Towards a Digital Learner Identity

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AUM Workshop @ UMAP 2011
15.07.2011
Outline

• Introduction: problem scenario
• The notion of identity
• Digital Learner Identity
• Solution scenario
• Future work
• Conclusions
Judith

- Lives in Girona, speaks Spanish, Catalan
- Works as translator in a multinational company
  - Web usage: search technical terminology, communities of translators, asks/provides help
- Loves photography
  - Flickr, show-case her pictures: receives/gives reactions, communities of photographers
Judith

• Feels ever less motivated by her job

• Would like to make a living as a photographer

• Has no clue where to start:

  • what kind of jobs could she find that suit her?

  • what kinds of competences do these require?

  • what kinds of competences, skills, does she has? how does she have acquired these?

  • how can she find this out?, to whom to contact?
Judith

• Judith is the **exemplary lifelong learner**: finished her formal education some time ago and needs ways to keep up with her job or wants to chart out other job options

• Traditional approach: existence of competence maps:
  
  • compare desired competences with current ones
  
  • receive a recommendation of suitable learning activities and resources to fill competence gaps
  
  • a domain or task-centred approach, include formal qualifications, **not informal learning, no learner identity** aspects are considered
The notion of Identity

- Linked to the notion of a spatio-temporal, comprises beliefs, desires and dispositions

- *Psychologists* are mainly interested in our **self-identity**: our beliefs and desires, and in how they cause us to act in particular ways

- *Sociologists* are interested in our **social-identity**: how our acts affect others, who have different beliefs and desires

- Develops over time, both through social negotiation with others and in inner dialogue with ourselves
Offline/online Identity

• Double identities, intentional or not

• Fragmented digital (learning) identities, professional and learning identities

• Difference between online & offline identities
Digital Learner Identity

A Digital Learner Identity is an augmented user model that captures the traces lifelong learners leave in their digital, social and physical worlds, all combined in a single model.

Helps the lifelong learner to understand what and how she is learning.
Benefits

- **Identify** relevant (groups) of **people**
  - selecting people or groups by link analysis
  - finding groups very similar to one another, but may never actually interact online, *abstract groups*
  - team recommendation, group formation
- **Ask for help** or advice, ad hoc transient groups
Benefits

• **Enhance social awareness**, how social networks influence/contribute to our learning
  
  • structure of the network (connections)

  • information, behaviour that it is disseminated throughout the network (social contagion)

• Learning propagation (contagion)

  • Foster social learning, collaboration, self-reflection, self-organization
Future work

• Explore the state of the art:
  • Current UM approaches, focused on work on (social) lifelong learning
  • Generic UM ontologies, exchange of data, aggregation
  • Explore the definition of a social learning meta-model, no predefined, captures what the learner does, and how she learns
  • Consider to start defining personas, different professional needs
Conclusions

• New ways to support lifelong learners are needed, traditional students models, competence-based approaches not suffice

• Identities are now richer, as they can combine off and online activities

• We argue that a **Digital Learner Identity** is needed, which considers formal/informal competences, off/on line activity
  • what their talents are
  • what they have learnt
  • relevance/influence their social networks have in their learning
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