and drinks for the observers

Conducting the tests

- Open questions to users (“Why are you doing that right now?”)
- An observation log with predefined questions (What problems do the users seem to have when using the product?)
- In some cases, recording sound (thinking out loud) and movements with the mouse (Which movements is the user making? Why is the user hesitating?)

Evaluation and interpretation

- What are the most important problems in the use of the product?
- Which product functions appear to have the most urgent need for improvement?

Follow up

- Discussion and brainstorming (in some cases including a select group of users)

Online tools

TAO/Online tools

This part of the TAO Handbook attempts to provide basic information on *software* that may support your work in terms of *collaboration*. Besides this aspect summarized with the term “tools” the headline also contains the omnipresent catchword “online“ which generally adds up to *communication* – technically in the first place but therefore enabling remote human interaction.

Taking a look at the simple example of using software to create a text it has been more or less cumbersome to cooperate: different people had to accomplish their part in an asynchronous manner, for example forwarding the respective files in an e-mail to another author after they – hopefully – wrote down all their thoughts. Today some tools have evolved to enable work on a single document (or other item, file) *cooperatively* and *at the same time* instead of being only accessible at a single computer screen and keyboard. In addition to these solutions for *working on actual items* there are more and more ways of communicating remotely: if you think of *computers* and the global network *internet* as general purpose machinery a web conference for example can provide you with functionality and methods that are not available or hard to accomplish outside a virtual environment. In fact you may surpass the sole purpose of replacing real-life meetings and may benefit if your solution incorporates features that support your conversation especially if your online meeting room incorporates before mentioned tools to work on items as you are discussing them.

Outline: how to bring your needs in accordance with the software available

Approaching with the idea in mind that computers really could be of “general purpose” you should first focus on defining your requirements and then go on and find out if there has already been someone who programmed a solution to meet these. You will find a rough guide through that process providing some common concepts and buzzwords as well as questions to work with and pointers to further information. Providing a bird's eye view as well as picturing some examples of todays implementations there are no detailed instructions on how to install online tools within your project as there is no silver bullet[1].

At first you find some words on the **requirements** both sides (end-user and provider) have to meet in the sections below. In the next chapter on “Online collaboration” you find some hints on useful solutions to **work collaboratively**; the focus is on text production, if you are looking for solutions for other media as well you will be able to find some yourself. In „Web conferencing“ and ”Virtual classrooms” the focus changes on **communication** between two or more participants. Concluding some „E-Learning environments“ will be presented, that consolidate the solutions already illustrated in (mostly web-based) platforms.

Therefore a main part of this topic contains a set of properties and according questions to help with the decision on available options and software.

A short **remark on wording**: the terms *software*, *solution* or *software solution* and *tool* shall be understood synonymous. As there are lots of different ways to implement a software solution as well as paradigms shifting at a rapid rate (sometimes only to favor marketing objectives) it is not possible to stick to the explanation of principles and precise wording at the same time. Currently for example everything is called “app” and takes place in the “cloud” whereas in other times the same concepts would be described by the terms of “terminal”, “server” and “modularity of programs”.

Ultimately you can think of all solutions information technology provides as a *service* that enables you to reach your goal; no matter if you use a program installed locally on your computer or you use one installed on your

organizations server via a network or if its hosted by a company on the other side of the globe.

Requirements: participants

Every participating party or single participant will need the following **hardware equipment**. This is just a short checklist to give an overview, the exact requirements depend on the software in question and should be found in its documentation:

- A “personal computer” (PC) of some kind is always required.

  I.e. a desktop computer or laptop or similar. For some applications even a smartphone is sufficient.

  In the majority of cases there is no need for an expensive high-end system. Most today's low-end to medium personal computers will suffice.

If the users shall be able to talk to each other there is additional hardware everyone has to obtain:

- Speakers or a headset including a microphone…

  If the user wants to avoid trouble already by choosing the suitable equipment headphones are recommended to avoid audio feedback loops.

- … and eventually a video camera, usually a webcam connected via USB.

  Often it's possible to participate without using a webcam and being content with an audio connection and video of the others. It is even doubted if having video images of all the participants heads is useful.

Dedicated systems like [[w:en:Set-top box|set-top boxes] or conference systems installed in a room that are optimized to fulfill a very specific purpose or to respectively cope with a specific problem and the whole range of possible technical equipment that may support a end-user's participation in his home are not discussed in this handbook. As they may facilitate collaboration and especially online communication they are usually very expensive and more difficult to operate and are therefore no option, at least on the *end-user's* i.e. *participant's* side.

Regarding **software** a general statement as above is not possible. Some solutions already work with an up to date web browser, others require to install plugins within that browser and some work as stand alone applications a user has to install. Most of today's web browser based solutions furthermore require Adobe's ***Flash*** technology or a specific version of Java, which sometimes is a stepping stone.

At this point you should also think outside your own box and take into consideration if the solutions in question are capable of running on different platforms i.e. operating systems. Depending on your target group Windows, Mac OS or Linux – to name only the most wide spread ones – may be predominating. As you will hardly seek to reach only a homogeneous group *cross-plattform* solutions are often most appealing just to avoid locking anyone out. Often browser-based web conferences take the advantage of meeting the criterion of being cross-plattform.

At last **internet access** providing sufficient bandwidth (up- and downstream) for the personal computer is needed and may be a crucial point in participating successfully and also in a satisfactory way. The following websites provide a service to check your respective connection (futher services can be found using the web search of your choice):

- http://www.speedtest.net – simple bandwidth test, example results [2].
- http://netalyzr.icsi.berkeley.edu/ – connection test that evaluates a wide range of possible problems besides pure bandwidth, example results [3].

At both test sites you will be able to obtain a link to refer to your results lateron. This enables you to sent your results to the technical support person of your choice if you are not able to interpret them by yourself.

Requirements: host or provider

There are two different kinds of approaches that make a basic difference if you are concerned with providing any online services for your community.

- A ***server-client*** scheme demands that your organization operates a server to which participants can connect. There will be software that needs to be run on host hardware (i.e. the server) and both is probably a cost factor determined by acquisition and maintenance. Most of these solutions benefit from taking away some engagement with technical issues from the participants. Most notably there are web-based solutions in which in the best case only a standard web browser and nothing else is required from the participants. Also such a centralized approach often allows for more means of organizing, structuring and controlling the workspace or meeting room, e.g. dedicated (password protected) directories or rooms for different groups, recording or other ways of documenting meetings.
- A ***peer-to-peer (P2P)*** scheme demands that each participant uses (and therefore has to install) software that is capable of connecting to the others without a central instance. Actually there will be very few *pure* P2P solutions, often only the actual communication (e.g. sending end receiving audio and video) is realized in a peer-to-peer way and a server is needed to initialize that communication anyway.

Whatever solution you will provide: to enable your community members to use the respective tool you will have to provide some documentation and hints, best online so everyone can refer to it again and again and from every place one can access the internet. Also the specific requirements that have to be met if the solution incorporates a server to which the participants connect should be discussed with a system administrator of yours, who should be already participating in the consultation at an early stage.

Tip: very often there are services already provided for your purposes and organization. Maybe “in-house” or by a partner or even an external provider that wants to support your goals. It is surely worthwhile to investigate in this matter as it will safe you a lot of efforts as someone possibly has already put work and thought in solving a big part of your task.

References

[1] Brooks, Frederick P., "No Silver Bullet: Essence and Accidents of Software Engineering," Computer, Vol. 20, No. 4 (April 1987) pp. 10-19., available at http://www.cs.nott.ac.uk/~cah/G51ISS/Documents/NoSilverBullet.html

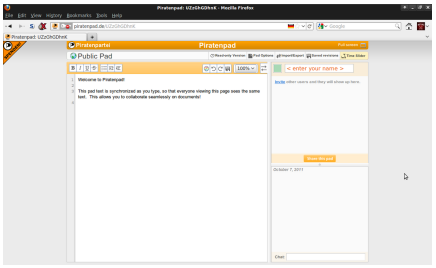
[2] http://www.speedtest.net/result/2210028191.png

[3] http://netalyzr.icsi.berkeley.edu/restore/id=example-session

TAO/Online collaboration

In contrast to software focusing primarily on *communication* – which are presented in the subsequent chapters – you will find some hints on actually creating and working on material on this pages. There is a magnitude of available solutions so to make a beginning we just aimed to present some that were used in the TAO project. However you should feel free to use this site to promote the tool of your choice!

„Office“ tools – especially if they enable cooperation on documents in **real-time** – often come in very helpful. Often there are services available for free: EtherPad



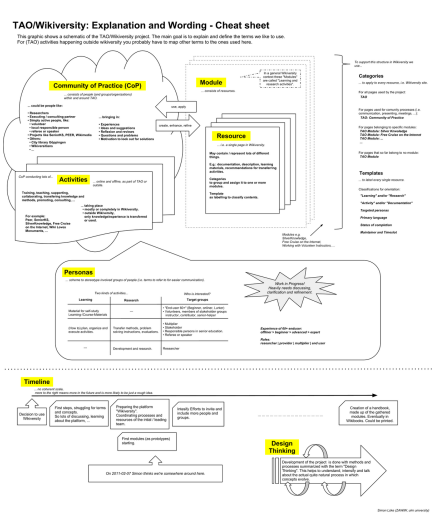
Etherpad Pro on piratenpad.de.

A text editing / creation tool, that provides only less options for formatting. This can be seen as an advantage as the user's have to focus on content and are not distracted by fiddling with the outer form. Every document is simply shared by sending its respective link to others. All work on the text is recorded and therefore no information can be deleted by accident and no versions of a document have to be saved for later refernce (this aspect resembles working with a wiki very much). Using EhterPad there are also options for creating resticted workspaces for teams, called EtherPad Pro. The software is open source and can be installed and used free of charge on your webserver, but there are also sites that provide free EtherPads you can create as you need them, e.g.:

- http://www.piratenpad.de/
- http://edupad.ch/

An example EtherPad for testing purposes can also be found here https://zawiw.edupad.uni-konstanz.de/demo-pad.If you are interested just follow the link and try it out.

GoogleDocs



Graphic created with Google Docs.

Is a free “office suite” accesible via a web-browser. Files like text documents, spread sheets or graphics are saved on [w:en:GoogleGoogle's servers an can be shared with other users or for public cooperation. Compared with a nowadays conventional office programs there are some features you might miss, but all basic features are implemented and addtional ones are being developed and it also enabled simultaneous real-time access of multiple users. To create new documents an account registered using a e-mail address is needed (you do not need an actual Google Account). The service can be found here http://docs.google.com/ and here you will find an example [1] of a graphic created in TAO here: https://docs.google.com/drawings/d/1B2EwgHpT9Cah-ZrZFptFqlv6fRzyKUyGoe48eeHXKew/edit

Besides working on documents there is always a need to **exchange files** during the recent years there appeared a lot of services providing such, for example the very notorious service Dropbox[2] or offers included in accounts that the members of your group may already use as they served completely different purpose than sharing files in the first place; e.g. you can obtain “online storage” at Google's Drive[3] or Amazon's Cloud Drive[4]. Moreover there are lots of other implementations to enable exchanging files, web-based

solutions like the before mentioned and their competitors however often provide easy first steps. Services hosted on the servers of your organization may supply more confidentiality or reliability and offer more settings that you may need.

References

[1] https://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/File:TAO-Wikiversity-Explanation_and_Wording-A_cheat_sheet.png
[2] https://www.dropbox.com
[3] https://drive.google.com
[4] http://www.amazon.com/clouddrive

TAO/Web conferencing

Web conferencing may be a way to enable exchange and discussion within your community or organization wherever or whenever real-life meetings are not possible. Furthermore and according to the focus of this handbook a web conference may also be of special interest for elderly people for whom leaving their homes may have become more laborious or impeded.

Compared with e.g. telephony web conferencing software potentially benefits from providing different properties and additional features, besides the commonly expected video transmission. As the channels that enable remote participants to communicate can hardly avoid to limit the familiar and manifold range of immanent human interaction there may be features incorporated in a conferencing software to compensate for this. Furthermore features that reach beyond this scope of compensation gradually extend such solutions to more or less enriched “working environments” which often aim to support a specific purpose. In the field of education there are for example two classes of solutions, which will be described in the subsequent chapters: *virtual classrooms* and even more comprehensive e-learning environments.

The topic's title “web conference” was chosen to discriminate or respectively define its focus within the long range of solutions that exist to enable remote communication: from traditional telephony (which enabled primarily only one-to-one, simultaneous transmission of audio) via *videoconferences* for two or multiple participants (which actually only adds a video channel to the previous category) up to before mentioned *virtual working environments*.

How-to: organize and carry out a web conference

This section gives the most important directions for carrying out an web conference. Of course the process is actually the same as it should be for every real-life meeting. However the participants will probably be more content (and therefore there may be a better outcome) if you take some care of the specifics that are brought in by the technology used (especially software).

Besides the ***participants*** there are commonly two more roles to be aware of. They can be defined as follows:

- A ***host*** who provides and administers the software or service that is used, who takes care of the accounts and respective privileges that the participants will need etc. She or he is mainly concerned with technical aspects.
- A ***moderator*** who manages the actual meeting. This role is identical with the real-life representation but the moderator should be very experienced in the use of the conferencing software.

Whoever is put in charge of these tasks may execute them according to this list:

- **Invitation**: containing at least date and “place” of the meeting. Often the place, i.e. virtual meeting room, is provided via a link by which the meeting can be joined. Depending on the experience of the participants a short guide on how to join should be included or linked. Also it is helpful to mention how far in advance the meeting room will be accessible, so everyone has enough time to check if his software and equipment is functional some minutes in advance of the appointed start.

- **“Testing“**: generally it is very recommendable to provide a possibility with which every participant may try out the web conference and get accustomed to it by himself at any given time. “Getting ones hands dirty“ in such a demo meeting is possibly the best way to get comfortable with the respective software, often better than an exhausting manual. If some participants did not use the solution in earlier meetings it is nearly indispensable to provide a demo meeting as everyone will need to check his or her setup. How to access a demo meeting should also be mentioned in the invitation. And maybe there is also someone to turn to for support.
- **Backup plan**: eventually it is wise to prepare an alternative (like a telephone conference) and communicate the respective proceedings to come into action in the unfortunate case that something goes completely wrong.
- **Meeting**:hHave the needed materials (documents, presentations) ready, manage the available tools to support the course of the meeting, check if someone seems to have troubles and misses contributions of others, inform everyone if the meeting is recorded and eventually will be published etc. If possible provide an alternative channel of communication (like a phone) to communicate problems.
- **Follow-up**: deliver or publish the meeting's documentation, take care of problems that occured, plan the next meeting.

Software properties: guidelines for deciding on the solution you need or want to implement

In the following we compiled some common properties and categories to help you in examining and deciding on the software that may meet your needs best.

On behalf of participating in the meeting

- **Managing the meeting**
  - Is there a need to assign **different roles** (moderator, main speaker, guest, …) to the participants?
  - Shall **discussion supporting features** be included? Think of virtual hand signals, emoticons expressing everyone's current opinion or a list of speakers.
- **Audio and Video**
  - Is **sending video optional** for every participant? (“Is it possible that a participant who is not able to send video joins the meeting?”)
  - What **quality** does the transmitted material need to have? Is low resolution video and audio enough as everyone uses his own laptop and will have lots of small video windows of every participant on his screen or will you show the meeting in a large room projected with a high resolution projector.
  - Will you use the meeting software to connect single participants or **multiple meeting rooms** in which more than one participant **sitting around a table** will be present? In the last case special audio equipment will be needed.
- **Tools and Technology**
  - Shall the participants be able to **chat** within the meeting? It is often a great opportunity to be able to communicate without interfering with the current speaker or to have the possibility to exchange small hints or links.
  - Is **simultaneous translation** possible, e.g. via sign language or captions? Maybe your target group has characteristics that require such or will massively benefit from it.
  - Shall a user be able to use every application installed on his PC into the meeting (often refferred to as **“desktop sharing”**)? Shall the others be able to control his application using their keyboard and mouse?
  - Is collective **work on documents** needed? What kind of documents do you think of? Plain or formatted text, presentations, spread sheets, graphics?
  - Do the users need to **exchange files** during the meeting?
  - What about methods like **brainstorming**, **mind maps** or **votes**?

- **Documentation**
  - Do you want to assist documentation during the meeting? By the means of taking notes or recording everything or just the audio?
  - Do you want to playback the meeting, e.g. via a video file or a podcast published automatically published on a website.

Challenges on the provider's side

- **Exact requirements –** What is needed to run the web conferencing solution?
  - Webcam, headset, personal computer? Or any more specialized devices? (See above section “Requirements: participants”).
  - What are the **hardware requirements**? (Buzzwords: CPU, RAM, …)
  - What are the **software and operating system** requirements? Especially:
    - Is it **web based**?
      - Browser-only: What browser variant (Firefox, Chrome, Internetexplorer, …)? All versions or only current (or even outdated) ones?
      - Browser-plugin: Is a specific or general browser plug-in required? (application specific or a general one like Flash)?
    - … or a **stand-alone application**?
      - What operating system is needed? Is it cross-platform?
      - How easy is the installation process?

        The last two items are crucial regarding the acceptance among your users. They determine if all members of your community will be able to use the personal computer they already own or have access to, at their homes, whatever system and additional software they have already installed or are able to install.
- **Infrastructure –** Will a **client-server** scheme be possible (Do you have the means to provide a server installation?) Or will a **P2P** approach suit you more?
- **Cost**
  - Is there a **licensing scheme** for your purposes? Are there charges on every installation? Every use? Every participant? Etc.
  - Has every user to pay for using the service or shall only the providing organization bear the cost? Or are only free alternatives coming into question?
  - Is there **a service which is already provided** and your organization can access? Maybe for free?

    *You should investigate on this question very carefully as there are often lots of services already provided for free either in the **educational sector** or for people working in **volunteering projects**.*
- **Support and development**
  - Can you get “professional” support if you are running into problems? Maybe even by the producer? Who might also guarantee some minimum results?
  - If you're not satisfied with or are not able to fulfill all the requirements you specified:
    - Is there active development? Maybe a road map that points out what you are missing?
    - Are you able to extend your solution with other software eventually created by yourself?

Conclusion

As there will be no overall solution, it is recommended to first triage the above properties according to your requirements. E.g. in three categories like *must-have*, *nice to have* and *not needed*. And then go on filling in the properties of the software that is available and in your focus.

General Conditions

TAO/Handbook/Public Relations

PR & COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR ONLINE COMMUNITIES: BEST PRACTICES

Introduction & outline chapter

Providing information and best practices to the staff of online communities who want to set up their own PR- and communication plan for a specific project; that is the objective of this Handbook Chapter. These best practices are gathered from the overarching project communication experiences within TAO, as well as from the individual online communities that participated in TAO (Seniorweb Netherlands, Seniorweb Switzerland, Wikimedia Germany and Wikimedia Switzerland CH). Although shortly mentioning the internal communication aspects of a project, this chapter mainly concentrates on the external communication.

This chapter focuses on the various aspects of a solid communication plan for a project or activity. First we will elaborate on the DNA of the communication, with the determination of the communication goals, key messages and target group (in 2: DNA of the communication). Then we continue with an overview of communication channels which may be interesting for online communities, e.g. a press release or presence at fairs (in 3: Overview of interesting communication channels). Paragraph 4 (Communication challenges) focuses on possible communication challenges and suggests ways to deal with them. Finally, paragraph 5 (Planning & Evaluation) concludes with some practical advice concerning the planning of the communication plan and its evaluation afterwards.

DNA of the communication: goals, key messages and target group

The first step of any communication plan consists of the determination of following elements: • Communication goals (what do we want to establish with our communication?) • Key messages (what do we want to say?) • Target groups (who do we want to reach?)

Practical examples

For the TAO-project in general and the participating online communities in particular (Seniorweb NL/CH and Wikimedia GE/CH), the overall aim of the communication activities was to create a critical mass of interest, necessary for the deployment of the project results. Below are examples of some important aspects in the DNA of the TAO-communication: **Communication goals:**

- Enhance the appreciation of seniors' knowledge to non-profit projects (e.g. online communities); raise the awareness for accessibility and usability issues for older adults in online communities; build conviction and stimulate action among seniors; …

Key messages:

- Participation of all age-groups; E-inclusion; digital integration; empowerment; ….

Target groups:

- External: Seniors, existing members of the online communities, general public, …
- Internal: project team, researchers, staff, …
- Determine clearly who belongs to the circle of internal and external communication, and adapt the communication accordingly

Overview of interesting communication channels

The purpose and the target group of a communication campaign determine the choice of the communication channel(s). Within the TAO-project, following channels have proved their usefulness for online communities.

Type of communication	Communication channel	Specificities
Offline media (e.g. newspaper, radio, ...)	Press release	• Especially effective if coupled with personal contacts with editorial staff • Visual media (tv): interested in possibilities to film • Determine geographical scoop and media focus accordingly, e.g. focus on local media
	Press conference	• Organized for special occasions, or with a famous person • Need to provide specific press conference-kit
	Interviews	• Especially interesting for audiovisual media (radio & tv)
	Media partnership	• Helpful to get more media coverage
Online media	Newsletters, mailing lists	• To reach interested people online
	Social network sites (e.g. Facebook groups)	• To reach interested people online
	Project website	• Pivotal point of project's external communication
	Websites of the partners	• Information about the project needs to be connected with the partners' existing websites (e.g. Wikimedia Foundation's Outreach Wiki, ...)
Presence at fairs & events	Stand activities at fairs, exhibitions, etcetera	• To reach target groups who do not use the Internet extensively • To engage in real-life conversations with target group
	Stand at events of partner organization	• To reach key-stakeholders • To engage in real-life conversations
	Stand material: hand-outs, banners, flyers, etcetera	• To address broad target group in public spaces • Especially for target groups who do not use the Internet extensively

Types, channels and specificities of communication

Communication challenges & how to deal with them

A solid communication may be critical for the success of a project. Therefore, every communication plan should pay attention to the hurdles that may appear. The table below provides a hands-on overview of the communication challenges which the project-team and the online community partners encountered during the TAO-project, and simultaneously suggests various ways to deal with these challenges.

Communication challenges	How to deal with them
Need to **reach a critical mass** to be able to implement the TAO-research results	Organize a broad public relations campaign
TAO-project is conducted ***with* the online communities and *for* the online communities**	Ensure that project team is able to effectively communicate through crowdsourcing (crowdsourcing is the process that involves outsourcing tasks to a distributed and undefined group of people)
The project information must be **linked to the partner organizations' existing websites**, which one can however not control	• Keep track of the changes and processes on these external websites, • If possible try to assist in steering such changes
Reach out to an **international audience**	• Communication has to take place in several languages • If possible, arrange for native-language speakers, writers and/or proofreaders
Project has **own logo and templates**	• Combine the project logo and templates with the formal demands of the partner organizations • Discuss this on beforehand with the communication department of the partner organization
External communication should address media in **various geographical areas**	Local partner organizations are best placed to effectively approach the local media.
The project **message should be coherent**, no matter who is speaking/writing (project team or partner organizations)	• Appoint one person in charge of the overall project communication • Use the "principle of subsidiarity": if partners can do the communication themselves, let them do it themselves. • However on beforehand, every communication activity should be presented to and checked by the person in charge of the overall communication

Communication challenges and how to deal with them

Planning & evaluation

To assure the quality of the project's (external) communication, the communication plan should be carefully planned on beforehand and evaluated afterwards.

- Planning: To reach a high-quality communication, the communication plan should be planned jointly with all the parties involved, e.g. the person in charge of the overall project communication and the communication managers of the partner organizations.
- Evaluation: Learn from your experiences and evaluate every communication activity afterwards, if possible based on measurable indicators (e.g. website statistics, number of members, Facebook statistics, …)

TAO/Activities/Communities of Practice

This module will give ou an idea of what communities of practice are and help you define the current status of your community.

What are communities of practice?

A **community of practice (CoP)** is, according to cognitive anthropologists Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, a group of people who share a craft and/or a profession.

The group can evolve naturally because of the members' common interest in a particular domain or area, or it can be created specifically with the goal of gaining knowledge related to their field. It is through the process of sharing information and experiences with the group that the members learn from each other, and have an opportunity to develop themselves personally and professionally (Lave & Wenger 1991).

CoPs can exist online, such as within discussion boards and newsgroups, or in real life, such as in a lunch room at work, in a field setting, on a factory floor, or elsewhere in the environment.

Structure

A community of practice is a unique combination of three fundamental elements: a domain of knowledge, which defines a set of issues; a community of people who care about this domain; and the shared practice that they are developing to be effective in their domain. Domain, community and practice build an ideal knowledge structure for communities of practice.

Domain

Do we know who our target audience is?

You always need to be clear who your target audience is. A survey can help to find out the audience's requirements, interests and problems.

Do we know what influence we will have to the project / the wider organization? And what topics and issues we care about?

To know what influence you will have helps to know on what the community has to focus.

Is the domain connected to the organization's strategy?

Because we are like a subgroup of a larger project / an organization it is important to follow the same strategy and targets as the project / the organization does.

Communities

Does each team member bring his/her knowledge to the community?

Especially in a community of practice is it important that each person brings his/her knowledge to the community. So the group can profit from everyone's experience and knowledge.

Check if the most common intern and extern roles have been set.

Intern roles:

- chairman
- minutes taker
- coordinator
- creator
- caretaker
- leader
- mediator.

External roles:

- stakeholders

Does a regularity of online meetings as well as face-to-face meetings exist?

Regular meetings are needed to inform everyone about progresses and to take common decisions. Further are face-to-face meetings important for boosting the team spirit and to meet each other; knowing each other usually improves the quality of team work.

Do we have guidance for members about conflicts?

You need to differentiate between different kinds of conflicts, such as personality, style, value, leadership, pseudo conflicts, etc.. Furthermore; it might be useful to have a generally recognized mediator to turn to in case of conflict.

Practice

Do you use ideal tools for your community? Such as tools for communication, shared documents, etc?

The right tool can simplify your teamwork, especially for distributed communities. First you need to know your exact requirements for choosing the right tool. Often companies offer a whole package of needed software which covers all the requirements.

Does the community have templates for official and non-official documents? And does a glossary exist, so everyone talks about the same thing?

Templates are needed for a consistent image outwards. Templates contain information about date, document number, status, distribution list, etc. A glossary defines keywords, which can avoid misunderstandings.

What language will be spoken, if a multilingual meeting is taking place? Does everybody understand that language?

To get the best out of meetings and conversations, communities need to define a language that will be spoken. Therefore everyone needs to be confident with it.

Cultivating communities of practice

Does the community of practice consist of different levels of participation?

The architecture of the community invites many different levels of participation. Usually a community consists of a coordinator who organizes events and connects community members. The rest of the community is divided into three different groups, such as the core group which actively participates in discussions etc.

At the next level outside this core is the active group which attends meetings regularly and participates occasionally in the community forums, but without the same regularity or intensity as the core group.

The rest of the members are peripheral and rarely participate. Instead, they keep to the sidelines, watching the interaction of the core and active members.

Do we have a combination of familiarity and excitement?

Successful communities offer the familiar comforts of a hometown, but they also have enough interesting and varied events to keep new ideas. The familiarity of these events creates a comfort level that invites candid discussions.

Do we have found a rhythm for the community?

Regular meetings, teleconferences, Website activity, and informal lunches and flow along with the heartbeat of the community. When that beat is strong and rhythmic, the community has a sense of movement and liveliness. If the beat is too fast the community feels breathless. When the beat is too slow, the community feels sluggish. The rhythm of the community is the strongest indicator of its aliveness.

Sociability

Does our website have a clear structure and attractive design?

Especially for handicapped people and people who are not used to work in the internet is it important to have a clear structured website. So they can get the information they want as easily as possible.

Do our members want to communicate apart from emails?

robably a life-time-chat is required or a message wall, as facebook or twitter has.

Challenge – Distributed Communities

Does distance play a role in our community of practice?

Distributed communities have to resort to technologies that are not real substitutes for face-to-face interactions. They are generally less “present” to their members. Because of this barrier, it takes more intentional effort for members to consult the community for help, spontaneously share ideas, or network with other members

Does culture play a role in our community of practice

Distributed communities are also likely to cross cultures. National cultures are the most obvious type, but organizational and professional cultures can also present problems in diversified organizations.

Cultural differences can easily lead to communication difficulties and to misinterpretation. Further, language differences also introduce a very basic barrier to communication.

Non-native speakers may not understand the nuances and connotations behind certain terms or may hesitate to speak if they are uncertain of their ability to express themselves effectively.

Source

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- Enabling knowledge creation, 2000
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Methods and Practical Tools

TAO/Co-Creation with Older Persons

Organizations and programs increasingly aim to create sustainability on all three levels, the individual, organizational, and societal level. One way to do so is by involving the end users of a particular product or service in the innovation process, also called co-creation. This study reports on four co-creation sessions with elderly that include an abundance of challenges and issues.

The investigation is based on observations in practice and analyses of the behavior of SeniorWebNL members and employees during the co-creation sessions. The purpose of this study is to critically reflect on different participatory methods that were used during the co-creation sessions, including Stakeholder Consultation (session A), Co-design (session B), Online Co-Creation (session C), and Theme Tables (session D). The analyses of the sessions provide insights into the challenges involved when co-creating with older persons.

This investigation hence complies with the issues and challenges involved, leading to more effective ways - guidelines - to co-create with older persons.

Co-creation with older persons

In this article, four different co-creation methods will be analyzed. All methods were conducted with older persons and hence from these experiences new and improved ways to successfully co-create with elderly can be identified.

- Session A – Stakeholder Consultation, two focus group conversations of which the first included SeniorWebNL members and the second SeniorWebNL ambassadors.
- Session B – Co-design, two groups both including members, ambassadors, and employees of SeniorWebNL. The aim of this session was the co-design of a new service.
- Session C – Online Co-Creation, online collaboration through the use of Adobe Connect.
- Session D – Theme Tables, using the 'World café' method. The aim of this session was to discuss older persons' requirements and needs with regard to existing web contact services.

Stimulating creative thinking

During the sessions it almost immediately became clear that participants need to be triggered to think creatively. For example, in session D we have learned that sketching a service was not an effective approach for older persons to generate input. Participants found it quite difficult to translate the main points of all categories into definite online applications. Overall, the output of the Theme Tables session was quite satisfactory, as all participants made relevant contributions, leading to the reach of consensus on most categories. Nevertheless, co-designing the web contact services was regarded as extremely difficult by most members, since they were asked to draw the homepage of the web contact services on a flipchart. Expecting that online services can be created by performing offline actions appears thus as a rather ambitious approach. Providing them with offline tools such as sticky notes and categorized flipcharts proved to be more successful as became clear in the Co-design session. A different but related observation points to the 'look-beyond-the-present' approach which appeared to be difficult to accomplish as well. During several sessions many participants indicated that they find it challenging to look in the future, partly because they have little to no knowledge of computer hardware or online applications and thus often they do not know why and how they will use their computer in the future. It was apparent that only just asking questions without giving them comprehensible examples was not sufficient. Hence the question arises whether the methods considered the digital literacy of older persons?

An issue of blind faith?

While observing both the organization and its members we have learned that it is important to encourage communication between both parties. During the evaluation of the Stakeholder Consultation, quite a few participants indicated that they appreciated being included in the innovation process because they felt more involved in the developments of the organization. For instance, during workshop A and D, participants pointed out that they did not know who were the ambassadors of SWNL. According to the organization, communication should be established by means of online participation and collaboration. During session C, however, we analyzed the online behavior of older persons where it became evident that communication via a webcam and microphone is not without problems. On the one hand, the older persons were impatient and did not want to depend on the technique, on the other hand, the online communication tools failed to meet the expectations and needs of these older persons. For example, the participants were only able to see each other on a small screen. Moreover, communication via the microphone was not successful either, since only one person could speak at a time. In addition to these unsuitable means of communication, the older persons also emphasized on the fact that offline – face-to-face – communication is preferred for the reason that they favor communication in a physical environment. Some methods used during the sessions show a blind trust in the technique and do not take into account typical technical conditions that would suit older persons.

Using online applications

Another important observation points to the reasons why and how online applications are used by elderly. Whereas the organization also aims at increasing the use of online applications to build relationships and stimulate online collaboration between their members, participants repeatedly indicated that they use SWNL's online applications mainly for practical reasons. According to SWNL, members of the organization can benefit from their online applications, as they offer a great variety of services available. Nevertheless, older persons appear to mainly use the organization's services to solve problems, raise questions, and obtain information about developments within the organization, among other motives. During the sessions all participants mentioned not being open to having contact with other members for social reasons. However, in their private lives they frequently contact relatives through various online applications. Yet, this is often also because of a practical point of view. The fact that the idea of increasing engagement in online activities is based on a somewhat incorrect assumption is self-evident. Another important observation includes the use of online applications. The Online Co-Creation sessions allowed us to observe and analyze how older persons deal with non-daily used computer applications such as Adobe Connect. The differences between the first and second session were noteworthy, since - during the second session - the participants were unable to install their microphones, leading to an early end of the session. The preconceived image which was included in the research method appeared as rather true. Nevertheless, one can question whether the participants' knowledge of installing hardware is applicable to all older persons. The problems could also be generated by a lack of knowledge on how to assist elderly online. Evidently, it appears that this method is more appropriate for the comparison of research methods than for obtaining relevant output, as the concrete output regarding the improvement of web contact services was less satisfactory.

Modifications of objectives

As stated above, the organization's main goal is to increase engagement in their applications. In addition to the outcome as stated in 'Unsuitable assumptions,' participants also pointed out the importance of learning environments. In line with EU's education policies, we have learned that SWNL could possibly enhance online engagement by creating environments where members not only learn from the organization but more importantly from and with other members. Consequently, members' collaboration is expected to increase. Nevertheless, the organization must find appropriate ways to create these environments. As the outcomes of the co-creation sessions already have revealed, the output is more satisfactory when communicating offline. Online collaboration, first of all is not desired

as indicated by most participants, but also does it entail numerous challenges. How could online collaboration be applied in a more effective and successful way? After analyzing the results of the co-creation sessions, we have learned that this way of communication still deserves a credible approach.

Guidelines

After a proper analysis of the sessions' outcomes, a number of guidelines to successfully co-create with elderly, can be identified.

"A guideline is a set of systematically developed standards or rules which assist in the decision about how to apply the policy or appropriate management of specific conditions" (Reeves, 2004, p.2).

Important in advance

The following guidelines are important to consider before conducting co-creation with elderly.

General

- Before conducting co-creation with older persons one should first investigate their social and work background in order to understand who they are and to be able to correctly reflect on their input.
- A second step before the actual co-creation with elderly starts, entails the purpose of the co-creation sessions and the older persons' role in the co-creation process. This way of communicating not only provides them clarity but they are also more prepared for the session.

Methodology

- Depending on the method, the elderly should be informed about the way they have to co-create with other older persons. For instance, when using an online collaboration tool, the older persons should be explained in detail on the possibilities the program offers, the limitations included in the technique, the way they should use the tool, and the possible problems that can occur during the co-creation session. A clear explanation of the method prior to the session reduces misunderstanding during the actual co-creation process.
- Based on an extensive study on the session's participants, suitable methods should be chosen to obtain the most valuable input.
- When using peripheral devices, a clear overview of how to install these devices should be provided to the older persons.

The co-creation process

The following guidelines are important to consider during the actual co-creation process with older persons.

General

- At the start of the co-creation session, the older persons should be informed about the schedule. A clear structure at the beginning of the session assures less problems during the co-creation process.
- Each session should include a few clear steps to structure the process, not forgetting to add a sufficient number of (short) breaks to keep the attention of the elderly.
- During the co-creation session it is important to be aware of any uncertainties, hence frequently asking questions, such as: are there any questions? Is it clear to everyone?, will increase the value of the older persons' contribution.
- Stimulate group interaction and give each participant the feeling that their contribution is of great value for the research.
- When a moderator guides the group conversations, particular attention should be given to the relevance of what the elderly are telling. By timely intervention in broad discussions, consensus on most parts should be achieved.

- A moderator should also pay attention to group dynamics, as some persons might be more dominant than others which could lead to unilateral outcomes. In this case, the moderator should intervene more often by involving other participants more actively.
- During the co-creation process, examples should be used to clarify certain issues or challenges.

Methodology

- The choice of an appropriate method is of great importance for the successful completion of the co-creation process. A suitable method can be selected on the basis of the knowledge from previous co-creation studies with elderly and furthermore on the basis of the participants health condition and social and economic background.
- User requirements - the method should take into account the health condition of the older persons. Applicable keywords here, are: visibility, usability, and reliability.
- Assuming 'things' is not a good starting point to co-create with elderly. One should not assume that older persons can do all the things certain methods anticipate. Limitations are mainly found when older persons have to think creatively and collaborate online. Therefore, the methods should be adjusted to the older persons' requirements.
- A moderator should lead group discussions, in particular when co-creating in online spaces.
- Offline tools such as sticky notes are an efficient way to generate valuable input.
- Discussion groups that consist of more than ten persons should be avoided in order to maintain the quality of the group conversations.
- Drawing is not the most efficient way to create input. Therefore, the use of images or pictures is recommended.
- When using an online communication tool, the older persons should be informed step by step (through audio or video coaching) about how they can access the program.
- As already indicated, these guidelines are based on previous experiences with older persons during different co-creation methods. In sum, these guidelines suggest that co-creation with older persons should acknowledge diversity among elderly, be aware of the differences in computer en Internet knowledge sometimes due to differences in age and should create learning environments where older persons will be taught on how to cope with certain co-creation methods.
- As abovementioned reveals, co-creation with older persons entails numerous challenges. However, based on the sessions analyses, we have learned how ways of co-creating with older persons can be innovated.
- The lessons learned during the four co-creation sessions appeared to be useful for improving the future guidelines.

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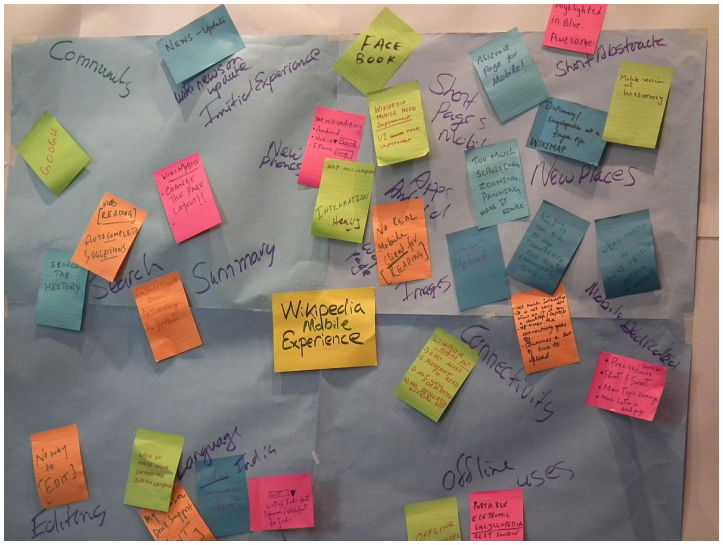
TAO/Handbook/Methods for cooperation and seminars

Introduction



Result from a brainstorming

This chapter focuses questions of continuing education especially on older adults and gives an overview and an introduction of corresponding pedagogical methods for cooperation, collaboration and seminars. For older adults it is a challenge and a need to learn, they have to enable themselves for an active and successful ageing. Learning of older people has to consider their life experience and knowledge. The overall learning goal is to learn the "mediation of the ability to coping with problems". Often older people can manage there own learning activity ("self-managed learning") that is understood as a process "in which the learner steers in essence his/her own learning" (Dohmen, 1997). He/she decides to a great extend if, what and when, how and with which target he/she learns. In contrast to formal learning older people prefer "situation-related experience learning" which means on one hand informal learning in everyday life situations and on the other hand non-formal learning as learning in different social environments e.g. in organisations or online communities. Self-managed learning includes application of experience learning and informal learning, it is a constructivist approach.

Management of Own Learning as a Challenge

Following skills have to be either newly learned or further developed:

- joy of learning
- self-initiation of learning processes
- choosing own learning materials and finding learning advice
- classification of own learning processes into contexts of higher priority
- critical attitude to learning contents and learning materials
- self-reflection as well as reflection about social contexts, etc.

Qualification as Requirement and Motivation

Against the background of cultural and social changes, economic and ecological crisis, globalization, the fast development of the new media and the demographic change lifelong learning is a must to be able to cope with new demands, also on the part of older adults. Therefore in the terms of Lifelong Learning the qualification of seniors is a necessity. It can also motivate them for their activities.

Active Learning through Social Commitment

Active learning through social commitment is a good example for qualification of seniors with practical orientation. Stadelhofer (1999)[1] sees "the ability to place the learn process in social contexts as a basic prerequisite for an active participation in forming our world".

Learn processes in social contexts including active learnig should be related to everyday life situations, it should be as well experience learning. Therefore social commitment is an excellent approach.

Examples for informal learning possibilities by social commitment:

- Reconsideration of the own concept of living by getting to know other persons or groups with other concepts of living, in different life situations for example as a leisure time companion of care requiring people
- Getting to know a different view at institutions for example a hospital or a nursing home by volunteering as nursing auxiliary
- Improvement of craftmanship skills like baking or bicycle repair for example by volunteering in integration projects with a bakery or a bicycle repair shop
- Getting to know new skills for example gardening in a municipal garden project supplying foodbanks with fresh fruit and vegetable
- Getting to know the feeling of esteem by helping people who show their gratitude
- Getting to know new approaches to problems through assistance
- Exchange of experiences and knowledge in exchange projects
- Discovery of undetected talents, abilities and skills for example by taking responsibility in a board of an association or by taking part in a sponsorship programme

Also non-formal learning possibilities are given such as introductory courses for example for the introduction of volunteers for the hospice service.

Different Learning Types and Pedagogical Methods

On a meta level a distinction can be made between different active participation learning types. They require different approaches.

In practice of seminars and workshops concrete pedagogical methods for the learning process and its stages are needed.

Below there is a description of exemplary methods for cooperation and collaboration. On a third level some general instructions and hints for learning situations especially with new media are given.

Different Active Participation Learning Types

- Learning through research
- Action learning (learning by doing)
- Intergenerational learning
- Intercultural learning

Learning through Research

"Learning through research"[2] is an example of self-managed learning in which the learner determines, tests and reflects own learning goals in a self-responsible way. "Learning trough research" is realised through

- individual work
- work in autonomous learning groups
- co-operation in research projects

The Method of "Learning through Research" enables,

- that older people select and work on forgotten or unexploited research subjects or draw attention to not yet researched facts
- that older students' attitudes and their professional and life experiences are considered in the design of research projects
- to learn about ageing and about social issues and at the same time about the way how ageing and social issues are researched

There is no teacher needed but a moderator, who consist in the initiation of project groups and their accompaniment from search for a subject through to documentation of results. The new information and communication technologies can strengthen self-determination as well as the independent research work of the learners.

Action Learning (Learning by doing)

"The potential of older people represents an important social resource. Without appropriate opportunities and space for application, these competences remain however unused, and: qualified engagement demands appropriate qualifications." (Stadelhofer 2007) Therefore action learning means to create these appropriate opportunities and spaces for application, to give grounds. According to the idea of linking to everyday life situations learning goals should be defined - best by the learners themselves - which promise a benefit, an improvement compared to their previous life situation. This also prevents from a too strong feeling that action learning means to be thrown into the deep end.

Intergenerational Learning

Regarding the perspective of single persons everybody is involved in different generational contexts. But also the society as a whole is built on them. On one hand values, norms, cultural traditions need to be transfered to the next generation. On the other hand societies also need new ideas, new technologies and new solutions. (cf. Höpflinger 2011) This is the general basis for intergenerational learning. Learning projects that are based on the collaboration between old and young can lead to a win-win-situation for both generations by a direct insight into the life world of the other generation and by the common work on interesting subjects and by testing different roles. Online collaboration combined with face-to-face meetings were successfully tested by ZAWiW, e.g. KOJALA[3]. [cf. Marquard, Schabacker-Bock, Stadelhofer 2011]

Intercultural Learning

In the time of globalization and cultural diversity interculturality plays a more and more important role because the number of contacts with other cultures increases. According to Hansen (2000)[4] there are two concepts of interculturality, one regarding the interaction of persons from different cultures, one regarding the interculture that develops itself in exchange processes of these persons. Intercultural learning targets the successful management of the interactions and the processes. There are parallels to the intergenerational learning: it also can lead to a win-win-situation and to new experiences by an insight, e.g. by European Grundtvig learning projects that combine virtual learning and face-to-face meetings such as ODE[5] or thematic projects a EWA[6] or by face-to-face projects such as mentor programmes at universities[7][8] which of course are also challenging examples for intergenerational learning.

Pedagogical Methods

Methods can be distinguished regarding their function (cf. Macke, Hanke, Viehmann 2012).

- Introductory methods
- Methods for the phase of work
- Methods to draw to a conclusion

Introductory methods

Introductory methods target to get in the right frame for a learning event regarding the subject and the participants, the preparation for the common work of a subject.

Some examples of methods are:

- "Wanted" poster (a prepared poster with blank spaces is prepared, copies will be given to all participants who will fill in the spaces to introduce themselves about personal data, hobbies, expectations, ...)
- Meta plan (a general task is given, every participant writes on one or more cards his keywords which will be structured and discussed later)
- Partner interview (general questions are given, always two participants are an group, after the phase of mutual interviews one participant introduces his interlocutor to the other participants)

Methods for the phase of work

Methods for the phase of work target different aspects e.g. like start of a collaborative process, working on subjects, transfer, valuation.

Some examples are:

- Brainstorming
- Mind Mapping
- Concept Mapping
- Case Method
- Fishbowl

Methods to draw to a conclusion

The final part of a learning event serves to review the results and the learning process, to get a feedback for and from the participants.

Some examples are:

- Flashlight (every participant only says one or two statements which may be commented on later)
- All participants stand in a room. One end of the room symbolises 100% approval and the other end 0%. Participants are asked several questions and they go to the position in the room which represents their opinion best. If everybody stands some comprehensive questions may be asked why they decided to stand there.
- Muddiest point (the participants will be enabled to critically tell about the weakest parts of a learning event, its materials, methods, ... - they may write their arguments on cards which will be collected, then feedback is given at the next occasion)

Methods for online learning

A lot of methods can also be modified for virtual learning and online collaboration. It should be payed attention to the independency of time and place in virtual cooperation and learning. It is an advantage because participants may take part in activities whereever they are (if the Internet is accessible) and whenever they like. However the use of some tools requires syncronous activities e.g. online discussions using a chat or Skype.

Mailing lists, discussion forums, chats, blogs, wikis, file hosting services, Skype, video conference tools etc. should be used for the collaboration and its different purposes. Of course also special online tools like virtual classrooms, e-learning environments (such as Moodle) or collaborative tools (like [[w:BSCW|BSCW) should be taken into account. Technology offers a lot of options like audio and video files, electronical quizes etc. that can enrich learning.

Often moderation is a plus with clear agreements of goals, about time-tables and the possibility to ask in case of any questions (project related, technical). He could initiative and monitor learning processes.

Some examples of methods for online learning are:

- Introduction (the participants send their personal introduction to a moderator of a learning project who puts them on the internal part of the project's website which only can be accessed by the participants. Or in case of an interactive site the participants may do that on their own. Introductions in virtual cooperation are very important because often senior learners want to know that there are real persons whom they are talking with.)
- Growing Document (a document is sent to participants or is safed in a commonly used file hosting service, it contains a task and the participants write in a fixed period their results and opinions in the document, they also react on meanwhile written contributions of other participants, it could be used for example for a virtual brainstorming)
- E-Expert (an expert is invited to join an online discussion to deepen knowledge, the questions could be prepared before by participants)

A wide range of e-learning methods is presented in the book "101 e-Le@arning-Seminarmethoden" (Häfele, Maier-Häfele 2008), it is available in German.

Qualification for the Use of New Media

Active learning also refers to the use of new media. Their use - up to the active participation in Web 2.0 tools and in online communities especially by seniors - cannot be taken for granted: "A broad use of the various application possibilities of the Internet presupposes [...] certain user abilities and also the preparedness to use the Internet. This however, in the case of a great part of the older population, has to be first achieved through a differentiation according to 'user types' and the development of situation-related strategies for Internet accessing and use."[9].

Therefore it is recommended to qualify seniors by closing up to the new media step by step, to give opportunities to exercise, to link to everyday life situations and to subjects of their interest, according to different user types. The seniors should feel the relevance of the new media for their lifes to motivate them for an active use.

A practical transfer of this recommendation is offered within different approaches such as

- by "seniors for seniors" in local "Senior Internet Initiatives" (SII, cooperating in a network of SII [10]) of volunteers in Baden-Wuerttemberg (Southwest Germany): in different ways they offer learning opportunities starting with the first access to computers and the Internet[11]
- "Grandparents & Grandchildren" (G&G): the website of this intergenerational and multilingual project offers different lessons ("Internet Gym" [12]) which shall be explained to the seniors by children, according to the needs of the learners, in cooperation with local stakeholders[13]
- "E-Seniors [14]", a French association fighting against "e-exclusion" of seniors by the introduction to the Internet up to workshops and activities including "digital improvements in everyday's life"[15]
- learning courses and educational projects within the association "Virtual and real learning and competence network of older adults (ViLE e.V. [16])"[17]

The final reports about the projects "Gemeinsam lernen übers Netz" (2000-2005, "Cooperative learning via Internet")[18] and "Senior-Online-Redaktion" (2003-2006, "Senior online editors")[19] document and reflect different approaches of virtual and blended learning in senior communities. They are available in German.

It can be seen as a challenge for social network operators to modify their supply according to the needs of seniors because "the new technical developments [...] offer totally new chances for the initiation and support of informal learning processes and, through developing subject and issue-related learning communities and social networks, for making knowledge and competences of individuals available to its participants and to civil society." (Stadelhofer 2007) Currently within the European Grundtvig project "PEER - Dare to be wise!" [20] a selection of Web 2.0 tools are adapted for the use on social network platforms. Also guidelines for operators will be produced how to motivate seniors for peer-to-peer learning in online communities.

Distinction of different steps

It is recommended to follow a way of different qualification steps which are built up on each other regarding the sensible use of the new media by seniors. Their interests and individual speed of learning should be payed attention to.

- First access to computers and other new media devices such as smartphones
- First access to the Internet
- Meaningful use of the new media
- Active participation by own contributions
- Participation in online communities

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Problem-oriented access

TAO/Handbook/Problem Motivation

You have trouble motivating your members?

Try reading the following chapter:

Fostering Older Adults' Online Participation

You may find some general information on older adults' use of the internet useful:

Target Group

TAO/Handbook/Problem Funding

You don't know how to set up a financially sustainable community?

Check out the module on business models.

You might also find the information on fundraising useful.

TAO/Handbook/Problem Volunteers

You're not sure of the best way to manage your volunteers?

Find some background information on volunteers, their motivation and management in this module.

The Handbook includes several examples of activities with volunteers. Learn from others' experience in the projects "Silberwissen" and "Free Cruise on the Internet".

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