

Hacking Gadgets to Support Learning - Easier Than You Think

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Introduction

Educators, designers and programmers have good practices in turning the Web into a learning tool, but in most of the cases either educators are lacking knowledge about programming, or programmers and designers skip the pedagogical principles and focus on software engineering and construction instead. The Web 2.0 gives us great possibilities to (re)use shared resources and to adopt them according to our needs. Numerous Open Source and commercial projects facilitate the creation of small software applications with only little knowledge about Web programming. Even if the applications are small, they may be powerful enough to help with learning tasks and fulfill the requirements of learning communities.

This proposal describes a hybrid between student activities and a workshop which aims to help young researchers in TEL to learn how to draft and realise mini-projects that can help with a learning task.

Student activities and workshop before and during the Summer School

This workshop starts already before the Summer School, to get students acquainted with the workshop's goal and to start getting familiar with the topic. Ideas should be collected in cooperation with other participants and eventually the students can already try to build some proof-of-concept or prototype of their mini-project. The pre-Summer School meetings can take place in the form of FlashMeetings or any other collaborative platform chosen by the participants. The activities during the Summer School can happen in self-organised sessions e.g. in the evenings. The workshop organisers will be available as facilitators and tutors before, during and after the Summer School.

The students present their work and try to impart their knowledge in the form of tutorials during a workshop at the end of the Summer School. They are also encouraged to find interested peers to either build upon their presented work or to eventually merge fitting projects to something bigger, which can be continued as post-Summer School activities. A real success of this workshop would be joint projects, used e.g. in the context of PLEs, and joint publications to advertise the achieved results and present the ideas to a bigger audience.

Biographies of workshop organisers

Hannes Ebner is currently performing his PhD studies at the School of Computer Science and Communication (CSC) at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Sweden. His research focus lies on loose and non-invasive collaboration, metadata interoperability and Semantic Web technologies, in particular applications of Linked Open (Meta)Data in the context of TEL. He is also one of the leading architects and developers behind numerous Open Source projects, such as the collaboration server Collaborilla, the concept browser Conzilla, the SCAM metadata and resource management framework, and the web-based electronic portfolio application Confolio.

Zinayida Petrushyna is a PhD student at the Databases and Information Systems department in RWTH Aachen University. She is interested in social networks and learning communities. Her dissertation is built on the ideas of learning media observations, data analysis and simulations. She handles the data mostly using social network analysis and natural language processing and make reasoning based on Community of Practice concept and Actor Network Theory. She teaches under others Web Science, and organize "Social Network in TEL" workshop last Summer School.