Learning Networks for Lifelong Learning

Peter B. Sloep

Berlin, December 5, 2008
Research programme on Lifelong Learning

- Use Cases for Lifelong learning
- Learning Networks for Lifelong Learning
- Design for Learning Networks
Use Case 1

James is a chemical engineer working for SMD. He wants to pursue a career as a water manager with the local water board. He therefore needs to update and upgrade his skills.
Use Case 2

A lawyer working for Sandex finds out he needs a more thorough understanding of the science part of the company, in particular about the manufacturing of pharmaca.
Use Case 3

A vintage motorcycle enthusiast who wants to buy a Moto Guzzi V7 from 1972 and restore it in its original grandeur. For this, she needs to learn motorcycle specific skills, which she hopes to do through a network of fellow-enthusiasts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>formal learning</th>
<th>non-formal learning</th>
<th>informal learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>initial education</strong></td>
<td>‘ordinary’ education</td>
<td>rare occasion</td>
<td>out of scope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>post-initial education</strong></td>
<td>continuous education</td>
<td>lifelong learning</td>
<td>out of scope</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thesis I

- Continuous education builds on the formal mode of learning
- It is ineffective for post-initial education as it cannot meet the demands for logistic, pedagogical and subject-matter flexibility
[Thesis 2]

- Initial education should smoothly transition into post-initial education for lifelong learning to have any chance
- This sets demands to initial education mostly
Thesis 3

• Post-initial education is best practiced in the context of Learning Networks

• A Learning Network is an online, social network designed to support and facilitate lifelong learning (a learning ‘ecosystem’).
Design: Competences

• Competence maps allow one to chart out achievements and ambitions in terms of competences

• Competence link learning activities to learning opportunities
Design: self-organisation

- In the context of a Learning Network, through ad hoc transient communities a patchwork of partially overlapping communities should emerge.

- Both nearby friends in the same community and distant acquaintances (friends of friends of ..) in remote communities (Granovetter’s strength of weak ties).
Design: peer recommendations

• on knowledgeable experts
• on content suited to learning goals
• on collaboration opportunities
• on study progress (coaching)
• (through the use of ad-hoc transient communities)
Design: architecture

- start with existing community and let it acquire learning network characteristics
- dedicated infrastructure
- start with an existing network and foster the growth of communities with a learning focus in it
- existing social networking sites
Questions?
now or later

peter.sloep <at> ou.nl
pbsloep.nl
celstec.org