
QUALITY MANAGEMENT OF PEER PRODUCTION – ABSTRACT

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Peer production of e-learning content is a growing trend, which will play an elementary role in creating, validating, enriching, editing, and updating of digital learning content.

The contemporary trend in digital content is that ordinary users will enter the nucleus of digital content production. There are already today a variety of important success actions in peer production and collaborative work: the peer production mechanism has been central e.g. in the development of Linux software and the Wikipedia movement. Although peer production has been recognized as an important factor in e-learning content creation especially in regard with the new Web 2.0 tools (such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking, Slashdot.org etc.), the conceptualisation how to manage and organise peer production has not been widely discussed. The particular interest of this paper is to concentrate on the quality management of peer production of e-learning content. Thus the basic understanding is that peer production can be assisted (and also managed) by utilising the various options of peer production potential as well as by providing efficient enabling structures and services.

The importance of peer production of e-learning content will grow especially in the sector of vocational education and training as well as in professional continuing education. Many organizations face challenges of shortening life-cycle of learning content as well as operational challenges in providing required learning content with short lead times and lower costs. However, it is also understood that the learning content produced by peers (based on professional experience) can be more accurate and attracting than “clinically produced” learning content by external e-learning experts. Today peer production already is important by different elements in e-learning content, e.g. shared team work results, shared learner-created reports etc. are an integral part of learning content.

Peer production has great potential, in particular, in the area of vocational education and training. Peer production is not only a novel method to produce e-learning content, but it is also an approach to empower a wide variety of professionals to the learning content production. Thus it has also an important democratic element in bringing the work-related learning content production to the actual level of users, tutors and learning supporters.

However, the great challenge of the quality management of peer production is at the same time to encourage the creativity of content creation, but also simultaneously to introduce quality management principles and procedures to ensure the potential for wider use.

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