Motivational factors of older people's peer learning

Methodology for participatory workshops

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Abstract

This deliverable is prepared within the WP2 of the PEER project, namely WP2: 'Peer-to-Peer learning methods for older people. As the first deliverable within this WP, its aim is to define the methodology for research based on participatory user-involvement workshops of the motivational aspects for older people's peer learning on social network platforms, in particular on platforms for 50+ adults.

By doing so, the workshops which contributes to guide the research performed in other WPs when considering the preferences and needs of the end-user.

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List of Abbreviations

WP	work package
OSN	Online Social Network

1 Introduction

This document presents the methodological framework that has been developed as a start-up input to the PEER project, WP2 – Peer-to-Peer learning methods for older people and serves as methodology for participatory user-involvement workshops.

1.1 About the PEER Project

PEER (full title: "Sapere aude! Dare to be wise!") is an LLP / Grundtvig project aiming to provide facilitation of informal and non-formal peer learning in online communities supported by customized Web2.0 tools for adults aged 50+.

Start date: 1 October, 2011   End date: 30 September, 2013

Website: www.peer-learning-50plus.eu

1.2 About this deliverable

This deliverable is prepared within the WP2 of the PEER project, namely WP2: 'Peer-to-Peer learning methods for older people. As the first deliverable within this WP, its aim is to define the methodology for research based on participatory user-involvement workshops of the motivational aspects for older people's peer learning on social network platforms, in particular on platforms for 50+ adults.

By doing so, the workshops which contributes to guide the research performed in other WPs when considering the preferences and needs of the end-user.

Target audience of the deliverable

This document is a public deliverable. Still, it is mainly intended for the project partners and the European Commission services thus the document will be made public, but not specifically disseminated on a wider scale.

Research questions in WP2

There is some research surrounding questions of the adaption and use of the social network platforms and in particular of 50+ platforms by older people, but we know little about which tools would be preferably used for learning purposes by older people.

Within WP2 we have two areas of investigation:

1. What are state of the art theories and research regarding motivating factors of learning and in particular of peer-to-peer learning in general and on social network platforms in particular. Based on **literature study**, relevant research questions are defined and theories are discussed in D3.

2. Based on these findings in D3, **participatory workshops** (in Glasgow/ Scotland and Ulm/ Germany) will be hold, both dealing with following research questions:

   • What are the experiences with sharing of information and knowledge among peers both in offline and online settings? What are the positive aspects and where and how occur barriers?

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- What motivates information and knowledge exchange in peer settings related to social and technological aspects?

2 Methodology for participatory user-involvement workshops

When searching for and adapting Web2.0 tools it is essential to investigate the needs and requirements for new solutions and elaborate appropriate concepts that relate to these specified needs. But eliciting requirements from older people with limited experience in ICT usage for innovative products that they don't know yet is a challenging process. Some of the information we are trying to elicit from the older participants during the workshops can be sensitive, and care needs to be taken to choose topics carefully and introduce sensitive topics appropriately.

Older people may feel reluctant to talk about their personal problems (Subasi, Leitner et al. 2008), not only because they are proud and want to keep their self-esteem, but also because they have difficulties to explain on a cognitive level what they consider to be a topic related to their emotions. Many older people may not want to talk about topics such as learning problems or motives not to exchange knowledge. So older people prefer rather to talk about the problems of others (for instance of friends) or problems of the whole group.

Another challenge that researchers face when involving older people in the design-process is the knowledge and cultural gap between researchers and older people regarding technology. Older people have limited experiences with new technology, and their opinion about technology is often based on very little knowledge, stories from friends, neighbours or the media. As a result, (Inglis, Szymkowiak et al. 2002) found out older generations which has less experience with new technology cannot specify the functionalities they need.[1]

In conclusion, any methodology regarding involvement of older people into research on new technology is challenged to:

Create trust and remove fear of technology:

To create an ambience of trust and open experience exchange the first phase of user-involvement requires the researcher to:

- Explain the research process and make users aware of their role as "experts" in the design process.

- Try to eliminate the fear of new technology (e.g. through a game-like approach) and create an awareness that problems with technology can be in

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[1] For more details on challenging issues in involving older people into technology design processes access Schwarz-Woelzl and Holocher-Ertl (2011): D2.1 Methodology of research in WP2, downloadable from https://www.zsi.at/attach/Go-myLife%20-%20D2.1%20Methodology%20of%20research%20in%20WP2_version_FINAL.pdf (29/02/2012)

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many cases attributed to poor product design and not to the poor knowledge of end-users

▪ Use interactive presentation formats to keep attention and focus high

Stimulate experiences with new technology:

To allow end-users to participate in fruitful discussions about new technology that they have not even experienced yet:

▪ Provide hands-on sessions with technology to collect first experiences with new technology

▪ Work with scenarios, photos and videos to increase imagination and tie the technology to practical concerns of the target group's everyday life.

▪ Involve older people as critics rather than as designers

Alternate between different group sizes and question formats:

To collect experiences and feedback from older people:

▪ Work with a balance of smaller groups to collect in-depth information and bigger groups to stimulate fruitful discussions

▪ Use structured questions

Plan the elicitation of sensitive information carefully

To collect sensitive information, like social isolation or loneliness consider in your planning:

▪ Which viewpoint users should take ("For me?", "For the group?" "For others?")

▪ Talk about future fears rather than current problems

Consider the knowledge and culture gap between end-users and designers

To assure the integration of the end-users' needs in the design process of new products:

▪ Provide designers with artefacts, descriptions, testimonials etc that illustrate the problems end-users have with new technology, for instance using video-sequences or personas.

▪ Provide training for designers to interact with older people appropriately

2.1 Design of the participative Go-myLife Workshops

The PEER project foresees two workshops in Glasgow (Scotland) and Ulm (Germany)

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Based on preliminary findings via literature review (D3) on theories of older people learning patterns, motivational factors in peer learning settings and their technology enhances learning patterns we elaborated a detailed agenda for these two workshops in the following.

The participants involved in each workshop are ten end-users aged 50+ and who are already retired. These ten end-users ideally are split into two profiles:

- Half of them should rely on experiences in sharing information and knowledge;
- Half of them should rely on experiences in using online social network platforms, ideally in 50+ platforms

Further, an equal gender division should be given.

2.1.1   Methodology and instruments applied

2.1.1.1   Introduction to the topic of peer learning and online social networks

Timeframe: 10H00 – 10H35 (35 minutes)
- Presentation of the PEER project, the role of the end-users in the project and the objectives of the workshop (5 min)
- Introduction of the participants and researchers (5 min)
- Conduction of the Online Social Network Quiz that poses 8 questions related to OSN and 50+ platforms, as well as different learning styles with focus on learning amongst peers (20 min)

Objectives:
- Make participants understand that they are the experts of their "Lebenswelt" – the world of their own life experience.
- Sensitizing participants to the fact that technology is often produced in a way that makes it difficult to use for end-users. In other words, that problems in handling new technologies are often not due to the end-users' low capability but due to low usability.
- Introduce users to the topic of online social networks and their increasing relevance in peoples' lives. Introduce the concept of peer-learning.
- Create a climate of open exchange between participants and researchers

2.1.1.2   Contextual investigation of older people's experiences with OSN and PEER learning

Timeframe: 10H35 – 11H20 (45 minutes)

Using the card technique, we will investigate if and how the participants have already shared experiences with others online and in the real world. Participants will be posed five questions and note their input to those questions on cards. These cards will be shortly presented by the participants, collected and thematically structured on flipcharts by the moderator. This collection and

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collaborative discussion aims to create a common understanding amongst participants about the topic under investigation. The questions are:

- What are current important topics/problems, where the experiences of others proved to be helpful? -> collection and structuring of topics
- How was the experience sharing taking place (online, offline)? -> collection and structuring of communication means
- What were the positive aspects for those participating? -> collection and structuring of benefits
- Were there barriers or problems that occurred? -> collection and structuring of barriers
- How could this sharing of experiences between peers be supported (also thinking about technology)? .-> collection and structuring of improvements

Objectives:

- Increase trust in participants' own expertise concerning the topic under discussion, "picking" them up where they stand at the moment.
- Foster the understanding and reflection about the topics under discussion, with questions that are still easy to answer.
- Collect first experiences related to peer learning (from the group of participants who are experts in information exchange), and on 50+ platforms (from the group of participants who have first experiences on OSN). Thus create a common understanding amongst participants.
- Analyse the outcomes from this discussion with regard to required technological features and facilitation services which support the motivation for peer learning on online platforms.

11H20 – 11H30 - short break

2.1.1.3   *Presentation of PEER learning scenario and claim analysis*

Timeframe: 11H30-12H30

Presentation of a PEER learning scenario and playful discussion of barriers and motivators in this scenario:

- The presentation of the PEER learning scenario will be visualized along a timeline comparable to a film scrip or storyboard, using screenshots from a forum, pictures for fictive participants, speech bubbles for the dialogs.

- After the presentation of the PEER learning scenario a claim analysis is conducted. For this task the participants are split up into two mixed groups of five persons each: each group consists of participants who have already experience with OSN and participants who have experience in knowledge sharing.

- One group is responsible to come up with cons in the claim analysis (=Bengerl) and to suggest barriers and problems that might arrive during

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the scenario. These barriers can be related to technology, to issues of trust and social relationship, to the content shared etc.

- The other group is responsible to come up wit pros in the claim analysis (=Engerl) that either help to deal with the cons or are motivators to keep the participants involved in the scenario and improve the outcome of the scenario. Again motivational issues can be related to social aspects in learning, to technological features, to improved processes.

- After 20 minutes the groups change their roles.

- At the end a summary and structuring of the inputs is organised by the moderator.

Objectives:

- Make participants understand the PEER vision through the learning scenario.

- Learn about expected barriers and perceived values within the learning scenario through this playful claim analysis.

- Change to group-work to change participants' mind-set form the "me" into the "we" which will more easily reveal sensitive barriers for peer learning and foster creativity in finding solutions to encountered problems. Taking a wider viewpoint will also help to reveal barriers and motivators that older people might have heard of from friends.

- Stimulate participation and avoid losing the participants' interest and concentration. Make participants better understand in which role the researchers are, when trying to find solutions to all the barriers and problems which might occur during a peer learning process on an online platform.

- Analyse the outcomes from this discussion with regard to required technological features and facilitation services which support the motivation for peer learning on online platforms.

Background information on this instrument:

For this task the project will combine the scenario approach with a claim analysis in a playful way. User scenarios are "informal narrative descriptions" (Carroll 2000) about a persona or personas (hypothetical archetypes of actual users) and their activities, emphasizing the goals the user wants to reach with a specific product, the persona's expectations concerning particular systems and the most critical tasks that he/she wants to execute. Scenarios can be described in different ways including text, speech, photographs and video clips (Isacker, Slegers et al. 2009).

For the participatory workshop we will create the PEER learning scenario of a fictive persona, Sue, who joins her peer network on a 50+ platform to retrieve information and experiences from others on the topic of successful transition from gainful work to retirement. This scenario will be visualized along a timeline using a storyboard as means of visualization.

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After the presentation of this PEER learning scenario the participants are divided into two groups. The role of the groups is to conduct a claim analysis (Chin, Rosson et al. 1997). A claim discovers specific consequences from using an artefact in a situation. Consequences may be either positive or negative for the user. In our case the pros describe the expected advantages that the usage of the PEER environment might evoke and also discuss additional features that might increase these advantages. While the cons collect problems of using the presented technology in the PEER learning scenario.

We modified the claim analysis approach to a more playful experience, with the aim to keep attention and the focus of participants high, stimulate participation as well as the creative search for solutions.

12H30 – 13H30 - lunch break

2.1.1.4   Analysis of motivational aspects for peer learning among the target group of older people

Timeframe: 13H30-14H00

The analysis of motivational aspects for peer learning will be conducted as individual task by the participants. They will individually elaborate a 3-ary "motivation" pyramid for peer learning as well as a 3-ary "barrier" pyramid for peer learning.

- The participants get around 12 statements related to the motivators for experience exchange which were identified in the literature research in WP2 Deliverable 3.

- They have to individually prioritise these statements, and add them to 3 priority levels (3=very important aspect for me, 2= quite important aspect for me, 1= less important aspect for me).

- The also receive blank statements to add motivational aspects that are relevant to them and have not been mentioned before.

- They do the same with 12 motivational barriers for knowledge exchange.

Objectives:

- This tasks aims to foster the individual reflection amongst participants on their personal motivational drivers and barriers for peer learning.

- This exercise is based on the discussion of the PEER learning scenario from the previous workshop task and prepares the ground for the final discussion at the end of the workshop.

- It will also raise awareness for the heterogeneity of learning styles and how different individuals can perceive barriers and drivers for peer learning.

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Background information on this instrument:

From existing theories on motivation for learning there a number of aspects that are known to positively influence the motivation to learn and exchange experiences with others. In addition research has also identified motivational barriers for learning and knowledge exchange.

In the achievement goal theory the learners' behavior of actively engaging in learning is influenced by two different sets of goals: learning goals and performance goals.

Learning- or mastery-goal oriented individuals want to increase their competence and challenges are seen as an opportunity to learn. Therefore, such individuals are associated with challenge seeking behaviour (despite low confidence in ability) and high persistence under difficulty.

Performance goal oriented individuals want to gain favourable judgments of their competence and challenges are seen as a test to measure competence. Individuals may seek in difficult situations to be judged competent and not incompetent.

An important contribution to this multi-goal perspective comes from [9] who differentiate between social and academic goals, where the former reflect desires to achieve a particular social outcome. Social goals influence achievement in their own right, as well as together with learning goals and the pursuit of social goals, as being cooperative, compliant, and willing to share, is positively related with successful learning. Thus, research suggests that combining orientation towards learning goals and orientation towards social goals to increase learning and performance .

Also Ryan and Deci stress the importance of social embeddedness for learning, and add two more factors: autonomy and the feeling of competence. Feeling competent to conduct a specific learning and knowledge sharing task is also reflected in the self-efficacy theory from Bandura and states that learners and knowledge sharers have to feel confident to be able to fulfill a task in order to be motivated to do it.

The positive influence of being embedded in a learning community on the learners' motivation is also confirmed by other scholars. Their research emphasizes the importance of collaboration for successful learning and suggests that social factors can be as powerfully motivating as intellectual ones in keeping learners on task. Collaboration enhances the active exchange of ideas within small groups, increases interest among participants, and promotes critical thinking.

Amongst the most important barriers for peer learning are trust in the expertise of others, but also trust in the relationships with others and that one's knowledge is not used in some ….

2.1.1.5   Collection of suggestions for technological features and required facilitating conditions

Timeframe: 14H00 – 15H00 (60 min)

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In this final task the workshop moderator involves the participants into the final discussion which aims to reveal ideas and suggestions for technology and facilitation services that might increase the motivation for online peer learning on 50+ platforms.

The questions discussed are:

- What should be supported by the peer project and technology?
- What is very important for participants when it comes to knowledge exchange?
- What are the biggest barriers to address?

Objectives:

- Understand what are the most important motivational aspects for peer learning and how those can be supported with technological features and also facilitating conditions.
- Collect suggestions on how to improve the PEER learning scenario with technology and facilitating conditions.
- Analyse the outcomes from this discussion with regard to required technological features and facilitation services which support the motivation for peer learning on online platforms.

15H00 – 15H15

Feedback round and closing session (15 min)

Ask participants to describe their experiences of the workshop in three words

Thank participants for the participation and give an outlook on future activities of the PEER project

2.2 Agenda

10H00 – 10H15

Introduction to the project – 15 min

10H15 – 10H35

Online social network & peer learning quiz – 20 min

10H35 – 11H20

Collection of experiences on OSN and with peer learning – 45 min

11H20 – 11H30

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Short break

10H30-12H30

Peer learning scenario and claim analysis– 60 min

12H30 – 13H30

Lunch break

13H30 – 14H00

Motivational aspects of peer learning – 30 min

14H00 – 15H00

Final discussion – 60 min

15H00 – 15H15

Feedback round and closing session (15 min)