The impact of Social Computing: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe

11th Bled Forum on Europe. Foresight Conference
The Future of Information Society and Challenges for Good Governance
11-12 March 2010

Yves Punie & Gianluca Misuraca

Joint Research Centre (JRC)
Institute for Prospective Technological Studies
The European Commission’s Research-Based Policy Support Organization
Introducing Social Computing (SC)

Social Computing: a set of on-line and/or mobile tools that facilitate user interactions and collaborations that enable users to share experiences, to become content co-creators and to provide value.
Video and Photo
1 billion Hits a day on YouTube (9 Oct 2009, BBC Online)
> 2 billion photos & >14 million videos uploaded to Facebook monthly (2009, Facebook)
> 80% of active internet users worldwide watch online video (03/2009, Social Media Tracker)

Social Networking
> 300 M Facebook users worldwide; 100 M in Europe; ~ 50% daily users (2009, Facebook)
> 56 M Netlog users in Europe, in 20 languages, > 150 M visitors per month (2009, Netlog)
> 70% of active internet users worldwide visit a friend’s page (03/2009, Social Media Tracker)

Blogs
# of blogs 2X every 5-7 months (2005-2007); > 110 M blogs (05/2008, Technorati)
> 70% of active internet users worldwide read blogs, 46% left a comment and 35% own blog
(03/2009, Social Media Tracker)

Other
> 5 billion tweets on Twitter (11/2009, Popacular.com)
> 14 M articles on Wikipedia, > 3 M in English, ~269 language versions, 1 M contributions,
85.000 people contributed 5 times or more in Sept09 (Wikipedia)

Source: IPTS estimation based on EUROSTAT 2008 & Flash EB N.241
Also middle-aged workers, females, and silver surfers

Used for work, employment, learning and leisure

Users participate in different ways and different quantities

Exponential growth has slowed down

Supply and use patterns are changing continuously

=> SC is becoming part of mainstream Internet use
Does it matter?

The Joy of Tech™
by Nitrozac & Snaggy

©2007 Geek Culture

Unemployable due to stupid personal stuff I put on my Facebook page.
Me too!
For me, it was an embarrassing YouTube video.

Signs of the social networking times.
1. Empowering users, taking up new roles in the Information society and economy

2. Peer-produced resources and harnessing collective knowledge
Cross-cutting impacts of SC on...
SC impacting work
16/01/2009 Twitter:

- First tweets 4 min’s after crash
- 15 min’s before mainstream media
- First picture on TwitPic
- FlightStats: “en route” – 26 min’s delay
- Wikipedia page on flight 1549 1 hr later

There’s a plane in the Hudson. I’m on the ferry going to pick up the people. Crazy.
Bloggers catch what Washington Post missed

Oliver Burkeman in New York
The Guardian, Saturday 21 December 2002 00.37 GMT
Article history

The momentum that ended in Trent Lott's resignation yesterday as the Senate majority leader did not, primarily, come from the traditional behemoths of the US media – the New York Times, the Washington Post and the main TV news networks.

Instead, the controversy has proved a defining moment for the vibrant online culture of weblogs - nimble, constantly updated, opinion-driven internet journals, freed from many of the constraints of the established media.

Mr Lott's incendiary comments on December 5 went unmentioned in the Washington Post's account of Senator Strom Thurmond's 100th birthday party. They were not picked up by the New York Times, which defines the news in the US, until December 10.
> 100 UK MPs are using Twitter to communicate with voters (<-> blogs)

BBC News, March 2010

WikiLeaks

Have documents the world needs to see?

We help you safely get the truth out.
Content: New resources for learning (access and diversity)

E.g. Wikipedia, Academic Earth, Videolectures.net, RSS, bookmarks, etc.
Access to information and knowledge becomes less exclusive and hierarchical
From know-what to know-how and know-where

Creation: New learning activities and skills

E.g. Blogs, Youtube, TeacherTube
Constructionist learning: learners become co-creators of meaning (empowerment)

Connecting: Learning through connecting

E.g. language learning, LinkedIn, Wikiversity
Emergence of new informal learning networks and communities
Learners on site, learners in classrooms, lifelong learning, mobility

Collaborating: learning through collaboration (not instruction)

E.g. Wikipedia, Wikiprojects, blogs, eTwinning
Across borders, at work, in class, at home
Wikipedia for Spies: The CIA Discovers Web 2.0

By MASSIMO CALABRESI  Wednesday, Apr. 08, 2009

CIA Director Leon Panetta

Right: Saurabh Das / AP

TIME
SC impacting governance
The communication novelty in contemporary society is mass self-communication by “the creative audience” (Castells, 2009).

Is there room for real counter-power and autonomy or is it rather about the total commodification of human creativity? (Fuchs, 2009)

Meaningful activities:
Humans do not engage in activities that are meaningless. If you think you see people doing things you find meaningless, look again and try to understand what the activities mean for them. (Henry Jenkins, MIT Comparative Media)

http://www.henryjenkins.org/
Security, safety and privacy risks: *Systems are weak while users are unaware*

- Protect all but especially younger users: awareness raising and LLL for all
- Encourage involvement of SC providers
- Enforce existing regulations, guidelines and confidence building

New skills for new jobs and risks for new digital divides: *basic ICT skills*

- Ensure learning of digital literacy and digital competences (lifelong and as early as possible)
- Raise awareness on new skills for new jobs (e.g. on user-generated content, sharing, etc.)
- Continue with available and affordable broadband and mobile internet

**Public Sector** approaches toward SC (Gartner 2009):

- denial of employee access to SNS;
- replacement (favoring government-sponsored networks);
- embracing SC but providing clear guidance for gov officials

**Need for European statistics**

- comparable, systematic, longer-term official data and stats on SC
Opportunities for good governance: Opening-up, transparency and participation
• Improve and innovate public services, their quality, user-centricity and inclusiveness
• Increase efficiency of governance processes and effectiveness of policies
• Unleashing the potential of open-data / linked-data for governance and policy modeling (while preventing misuse)

Europe 2020:
• Smart – Green – Inclusive growth
• Social innovation addressing EU challenges

=> New ways of doing things, also at European level, affecting European policies and institutions

=> Realizing potential requires organizational change, experimentation and embracing a culture of openness and risk-taking
Emergence of new models of ICT-enabled governance
- 60% of EU cities believe this (IPTS-EUROCITIES survey, 2009-2010)
- Need of a conceptual and measurement framework to capture/measure ICT-driven changes on governance and policy impacts

Huge potential for open and collaborative governance
- Need of multidisciplinary research in order to go beyond the traditional eGov research domains
- E.g.
Scenario-Design for eGov2.0

Government in control

User in control

Technology in control

Wall-E

Yes, we can!

Source: IPTS, Public Services 2.0, 2009, (Eds. Punie, Misuraca and Osimo)

12 Published Reports on SC (2008-2010):

- The Impact of SC on the EU Information Society and Economy
- Public Services 2.0: The Future of Public Services
- Learning 2.0: The impact of Web2.0 Innovations on Education and Training in Europe
- Learning in Online Networks and Communities
- Web 2.0 in Government: Why and How?
- Web 2.0: Where does Europe stand?
- Good Practices for Learning 2.0: Promoting Innovation
- Good Practices for Learning 2.0: Promoting Inclusion
- Social Computing: Study on the Use and Impacts of Collaborative Content
- Social Computing: Study on the Use and Impact of Online Social Networking
- An Empirical Analysis of the Creation, Use and Adoption of Social Computing Applications

http://is.jrc.ec.europa.eu/pages/EAP/SC.html
Thank you

yves.punie@ec.europa.eu

http://is.jrc.ec.europa.eu