

Social Software and Web2.0 in Teacher Education and Teacher Training

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Final Report for Share.TEC Pilot

Social Software and Web2.0 in Teacher Education and Teacher Training

From June 2010 to April 2011

Marion R. Gruber, Open University of the Netherlands (OUNL)

1. Introduction

In this pilot we analysed the use of social software and web2.0 tools and services in teacher education and teacher training. It resulted in a wiki that can get used as an educational resource for teacher education and training. The wiki is open to educational researchers and practitioners and it has been added to ShareTEC's open educational resources repository.

The Horizon Report 2010¹ stated, a “new educational perspective, focused on collective knowledge and the sharing and reuse of learning and scholarly content, has been gaining ground across” (p. 13). “Open content has now come to the point that it is rapidly driving change in both the materials we use and the process of education. At its core, the notion of open content is to take advantage of the Internet as a global dissemination platform for collective knowledge and wisdom, and to design learning experiences that maximize the use of it.” (Horizon Report 2010, p. 13) Related to this notion on open content and social software it is required to link this innovation potential to practice. This is best explored and analysed by using the tools under real educational conditions. Consequently, this pilot focused on connecting teacher trainers and educational practitioners for sharing experiences of using social software in teacher education and teacher training.

The pilot had the following objectives for the participants.

1. *Learn about available web tools and services that are useful for teacher students during their studies, teachers in practice, and teacher educators and trainers.*
2. *Develop practical experiences for using selected tools and services in educational scenarios.*
3. *Identify the opportunities and limitations of the tools and services for their effective use.*
4. *Share tools, experiences, and findings on the wiki.*

Based on these objectives good practices for educational applications of social software and web2.0 tools and services in teacher education and teacher training were discussed and identified. Helpful information is covered at the pilot wiki (see figure 1). This information includes e.g. definitions, literature references, video tutorials, and links to useful online resources.

¹ Johnson, L., Levine, A., Smith, R., & Stone, S. (2010). [The 2010 Horizon Report](#). Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium.

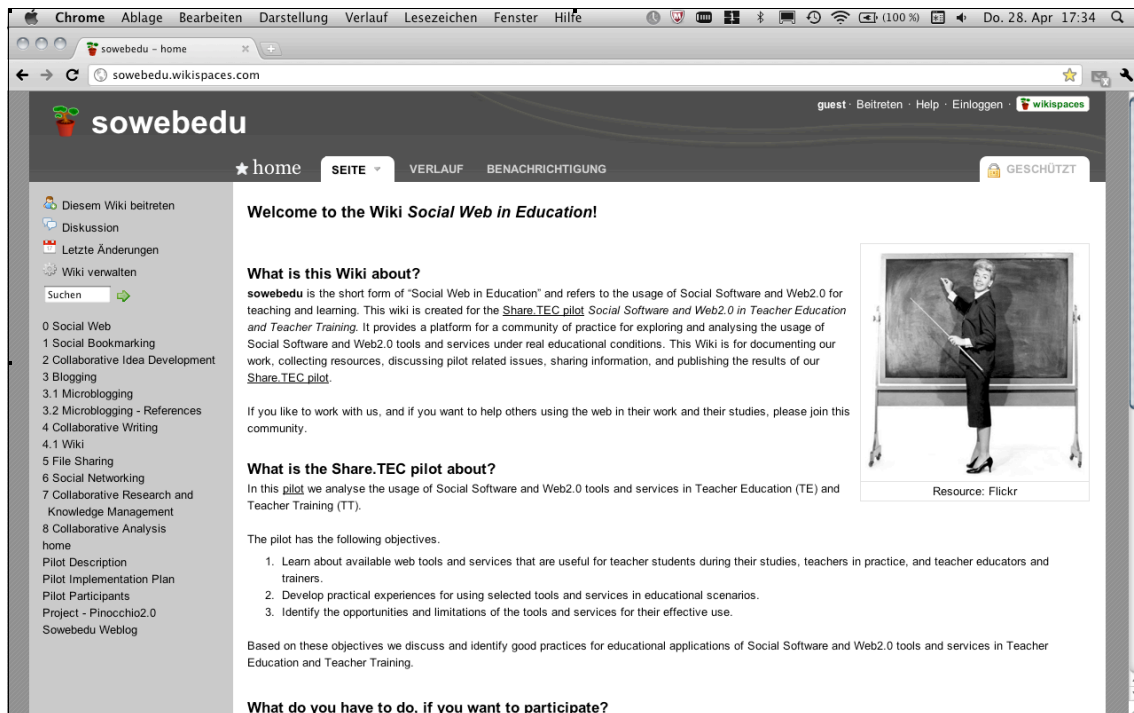


Figure 1: Screenshot of [SOWEBEDU wiki](http://sowebedu.wikispaces.com).

2. Method

Realisation

The pilot 'Social Software and Web2.0 in Teacher Education and Teacher Training' (SOWEBEDU) was set up at the end of June 2010 from OUNL. After the summer break a wiki was established at Wikispaces (see figure 1).² Additionally, a weblog at WordPress was created and linked to the wiki.³

The following activities framed the wiki and the weblog:

- Networking (related to objective 1 and 3):

Networking activities took place at Online Educa Berlin (Share.TEC booth) in December 2010 as well as in the pilot presentations and workshops.

- Collaboration with the E-Learning Coordination of the Faculty of Arts, University of Zurich (CH) (related to objective 1, 2 and 3):

This collaboration focused on the support of networking events and hands-on workshops that encouraged the faculty to participate in the pilot.

- Presentations (related to objective 1 and 3):

Presentations about social web in education were held at the Faculty of Arts, University of Zurich (CH) and at the Studiecentrum Open Universiteit, Eindhoven (NL). In these presentations an overview of available web tools and services that are useful for teaching and learning were given. Application scenarios in education were identified, and opportunities and limitations of the tools and services for their effective use were discussed.

² SOWEBEDU (Social Web in Education) wiki. <http://sowebedu.wikispaces.com/>

³ SOWEBEDU (Social Web in Education) weblog. <http://sowebedu.wordpress.com/>

- Hands-on workshops (related to objective 1 and 2):

At the Faculty of Arts, University of Zurich (CH) hands-on workshops to Blogging, Collaborative Writing (Wiki), and Microblogging (Twitter) for teachers, teacher trainers, and faculty members were conducted. Workshops to Social Networking (Facebook), Social Bookmarking, and Collaborative Idea Development (Mindmeister) are planned for May and June. In autumn semester hands-on workshop for File Sharing and Collaborative Research and Knowledge Management and a second round of held workshops will be offered.

- Knowledge exchange (related to objective 1 and 3):

The pilot participants shared experiences and ideas about the use of social software and web2.0 tools and services as well as they identified and described application scenarios in education. Opportunities, limitations, and challenges were also identified and discussed. The key outcomes and the application scenarios in education are mentioned at the wiki.

During this pilot different communication channels were used:

- Social Web: Twitter (#sharetec, #sowebedu), Facebook, weblogs.
- Online portals: TELEurope⁴, Share.TEC⁵, SWITCH⁶/eduhub.ch⁷.
- E-mail/ mailing lists: teacher education institutions, teacher educators and trainers, and teacher organizations e.g. in AT, CH, and NL.
- Face-to-face networking.

Target group

The pilot targeted teacher students during their studies, teachers in practice, as well as teacher educators and trainers. The participants of the pilot were primarily recruited at networking events, presentations, and hands-on workshops.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the pilot focused on the following aspects:

1. Analysis of the usage of the topic-based wiki pages using wikispaces analytics.
2. Educational scenarios in relation to the topics.
3. Qualitative analysis of the topics mentioned in the wiki.

⁴ TELEurope is the social media hub for everything about technology-enhanced learning. It is the community platform of the European open network of excellence in technology-enhanced learning STELLARNET.EU. <http://www.teleurope.eu/>

⁵ <http://portal.share-tec.eu/>

⁶ SWITCH (serving swiss universities) provides innovative, unique internet services for the Swiss universities and internet users. <http://www.switch.ch/>

⁷ eduhub is a platform for new learning technologies at Swiss universities. Its aim is to implement sustainable IT-based methods in academic teaching, to exchange experiences and to promote collaboration. <http://www.eduhub.ch/>

3. Results

The SOWEBEDU⁸ wiki has 23 members, of which the majority contributed to the resources. The wiki covers eight main topics and one project description (Pinocchio2.0). Every topic provides rich information, such as definitions, tools and services, video tutorials, slides, descriptions of application scenarios as well as references to literature, studies, or websites.

Wiki Topics

The eight topics of the pilot focused on:

- Social Bookmarking,
- Collaborative Writing,
- Social Networking,
- Blogging (incl. Microblogging),
- File Sharing,
- Collaborative Idea Development,
- Collaborative Research and Knowledge Management, and
- Collaborative Analysis.

All topics were described explicitly and enriched with references, tutorials and further information.

Educational Scenarios

For six topics application scenarios were developed: *Social Bookmarking*, *Collaborative Writing*, *Social Networking*, *Blogging* (incl. *Microblogging*), *File Sharing*, and *Collaborative Idea Development*. The topics *Collaborative Research and Knowledge Management* and *Collaborative Analysis* were added at the end of the pilot. Therefore, no scenarios were formulated. All application scenarios in education are described elaborately in the related topic section at the wiki.

Wiki Statistics

The SOWEBEDU wiki activities started at the end of September 2010. The usage statistic shows a continuous growth of wiki page-views (see figure 2). More than 3000 page-views on the wiki were counted by the end of April 2011. Visitors come from all over the world. The prime origins of the visitors were in alphabetical order: Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom, and United States.

From September 2010 until the end of that year⁹ *Microblogging* (372), *Collaborative Writing* (363), *Blogging* (261), *Social Bookmarking* (218), *Wiki* (160), *Social Networking* (126), and *Collaborate Idea Development* (122) were most interesting to the visitors.

From January to the end of April 2011 the following topics were visited mostly: *Wiki* (346), *Collaborative Idea Development* (328), *Social Web* (310), *File Sharing* (286), *Collaborative Writing* (226), *Blogging* (222) and *Social Bookmarking* (208).

⁸ Short form of SOcial WEB in EDUcation.

⁹ <http://sowebedu.wikispaces.com/space/stats/page/2010>

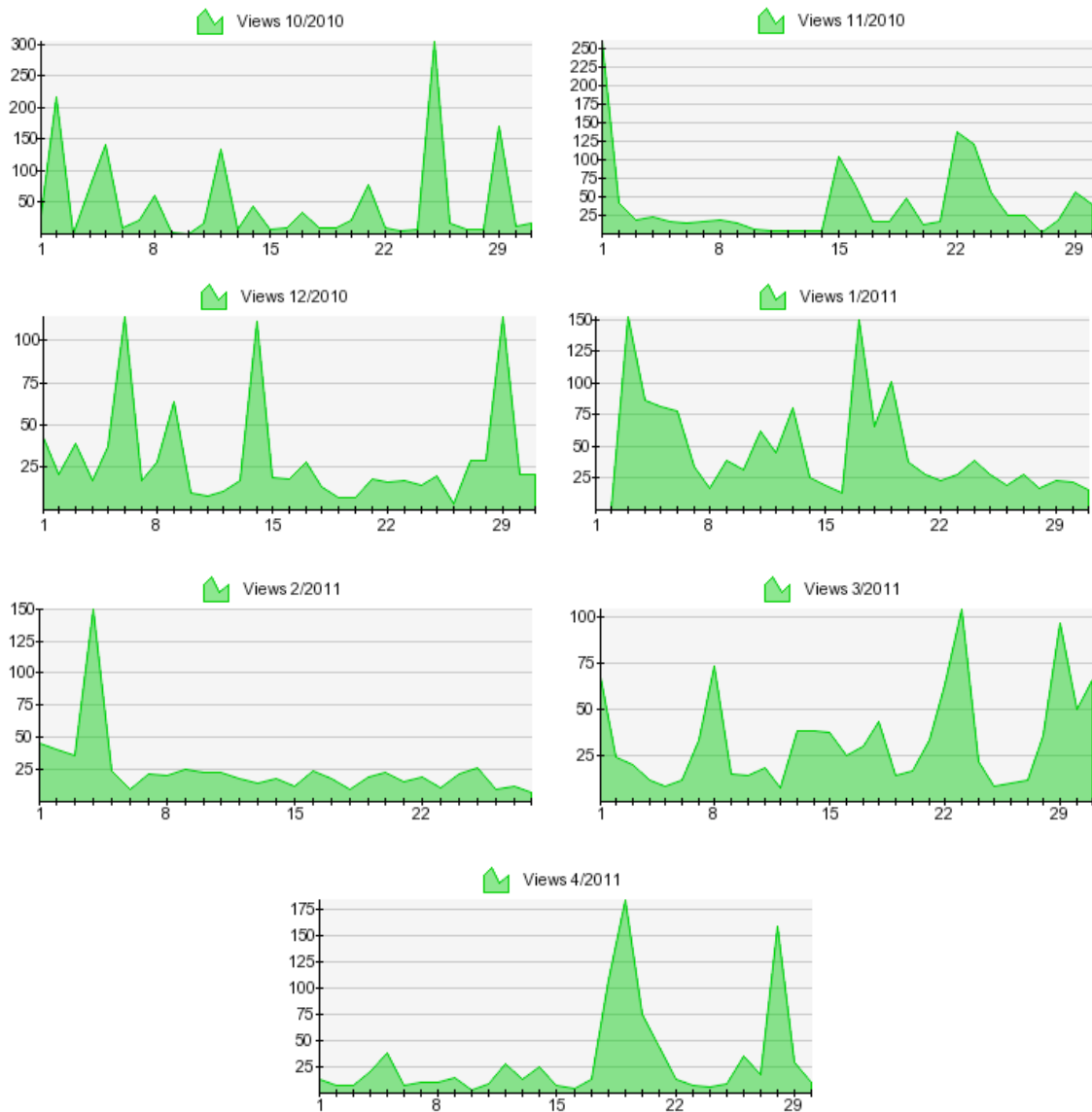


Figure 2: Monthly access statistics of the [SOWEBEDU wiki](#) from 10/2010 to 4/2011 with the wikispaces statistics.

4. Conclusions

This report analysed the Share.TEC pilot 'Social Software and Web2.0 in Teacher Education and Teacher Training' (SOWEBEDU). The pilot facilitated a wiki and a weblog on the topic. With these facilities it brought together people who are interested in using social web for teaching and learning and engaged them in sharing their practical experiences. The Wiki provides a platform for this community of practice for exploring and analysing social web for educational purposes.

The key results of the pilot are summarised by the following points:

- A Network of teacher educators and teacher trainers, teachers in service and teacher students that are interested in using the social web for teaching and learning.
- [SOWEBEDU wiki](#):

The wiki provides a platform for a community of practice for exploring and analysing the usage of social web in teaching and learning under real education conditions. It collects resources, fosters the discussions of related issues, supports sharing of information, describes application scenarios in education, and includes all results of this pilot.

Furthermore, the wiki was uploaded into the Share.TEC portal as an open educational resource.

- [SOWEBEDU weblog](#):

Additional to the wiki a weblog is provided. This blog covers news and information about the topics, pilot related issues and on going activities.

- Cooperation with the [E-Learning Coordination \(ELK\) at the Faculty of Arts, University of Zurich, CH](#):

Together with the [ELK team](#) a presentation and hands-on workshops were planned and conducted at the Faculty of Arts, University of Zurich, CH (UZH).

- Workshop at Studiecentrum Open Universiteit, Eindhoven, NL. April, 21, 2011, Miniconference "Het gebruik van digitale collecties leermaterialen".

5. Further activities

The pilot has been successfully installed a small community that will continue to work with the provided platform. Beyond the scope of this pilot are the following actions that have been already initiated.

- Webinar in cooperation with Switch, CH about *Social Web for Teaching and Learning*.
- Additional workshops at the Faculty of Arts, UZH.
- Contributions and further development of the wiki.

6. Contact

Marion R. Gruber, CELSTEC, Open Universiteit Nederland, NL (marion.gruber[at]ou.nl).