Center for LifeLong Learning & Design

University of Colorado at Boulder

Wisdom is not the product of schooling but the lifelong attempt to acquire it.
- Albert Einstein

Increasing Participation and Sustaining a Research Community in 'Creativity and IT'

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Research Methodology

basic research on **real problems**

Basic Research

- **objective:** create an analytic framework to exploit cultures of participation to understand and support social creativity

- **next generation wikis**
    - evaluate **success stories**: open source, Wikipedia, 3D Warehouse
    - **failure stories:** many wikis dead on arrival (e.g.: "Science of Design")
    - predominantly text → supporting **different media types**
    - **tension/trade-off:** Wikis = "The simplest online database that could possibly work" ←→ rich functionality means more demands on the participants
    - content management systems → **participative systems**

Real Problem: The CreativeIT Wiki

Real Problem

- **objective:** create an extensive socio-technical environment (one stop shopping, anchor point, historical account, ….): useful, usable, reliable, informative, up-to-date, inspiring, …….

- create **rich seeds** to reach a "tipping point"

- tie the CreativeIT community together **indefinitely** (beyond the CreativeIT program at NSF)

- the current CreativeIT Wiki served **several activities** including:
    - original NSF workshop (Nov 2006)
    - NSF workshop in Arizona (Jan 2008)
    - this workshop, ... (Jan 2009)

Assessment

- the **threshold** to get started was too high

- the perceived **value and benefits** to participate need to be substantially increased

- media and attention **competition**

- the prototype in its current form succeeds as a content management systems but provides **little support for community discussion**;

- the existing seed is still to impoverished to come close to reach a **"tipping point"** of broad-based participation → the involvement of the community at large remained limited

Current Research Agenda

- better support for **finding** important existing information and highlighting **opportunities for collaboration**

- making **ongoing changes** (providing the rationale for participants to return on a regular basis) easier to recognize

- include **examples, models, and tutorials** of how to design interesting contributions (specifically for new users)

- explore **pro-active efforts** from the developing team to act as facilitators and mediators to encourage and invite participation (e.g.: events, featured projects of the week)

- support **targeted communities** (e.g.: PhD students working on creativity)

The New Wiki: migration to more sustainable, extensible substrate