Open Educational Practices and Resources Based on Social Software: UTPL experience

Nelson Piedra, Janneth Chicaiza
Escuela de Ciencias de la Computación
Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja
Loja, Ecuador
nopiedra@utpl.edu.ec, jachicaiza@utpl.edu.ec

Edmundo Tovar, Oscar Martínez
Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
Universidad Miguel Hernández
Madrid, España
etovar@fi.upm.es, oscar.martinez@umh.es

Abstract—Open Educational Resources (OER) are a direct reaction to knowledge privatization; they foment their exchange to the entire world with the aim of increase the human intellectual capacity. In this document, we describe the committment of Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja (UTPL), Ecuador, in the promotion of open educational practices and resources and their impact in society and knowledge economy through the use of Social Software.

Keywords-component: OER, Open Educational Resources, Web 2.0, Social Software, Education, Collaboration, University, Creative Commons Licences, UTPL.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Web 2.0 philosophy has inspired different communities around the world, among them educational institutions as Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja (UTPL) which have taken the use of Social Software as an option for development of open educational initiatives; unfortunately, in Latin America there are just a few initiatives in context of Open Educational Resources (OER) development and their quality guarantee [1].

One of the greatest hurdles to sharing content online is the great diversity of content generated. Repositories tend to be database-specific, posing a challenge to data sharing. Large repositories often include thousands of individual records created by multidisciplinary teams, all in complex relationships that require too much time and expertise for the average users.

A. OER production cycle

The UTPL strategy to OER production is the promotion of an environment for collaboratively developing, freely sharing, and rapidly publishing scholarly content on the Web. To UTPL, anyone may view or contribute from anywhere in the world. The contents production cycle followed in UTPL is of co–authors that implies to create, share, re–use, improve and enriching contents collaboratively instead of the classic model of contents development: to create, connect, package and free which has a focus from one to many, where users are passive consumers.

B. UTPL Content license

Creative Commons Licenses shows the will of the owners of the intellectual property and the creations to give some permission on the produced material [2]. In this sense, if the license has been violated, then there are legal bases to defend the rights. Creative Commons with jurisdiction in Ecuador (creativecommons.ec) was launched on April 22 of 2008 with support of UTPL.

Works produced by UTPL members keep Creative Commons License version 3.0, CC, with jurisdiction in Ecuador; The version 3.0, allows to any user; to copy, distribute and execute publicly the work and to make derivate works; always when work credits are renown in the way specified by the author.

II. A CULTURAL SHIFT THROUGH THE ASSUMPTION OF SOCIAL SOFTWARE IN THE UTPL

Web 2.0 or Social Web is focused on the contents, relationships and knowledge but not specifically in technology [3]. It is an attitude, a paradigm change that is transforming the world of communications, knowledge, education, business and relationships.

In UTPL moreover of the use de Virtual Campus (based on moodle, eva.utpl.edu.ec), motivates the use of social software (tools and services) in the classroom to engage all teachers and students in a new world of asynchronous and synchronous communications and interactive learning.

From UTPL perspective, the most important aspect of social software is that it allows produce OER and improve learning processes. The adoption of those social web-tools may provoke changes in educational practices [4]. Many teachers and students in UTPL have adopted the use of social software as the first option of tools for learning.

Blogging and wikis

Blogosphere and Wikipedia bear the world flag of collaborative open/free writing, with millions of articles and authors writing in many languages, about different topics and from the most diverse parts of the world.

From an educational perspective, UTPL understands that blogging is autonomous, constructive and inherently conversational. Teachers or students can create a blog individually or in groups, they form their ideas about specific topics, gather, evaluate and interpret data and information, they assume positions, train in elaboration of arguments and evidence, and acquire abilities to express their thinking in the right way and style.

The use of wikis is a good example of transition from static and restricted web to social and collaborative
participation (co-authors). The wikis enable to create, modify, and delete content in collaborative way. Mistakes are solved by social correction and with the support of content configuration management.

A summary of the use of social software for knowledge management, learning and OER development is shown in table 1.

**Collaborative Quality Control**

The traditional vision of contents quality assurance implies to do it by topics and with knowledge of experts instructional. International organizations are working on Quality Guarantee for OERs: UNESCO, OECD, and different international networks.

In the context of UTPL, the quality is guaranteed collaboratively with students, teachers and expert participation during the learning and teaching process (even after it) through studying groups, practice communities and more over, being accessible through the web, it is under revision and improvement from people from all around the world.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Educative institutions must not put available just designs and educational materials through open access repositories, but they must open and share their experiences, processes, cases, learned lessons and give suggestions about how to improve educational practices.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

This work has been done with the support of the Project AL09-PID-36 “Estimaciones para el desarrollo e investigación en OER” UPM Relations with Latinoamérica Program.

**REFERENCES**


