

# SVEA, Developing Custom Tools to Promote Web 2.0 in VET and Adult Training

Schoofs B.<sup>1</sup>, Marcellin L.<sup>2</sup>, Heylen E.<sup>1</sup>, Op de Beeck I.<sup>1</sup>, Van Petegem W.<sup>1</sup>, Newrly P.<sup>3</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>[EuroPACE ivzw](#), <sup>2</sup>[CSP – Innovazione nelle ICT](#), <sup>3</sup>[MFG Baden-Württemberg](#)

**Key words:** *e-learning, web 2.0, adult and VET training, lifelong learning,*

## Abstract:

*The use of web 2.0 social platforms such as wikis and blogs, offers new possibilities for networking and project management. In VET (Vocational Education and Training) and adult training in particular, these web 2.0 tools can be used to allow more learner-centred, and self-explorative learning. However, several barriers to integrate such flexible tools in training courses remain. The SVEA project aims to provide education professionals in adult and VET training with both an on- and offline training framework on the applications of web 2.0.*

## 1 Introduction

Web 2.0 technologies offer new possibilities for networking, cooperative production and sharing of content, production of publicity, project management and knowledge management. These decentralized management processes are need-oriented, faster and more efficient than past centralized management processes.

The SVEA project aims to provide education professionals in VET and adult training with both an on- and offline training framework on the applications of web 2.0. In doing so SVEA seeks to enhance both their education skill set, and to streamline and decentralize organizational processes. The resulting collaborative management and enhanced learning environment, will allow for greater competitiveness and increased visibility in the education market.

## 2 Implementing Web 2.0 for Organizational and Personnel Development in VET and Adult Training

SVEA addresses the collaboration and web 2.0 skills of teachers and trainers in VET and adult training institutions with a special focus on personnel and organizational development. Personnel and organizational development plays a significant role for the strategic development of every organization. Especially for organizations whose business concept foots on the knowledge of highly qualified employees such as training institutions, who are dependent on innovative personnel and organizational management concepts. An effective and target-oriented communication and knowledge exchange is an important asset, but is only possible with an organizational culture that evolves away from the classic hierarchical model towards flat hierarchies and self-organization of teams.



Enhancing web 2.0 competences will not only empower teachers and trainers within their organization enabling them to actively co-develop their organizational processes within their organization; but at the same time will also enable them to use these tools for learner-centred teaching. The use of web 2.0 social platforms such as wikis and blogs, offers new possibilities for networking and project management. In VET and adult training in particular, these web 2.0 tools can be used to allow more learner-centred, and self-explorative learning.

The implementation of web 2.0 will stimulate the overall organizational development.



### 3 SVEA Regional Analysis

SVEA aims to develop an on- and offline training for trainers in VET and adult training institutions to strengthen their knowledge on how to integrate social media tools in their training courses. In order to identify the actual needs of the trainers in Europe a needs analysis of the target groups within the SVEA partner regions was conducted.

#### 3.1 Results

The SVEA regional needs analysis is a result of five regional analyses conducted in the SVEA consortium regions (Germany, Italy, Spain, Wales, Belgium). All together 60 representatives from different VET and adult training institutions participated in the analysis, which was structured in four phases:

Stakeholder mapping, desktop research, phone interviews, regional round table workshops

##### 3.1.1 Current ICT and Social Media Usage in the Regions

The use of internet averages from 42% to 80% of the population in the 5 project partner's countries [1][2]. Broadband connectivity ranges from 39% to 69%. In the whole of Europe internet usage varies from 30% to 90%. The overall picture is that ICT skills and internet usage are increasing year on year and that the use in education is becoming more effective as a result. An important precondition for a successful implementation and integration of collaborative online applications into the VET and adult training system is a competent and proficient use of ICT and Social Media applications by the learners. SVEA aims to deliver exactly that platform on which anyone can work with web 2.0 applications while not drowning in a sea of options.

##### 3.1.2 The Current Use of Web 2.0 Applications within VET and Adult Training

Trainers participating in the regional analysis are fully aware of the range of web 2.0 applications available on the internet and their usage in a social context. Within their trainings many institutions are offering collaborative elements within their closed learning platforms, which the trainers can use to organize their training. However, it is mostly up to the trainers to

decide whether they really want to use them and to what extent. In general, participants recognized a need of web 2.0 tools to collaborate and share knowledge and resources. The institutions varied from having a very positive approach to the use of such tools, to the banning of use by both staff and students for control and security reasons. The ones effectively using applications are most familiar with: Facebook being the social networking application of choice, YouTube and Flickr for video and photo sharing, LinkedIn for professional networks and, increasingly, Twitter for daily networking.

### 3.1.3 *Current Trends*

In the next few years people working in the education system expect a stronger uptake of social media tools in the further education sector due to the following trends:

- Training at work is becoming more important. Learning in the workplace requires fast access to knowledge, information and expertise. This can be offered more easily by using flexible web 2.0 applications.
- A mixture of face-to-face and online training is becoming important as it offers more flexibility. The Internet will become a real asset to the future delivery of training. The challenge for the learner will be to handle this large information flow.
- The use of web 2.0 tools within the preparation and the follow-up phases of training courses will increase.
- The trainer's role will change: he/she will be more and more a moderator offering a framework for learning to the learners, guiding them through the information to gain the relevant knowledge. The learners will generate the learning content on their own by using collaborative online tools.

### 3.1.4 *Challenges of Implementing Web 2.0 in VET and Adult Training*

During the SVEA regional needs analysis it was possible to identify common barriers for each of the projects partners' countries.

The needs vary from cultural over institutional to technological barriers.

One has to keep in mind that older students/teachers are not easy to persuade to **start using** an electronic learning environment. **Poor digital literacy and lack of web 2.0 usage**, particularly among lifelong learners, were identified by all countries as a problem.

There is still a **lack of acceptance** by both trainers and learners of the value of using web 2.0 tools. Sometimes this is due to a lack of knowledge, as well as the concern that it would require a change in the way training is designed and delivered.

General **guidelines** on how to use such applications or guidance on new **good practises** are not easily identified.

**Copyright** was identified as an issue. As we are talking about collaborative tools, it is not easy to control the exchange of content among students.

**Safety** when using open web 2.0 applications is most certainly an issue that needs attention since institutions have a duty of care to students.



SVEA seeks to respond to the needs identified within the regional needs analysis with appropriate measures and activities, which leverage on the possibilities offered by web 2.0 tools. SVEA is undertaking actions to offer concrete solutions, to close the identified gaps and to have adequate answers to the trends, which need to be responded to. Actions consist of **short training modules, webinars** as well as a **training platform** offering functionalities such as establishing social networking groups, a wiki and a blog to share information and a platform to provide feedback in an easy way.

On the other hand the analysis identified a multitude of benefits as well.

Web 2.0 tools offer **high level of collaboration**, allowing remote group/individuals to collaborate through a variety of online communications methods. By integrating web 2.0 tools and internet resources in training courses the learner has the opportunity to **acquire new knowledge very quickly**. Thanks to the facilities offered students can connect at any time, in any place and critically analyze the information available, which leads to a **high level of learning**. Courses integrating web 2.0 applications are much **more learner and target group oriented** than classical face-to-face trainings. The learning success consequently has the potential to be much higher. **Improved technical infrastructure** allows institutions to support staff and students more flexibly and market courses more effectively.

### ***3.2 Developing a Collaborative Training & Working Environment***

Following previous analysis we identified an open source solution, being an online working environment based on the main features of web 2.0 paradigm. The central concept was to integrate several functionalities into a single and easy-to-use working environment.

**The collaborative platform designed for SVEA** is based on **Open atrium**<sup>1</sup>, an environment that allows distance and self-paced learning and where students and trainers interact and build communities of practice through the use of social tools.

The main aim of the platform is to:

- enhance the skills of individuals;
- make the information produced more accessible and visible;
- promote collaborative learning practices;
- transform “tacit” knowledge into “explicit” knowledge;
- reduce the use of redundant, non-categorized resources, such as e-mails, facilitating archiving, the traceability of learning processes and the rational use of the skills base.

Through the use of the **SVEA platform** users can share information and bookmarks, write collaboratively, organize their daily activity and task as well as communicate easily with each other.

The main part of this platform is the group space where users can access all the available functionalities. The home page is structured as a dashboard, customizable with several mini widgets. They can be turned on and off and arranged as pleased: in this way users and groups can manage their specific information workflow.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://openatrium.com/>

In order to help people communicate, the platform provides a **blog**, which allows the user to have conversations on several topics with his team and other users as well as to provide feedback and discuss the training.

In addition, the management and sharing of documents and attachments within a group is guaranteed through the **wiki** tool. As a safeguard against loss of data, users can save, see revisions and revert the wiki page to a previous version. In order to help the user identify what changes have been made to a certain document from other members a “**Highlight changes**” functionality is provided.

Other than the collaborative writing users can also save documents in different formats and navigate through a file repository and personalize it assigning access permission to other users. This functionality supports sharing of external knowledge and facilitates the students learning activity.

Another important functionality is provided by the so-called **Case Tracker**, a full ticketing system, which allows assigning to do lists and create unlimited projects within each group. The case tracker also allows to classify the to do, give it a priority, and manage its status. The user can also set the status, priority and type of the case.

All the actions performed by the users inside the platform can be notified to the other members who are then always informed about the status of the overall project.

In addition, the **SVEA Platform** allows the user to share events and meetings with his team, using the calendar feature. In order to integrate different information flow and to avoid duplication of information among different platforms, users are able to import public calendars (i.e. Google calendar) into a group calendar.

Furthermore, the platform allows the aggregation of several social tools, external such as twitter and *ad hoc* ones as, for instance, a facebook like status, the sharing of bookmarks, photos, videos and a shoutbox which is a sort of microblogging service. The shoutbox allows the user to share short messages, links, and information with just the people in your group providing an instant communication tool that makes knowledge sharing easier.

## 4. Conclusion

Virtually all aspects of modern society are being transformed by the Internet and education is no exception. Training and learning at work are becoming more important. This requires fast access to knowledge, information and expertise. This can be realized more easily by using flexible web 2.0 applications.

The trainer's role will change: he/she will be more and more a moderator offering a framework for learning to the learners, guiding them through the information to gain the relevant knowledge. The learners will generate the learning content on their own by using collaborative online tools.

The overall trends confirm and strengthen our intention to further promote the web 2.0 uptake in VET and adult training institutions. SVEA will support these trends by developing and offering the aforementioned targeted support instruments.

## Acknowledgement

SVEA is funded by the European Commission within the Lifelong Learning Programme. It is being undertaken by MFG Baden-Württemberg (D) as project coordinator with support from four European partners: CSP Innovazione nelle ICT in Italy, EuroPACE in Belgium, FUNDECYT in Spain and Coleg Sir Gâr in Wales.

## References:

- [1] SVEA Project Consortium (2010); SVEA Summary of the Regional Needs Analysis  
[http://www.svea-project.eu/fileadmin/\\_svea/downloads/SVEA\\_Regional\\_Needs\\_Analysis\\_01.pdf](http://www.svea-project.eu/fileadmin/_svea/downloads/SVEA_Regional_Needs_Analysis_01.pdf)
- [2] C. Redecker, K. Ala-Mutka, M. Bacigalupo, A. Ferrari Y. Punie, (2009) “Learning 2.0: The Impact of Web 2.0 Innovations on Education and Training in Europe”, JCR Scientific and Technical Report

## Author(s):

Barbara Schoofs  
EuroPACE ivzw  
Kapeldreef 62, 3001 Heverlee, Belgium  
Barbara.schoofs@avnet.kuleuven.be

Lara Marcellin, Collaborative & Interactive Architectures Manager  
CSP - Innovazione nelle ICT s.c.ar.l., Engineering Department  
via Livorno, 60 - 10144 - Torino - Italy  
Lara.marcellin@csp.it

Erwin Heylen  
EuroPACE ivzw  
Kapeldreef 62, 3001 Heverlee, Belgium  
Erwin.heylen@avnet.kuleuven.be

Ilse Op de Beeck  
EuroPACE ivzw  
Kapeldreef 62, 3001 Heverlee, Belgium  
Ilse.opdebeeck@avnet.kuleuven.be

Wim Van Petegem, Dr.  
AVNet-K.U.Leuven / EuroPACE ivzw  
Kapeldreef 62, 3001 Heverlee, Belgium  
[Wim.vanpetegem@avnet.kuleuven.be](mailto:Wim.vanpetegem@avnet.kuleuven.be)

Petra Newrly, Project Manager Project Development /European Educational Projects  
MFG Baden-Württemberg  
Breitscheidstrasse 4, D-70174 Stuttgart, Germany  
Newrly@mfg.de



Lifelong Learning Programme

