# Agenda

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**Social Software in E-Learning Initiatives in Developing Countries**

Tanja Kohn

Introduction

- many technologies enter the “new” e-learning market
- developing countries
- e-learning initiatives expand
- Initiatives promoting low-cost computers for developing countries:
  - OLPC (One Laptop per Child): most famous of the initiatives, provide low cost computing devices for the developing world, a Linux-based, low-power laptop meant to connect wirelessly to broadband using mesh networks and featuring an innovative display mechanism
  - Intel Classmate (Eduwise): Intel's low-cost laptops for the education market, utilize flash memory instead of a hard drive and run Microsoft Windows XP

Social Software

- Definitions have a common stress on the importance of **creating networks and relations between people and the support of group interaction.**

- Tools to support collaboration, communication, and networking are called **social software.** [Anderson 2005]

- “Software that enables communication through digital technologies during which people connect, converse, collaborate, manage content, and form online networks in a social and bottom-up fashion.” [Wever et al. 2007: 512]

Social Software

- Social software can be categorized in various ways, e.g., **synchronous and asynchronous social software.** [Maier et al. 2005]

- In e-learning, social software is used to support communication, coordination, collaboration, and networking, e.g.:
  - instant messaging and real-time communication
  - mailing lists
  - fora and message-boards
  - text, audio, and video blogs
  - wikis
  - software platforms for rich interaction
  - musical taste-sharing and photo-sharing
  - social networking software [Maier 2007: 628, Wever et al. 2007]
Knowledge Transfer

Knowledge transfer is part of the knowledge sharing process and is fostered by social software for co-existence, communication, coordination, and collaboration that are used for e-learning.

Research Design

- What social software is used in e-learning initiatives in developing countries?

- case study analysis (2005-2007)
  - keywords: e-learning, developing country, education, ICT, social software
  - countries: South Africa, Botswana, West Indies, and Oman

- empirical multiple case study in Peru
Model of E-Learning Initiatives across Institutions

6 main social relationships; including: stakeholders, knowledge transfer, and examples of possible used social software

Results of Case Study Analysis

- asynchronous tools are mainly in use
  - mailing lists
  - discussion fora
- other tools in use:
  - electronic quiz
  - chat
  - (audio/video) conference
  - game software
  - digital whiteboard
Example: OLPC – Chat Application

Chat
The Chat activity provides a simple environment for discussion, whether it’s between two individuals or an entire classroom.


XO Laptop –
software and collaborative activities

Home
Group - inviting
Neighbourhood - sharing
Conclusion

- the use of social software in such settings is still very little
- and so is the variation of social software
- chat, fora, and mailing lists domain the use of social software

- technical recommendations:
  - Internet access
  - than: open-source tools and free Web-based services are easily available
- organizational recommendations:
  - involve participants as early as possible
  - teachers training to integrate such software

OLPC Peru Impressions

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