

State of the Art of Educational Repositories in Europe

EdReNe has recently published an updated comprehensive *State of the art report on educational repositories in Europe*.

Read the complete report and follow a continuously updated national status [here](#).



2008 concluded with two EdReNe expert workshops

The network now comprises 37 members of European key stakeholders within the area of educational repositories. We focus on repositories of learning resources for schools, but we make an effort in learning from experiences of higher and further education repositories, too.

In September and October 2008 we arranged two expert workshops on *Repository strategies*, and *Engagement of producers and users*. The next two expert workshops, one on standards and one on rights issues, will be held 25 – 27 February 2009 in Oegstgeest, The Netherlands, and in March in London, England, respectively.

[WS 3.2: Repository strategies, general level II in Tallinn, Estonia](#)

By the end of the workshop series EdReNe will produce a thematic synthesis report on repository strategies. The members have given highest priority to the issues:

- Quality assurance strategies (editorial policies; technical quality assurance)
- Identifying the decisive benefits that trigger repository use by important target groups: professional publishers, public institutions, teachers...

- Connecting and cooperating with existing repositories (including overcoming barriers such as language, IPR, technical issues...)
- The cost of building and maintaining a repository (business models; initial costs; establishing a critical mass of content; sustainability...)
- Strategies for involving key actors in development process

At the workshop the members discussed these five themes. At plenum sessions members and external experts presented (very different) approaches when setting up new repositories and identifying what seems to trigger success, and how pitfalls can be avoided.

Repository strategies

[WSOY's strategies and services on learning material repositories](#)

The presentation from one of the leading educational publishers in Finland detailed a strategy of providing both publisher produced and user generated content through a common interface (a platform with LMS functionality developed since launch in 2001).

Heikki Karjalainen, WSOY

National Digital Resource Bank

The background, business model and choices made so far in the ambitious project of establishing a National Digital Resource Bank – a project building upon the goal of each school having a learning platform by 2008, with the ambition to ease uptake and use through providing quality digital content.

Fiona Iglesias, NWLG

National Repository Strategies: Some Higher and Further Education Examples

An overview of the differences and similarities in the strategies chosen by three repositories: JORUM (UK, 600 institutions; higher and further education), COLEG (Scotland, 40 institutions; further education) and NDLR (Ireland, 21 institutions; higher and further education).

These repositories present three different types of motivations for building a repository: distribution of content; preservation of content; building a community of practice.

Charles Duncan, Intrallect

Education, content and Encyclopaedia Britannica

The current status and future plans of Britannica's work in the school market. With a 240 year history and tradition of content creation and moving through first digitalization and up to today where much emphasis is on providing access to content the way users want it – easy, flexible and through a number of different access routes and devices (web, LMS, portals, push technology, mobile access, eBooks, interactive whiteboards).

Adam Bates, Encyclopaedia Britannica

Group sessions and synthesis

During the group sessions participants further analysed and elaborated these areas. From the diverse nature of different settings and contexts for establishing educational repositories it is hard, if not impossible, to do a simple and rigorous presentation of best practise.

In order to present the best possible advice to existing and coming repository owners, the coming thematic synthesis report on repository

strategies will thus try to describe common obstacles and barriers, and provide examples of how they have been successfully dealt with within specific contexts. Emphasis will thus be on case descriptions combined with comparable data across countries/repositories.

In addition, existing reports and advice to repository owners on the same issues will be collected (a few examples emerged during the workshop) in order to provide as comprehensive a view on potential strategies as possible.

Group sessions also included the elaboration of the state of the art contributions and the preparation of how to deal with templates of agreements relevant to repository owners.

WS 5.2: Engaging producers and users, operational level II in Alsace, France

Next year's thematic synthesis report on Engagement of Producers and Users will further elaborate on the themes given the highest priority at the second workshop:

- My repository - the need for personalization (profiles; reviews; collections; automatic recommendations...)
- Building your own content from repository resources (allowing teachers to combine content from various producers)
- Analyzing repository use (statistics; identifying popular functions; interpreting search strings and results; user surveys; characterization of user types)
- Implementation of user generated metadata (evaluations; reviews; tagging; collaborative filtering; information on actual usage...)
- Ensuring ease of use (identifying/developing design patterns; usability; wizards...)

The workshop thus focused on presenting cases of member repositories and how they currently approach these issues.

Plenum discussions followed presentations on: flexible curriculum sharing; teachers developing digital content across institutional boundaries; and managing quality control of user generated content.



Other group sessions focused on improvements and suggestions relating to the State of the Art report, and the deliverable dealing with agreement templates relevant to repository owners. A session addressed the current state of health of educational repositories – describing the most profound ailments (by examining specific repository examples) and suggesting cures.

How does ‘my’ repository address the top issues?

EducaSources

The current implementation does not include many personalization possibilities, but this is a major part of a planned upgrade. As EducaSources is a referatory the combination of content depends on the possibilities offered by the referenced websites. An important part of the added value of EducaSources is the current high quality of metadata, and even though plans are to allow users to have more “web 2.0 like” interaction with records in the next release, there is no intention of including user tagging as the basis for e.g. navigation.

Rosa Maria Gómez, CNDP

Scoilnet

On the personalization issues, users can create a favourite collection, add items to a personal clipboard and set preferences corresponding to their subject areas. A new service – Scoilnet Maps – allows addition of user specific content. For building your own content Scoilnet offers various possibilities primarily consisting of an authoring tool (new service) and CC licensed assets. The presentation also included examples on how statistics can be useful for knowing what content

is requested and when to publish it, and also presented data from an Inspectorate report including evaluation of the use of Scoilnet.

Mike O’Byrne, NCTE

www.schule.at and www.eduhi.at

By far the largest and most successful repository in Austria (part of portal). Plans exist of implementing personalization in the form of profiles and personal collections. The statistics show what the most popular types of content are – and give a focus on the content to search for /have developed. The most important keys to the success were presented as: Old but good - a portal that stays; from teachers for teachers; always try to adapt to different needs from subjects.

Astrid Leeb, Education Highway

Vetamix

Vetamix focuses to a large extent on actually producing content, e.g. with a simple authoring tool (“lesson mixer”) allowing users to build and share personal collections. Other examples of user involvement include possibilities for tagging, adding favourites to user profiles and discussion forums connected to repository resources. The experiences gathered and statistics are still relatively limited as Vetamix was launched August 2008.

Christian Komonen, Vetamix

Materialeplattformen and Fagenes Infoguide

The two repositories were launched almost ten years apart in time and thus tackle the issues differently. A major difference is on the personalization side where the newest initiative (Materialeplattformen) allows for users to

contribute and edit own materials, and it also offers services for exposing repository content via RSS or easily customized integration of search results in other web sites through JavaScript. Content deposited by teachers is shared under CC licenses in an attempt to increase the possibilities for reuse – but it is still early in the process, and different CC licenses are allowed. There is no present use of tagging or integrated community features. The statistics presented showed examples of how knowledge of user behaviour can lead to “quick wins” when developing new functionality.

Tommy Byskov Lund, UNI•C

Engaging users in creating and reusing content, and sharing experiences

Next big thing: support flexible curriculum building

“On top of sharing digital content why not share experiences of actually using it”.

Henk Nijstad, Kennisnet

Teachers developing digital content across institutional boundaries: why and how

National associations of secondary schools have initiated a project on developing their own digital content.

Henk Nijstad, Kennisnet

JClic and Virtual Notebooks - Building a repository on the success of an authoring tool

The free software JClic allows for easy production of interactive platform-independent learning resources. Virtual Notebooks allows teachers to create online “notebooks”. Both authoring tools integrate with Moodle.

Francesc Busquets, XTEC

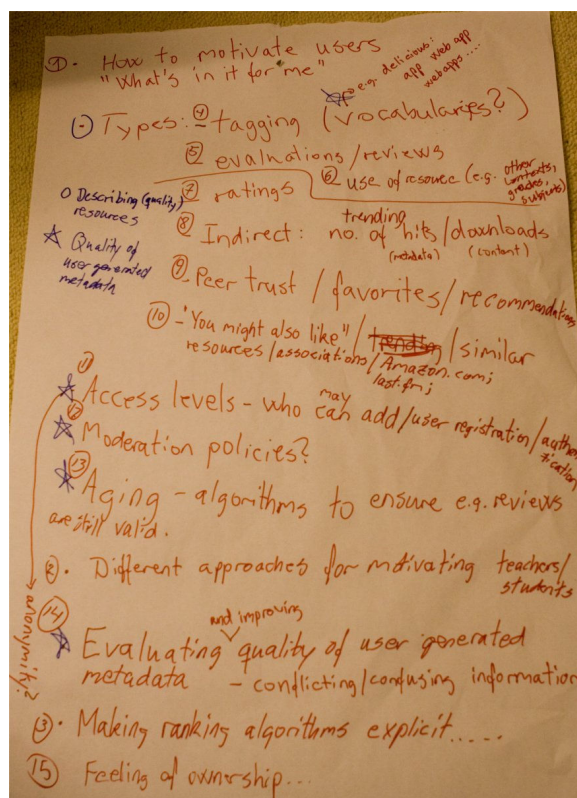
Managing quality of user generated content

“Focusing on user generated content leaves you with the problem of either a heavy burden on central quality control or the risk of disappointing users when they find low quality content.”

Leonie Verhoeff, Kennisnet

Group sessions

- Input for thematic synthesis report Engaging users
- Updated version of the State of the Art report on educational repositories
- Current State of Health of European Educational Repositories - As Diagnosed by the EdReNe Thematic Network
- Resulting summary presentation, presented at Online Educa 2008
- Templates for agreements between repositories and content owners/providers



December 2008, [Leo Højsholt-Poulsen](#), UNI•C, EdReNe coordinator