



The Communication in the Communities of Practice: Is there a “Best” Tool?

MOISIG¹Rua Dr. Jaime Lopes de Amorim
4465-111 S. Mamede Infesta – Portugal
tel: +351 919 497 331, fax: +351 229 025 899
moisig@moisig.iscap.ipp.pt

INTRODUCTION

Communities of practice (CoP) are described as “groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” [Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002:4]. Additionally, we recognise that knowledge has become the key to success as well as a source of competitive advantage. Organizations are recognizing that the need to nurture the development of “communities of practice in strategic areas is a practical way to manage knowledge as an asset” [*op. cit.*:6]. These communities are not bound to an organization. They can be constituted by elements “from different organizations as well as across independent business units” [*op. cit.*:6]. These communities can be, though, collocated or distributed. For example, “[s]cientists have long been forming communities of practice by communicating across the globe (once by letter and now by e-mail). Some communities meet regularly² (...). Others are connected primarily by e-mail and phone and may meet only once or twice a year. What allows members to share knowledge is not the choice of a specific form of communication (face-to-face as opposed to Web-based, for instance), but the existence of a shared practice” [*op. cit.*:25].

Although these communities are not built around a certain technology, in some cases it is needed in order to help the group to be developed. Some CoP’s grow because they use the “right” tools. They help the members of the community, for instance, to be in touch, to share ideas and opinions, to solve problems together, to socialize, to work in the same document at the same time.

Due to a great effort of the Software Engineering, there are several tools available to help to improve collaborative work. As time goes by, these tools have acquired great usability and thus allowing users to overcome difficulties in its use and improving satisfaction and productivity.

Nevertheless, these tools are not all the same nor have they the same potentialities or functionalities. Some follow a peer-to-peer approach, while others are web-based.

In this communication, we present a CoP – MOISIG – and its characteristics as well as its communication needs. We also describe the tools experienced - (a) a mailing list (yahoogroups); (b) Groove – a peer-to-peer tool; (c) WebCT – a platform of e-learning. Finally, we analyse the cross relation between CoP’s needs and tools’ functionalities and draw some final remarks.

FOOTNOTES

¹ The members of MOISIG are: Anabela Sarmiento (ISCAP-IPP), Joao Batista (ISCA-UA), Leonor Cardoso (FPCE-UC), Mário Lousã (ISP-Gaya), Rosalina Babo (ISCAP-IPP) and Teresa Rebelo (FPCE-UC)

² One example of such community is the MOISIG – Management, Organization and Information Systems Interest Group. For further information about this community, please see the articles Cardoso *et al.*, 2000; Batista *et al.*, 2001; Sarmiento *et al.*, 2002.

0 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/proceeding-paper/communication-communities-practice/32215

Related Content

Multi-Level Service Infrastructure for Geovisual Analytics in the Context of Territorial Management

Giuseppe Conti, Raffaele De Amicis, Stefano Pifferand Bruno Simões (2010). *International Journal of Information Technologies and Systems Approach* (pp. 57-71).

www.irma-international.org/article/multi-level-service-infrastructure-geovisual/39000

An Open and Service-Oriented Architecture to Support the Automation of Learning Scenarios

Àngels Rius, Francesc Santanach, Jordi Conesa, Magí Almiralland Elena García-Barriocanal (2011). *International Journal of Information Technologies and Systems Approach* (pp. 38-52).

www.irma-international.org/article/open-service-oriented-architecture-support/51367

A Hospital Information Management System With Habit-Change Features and Medial Analytical Support for Decision Making

Cheryll Anne Augustineand Pantea Keikhosrokiani (2022). *International Journal of Information Technologies and Systems Approach* (pp. 1-24).

www.irma-international.org/article/a-hospital-information-management-system-with-habit-change-features-and-medial-analytical-support-for-decision-making/307019

Mixed Methods in Knowledge Management and Organisational Research

Sally Eaves (2015). *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology, Third Edition* (pp. 623-632).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/mixed-methods-in-knowledge-management-and-organisational-research/112375

Component Based Model Driven Development: An Approach for Creating Mobile Web Applications from Design Models

Pablo Martin Vera (2015). *International Journal of Information Technologies and Systems Approach* (pp. 80-100).

www.irma-international.org/article/component-based-model-driven-development/128829