

Title: The Collaborative Working Environment: Next Generation Learning Platform
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1. Abstract:

*See how web 2.0 applications and rich web applications are integrated into the back-end learning platform to form the next generation sustainable learning space on the web; **the Personal Collaborative Working Environment.***

In recent years web 2.0 services for social interaction has grown in popularity. The same has rich web applications, which are delivering the same level of functionality as traditional desktop applications. Mobile devices are a part of the future, whether being Symbian controlled cell phones with an OperaMini browser, a Windows mobile or something not yet known, the Learning Platform needs to take the young students everyday social and mobile platforms seriously.

In this session we will present Fronter's vision of the next generation online learning space, which integrates web 2.0 services and rich web applications with the back-end learning platform.

2. Background - The collaborative working space

Fronter will present how web 2.0 applications and services, which are spread across the web, can be integrated into the institution controlled learning platform in such a way that the universities' interests are maintained, and at the same time let the learning process use the full potential of web 2.0 applications. Fronter is also creating a full service working environment on the web as a real alternative to desktop computing.

3. Alternatives - An example of tomorrow

In a normal day, the student "A" is reading newest contribution to the debate concerning the today lecture, on a mobile Symbian with OperaMini browser cellphone. Perhaps the student "A" comments on the debate by sending an SMS, which is readable in the learning platform debate. Another student "B" subscribes to this debate, which via RSS is shown in a site for readers with special interest in this particular subject. In this site, a third student "C" reads the contribution and invites "A" to participate in an ongoing synchronic videoconference. "A" accepts, and participates via cellphone-camera. "A" is honored by the invitation and therefore brings a recording of the video session to a LinkedIn and jobmatch webprofile elsewhere. Afterwards both "B" and "C" finds "A" so visually and intellectually attractive, that she is invited to a party on the following Friday.

The past, the present and the future

During the last 10 years, traditional learning platforms has invaded Europe, and for many become an indispensable concept or tool. Despite only being around for a short time, Learning Platforms has undergone many phases, which might be referred to as "generations". With the birth of the web back in 1993, came the first generation of "home grown" systems. The second generation appeared around 1997 as out of the box Learning Management Systems. Today learning platforms are mostly referred to as Virtual Learning Environments or Managed Learning Environments, which is the next generation of learning systems.

Now, following the rapid development and high uptake of the ePortfolio concept and the integration of web 2.0 applications, the Learning Platform is now moving into the fourth generation: Personal Learning Environments. A PLE where the user is in the centre and "owns" his/her own data and process. The ePortfolio reflects all activities and tracks progress made by the user throughout the learning process.

4. Conclusion - The vision

The future VLE integrates different rich media content into the open platform, and the end user starts designing an individual virtual identity. When the platform furthermore is open and complies with the international standards, the end user can actually bring content from various content providers and institutions, for a lifelong cyber journey of digital identity. Of course this evolution starts with education, since it is here the need for collaborative communication sums up. The vendor that presents the above mentioned in a user friendly web based interface, and complies with the future needs for web 2.0 technologies in a meaningful context where professional, studying, social and personal needs are

integrated in one single platform, which can be reached from a multiple number of different devices, is a part of the future.