

BEYOND THE ACADEMIC TIME

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Abstract

Once finished the MUIAPLCS (Master Universitario en Ingeniería Avanzada de Producción, Logística y Cadena de Suministro), where ITC (Information and Communications Technology) tools have been used as “PoliformaT” (equivalent to “Moodle” in the Universidad Politécnica de Valencia UPV), a Blog (“Wordpress”) and others tasks equivalent to “webquest” to support the different seminars, there is a stop of the relationship and the exchange of knowledge between professors and students. Now it is aimed to create a place where communication could be maintained and used in the coming years. An Internet Portal of Master’s graduates, a place for finding solutions, requesting answer to new problems, maintaining contact with a community on a specific interest of professors, graduates, new student and future new students that seeks information or future works, a Social Networking Site.

Keywords: Master networking, Alfresco, communities, Social Networking Site.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Social Networking Site (SNS) is web-based service that allows people to create/share value and content with groups, thereby fostering mutual support and satisfactory participation in community activities as well as individual’s feelings of attachment to the same and, consequently, expectation of continuity (M.J. Sánchez-Franco *et al*, 2012). The SNSs Designers have to foster a sense of true commitment in their users (Vasalou *et al*, 2010) where the principal value is the trust. Also the community satisfaction is a necessary condition for an SNS success (Bontis *et al*, 2007) together with perceived support.

This paper address to determinate the requirements for the project/idea of creating a Social Networking Site for the graduates, professor, university, future students and enterprise related to MUIAPLCS.

The paper methodology is a review of the expected SNS requirements by the different interested groups. This is done with personal interviews, emails and visiting others SNS. The third section outlines some of the free solution available for the SNS development with the review of their potentials and limits. The fourth section will involve the presentation of the ongoing solution for the MUIAPLCS SNS and finally the conclusion.

2 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SNS

The master MIAPLCS is addressed to professional interested in the production, logistics and supply chain world. Some students had a long professional experience others less but all have a clear objective to focus their experience in this field. The students have acquired new competences, shared experiences and taken a big folder of knowledge for their future. These competences and knowledge were on different areas and for different uses, some of them may be used immediately others may be required in the future, it will depend on each one professional situation.

During the seminars, the professors have offered new perspectives and methods for solving the problems in the field. They have giving new capacities, new aspects to consider and the knowledge of thinking with other perspectives. On the other side, the students have shared comments, experiences and thoughts with the review of the cases in the class and the team’s papers work. Also the students have taken the teachers role presenting their analysis on specifics concepts, as part of their training. It has been a share of knowledge in all direction, professors to students, students to professors and students to students that has stopped with the final test /graduation.

Now some Master graduates have returned to their previews work with new assignment, others have obtained new jobs or they are looking for it and others are taking a doctoral research in the field. The

professors are back with a new course and new students. New students are looking for information, opinions and recommendations about the Master.

During the course, the ICTs have been also used in a community view. A "Facebook" group was created in order to share information and social life of the international group. Other tools as "Dropbox" have been used to share files and papers. (Altibelli L *et al*, 2011)

Professors need to update about new market requirements and provide the students with real industry problems. The students always work better the new competences when they are closer to their daily lives problems. Also the professors, at the UPV, have investigation lines that can be supported with the feedbacks of the industry market.

And finally the Master's administrative team have several requirements. They have to share some employment offers to the graduates or a place to maintain the contact with finished student. An objective of the professional master is that the students finish the master and get their title. Normally the students return to their professional work without giving time to the final work ("tesina") and losing their contact with the university. As in order to finish the master and obtain the title, it is required a final paper work to confirm their expertise competences after the course ends.

The new student should have a place with the previous graduated student knowledge/information and also a place where they could update with new information. Therefore it could be an extra supporting tool for the different subjects.

As reviewed the members of this community have several requirements that the new technology can give support. The SNS is a solution for sharing/search/ask/solve the sought objectives. Herewith is the list of the requirements for the SNS from the different interviews.

- a) A place to keep in contact with the Master team in order to help in their new jobs.
- b) A common space to share the files, pictures, films (or links to that knowledge) well organize and easy to find a subject. (road transport, international transport, production logistics etc)
- c) A place to leave questions or problems to the community that can be solved by any member or discussed as a blog. (The solution could be an address to a specific areas of files, pictures or previous discussions)
- d) An area that can support the process to implement the competences that have been acquired in the master.
- e) A link to our social community, networking or a way to keep on contact with the friends as nowadays they are in Mexico, UK , Germany, Colombia, Spain... "The social and citizen competence are an important part of the education" (LOE Ley Orgánica 2/2006 online with recommendation of the European Parliament 18/12/2006)
- f) A way to improve the Master, in the matter of, that improving the quality and prestige of the graduates, it will be improved the value of the title.
- g) An area to place jobs offers for graduates of the Master.
- h) A network to place surveys or tests on any investigation line.
- i) A web that can help future student to understand the benefits of the Master.
- j) An area to be on contact with the industrial needs.

Therefore the mission of the Portal is:

"A common friendly place, for accepted members, to share knowledge on the production, logistics and Supply Chain industry"

Also should be added that will be an area of respect, trust and looking for the improvement of the community.

A place that can give a link to the common social media available as "Linkedin" , "facebook" , "twitter" , "slideshare" , "youtube" , "vimeo..."

A place that have a strong system to handle files and folder easy to find thinks, together with space for wiki, blogs, forums and also connect to personal elements, RSS, personal emails or mobile technologies so the members could be easily informed.

The UPV has a general SNS for graduates "Asociación de Antiguos Alumnos de la UPV" (Alumni Association of the UPV) that gives solutions to a heterogonous community of graduates. It has

solution for new graduates, older graduates or enterprise. Solutions as “Know Box” or clubs etc that could be a solution to the Master SNS requirements, but in the startup is looked for an alternative solution to consolidate the service and overcome any obstacle.

Other post master communities can be found in others universities as it is the case of IESE-Alumni community that gives in his Portal:

- News, related to the area
- Education, in order to keep a continues update
- Finder, of others alumni data
- Inside communities as year graduates ...
- Professional development (job finder, etc)
- Others services (library etc)

Therefore the detected interested group over this SNS will be the “graduates”, “professors”, “administrative” and “new students”. And their requirements could grouped on Database, Discussion (problem solving), Networking, feedback and surveys and News as in table 1

	Database	Discussion Area	Networking	Feedback surveys	News
Graduates					
Professors					
Administrative					
New student					

Table 1 Requirements to the SNS by theirs users

Database: a place to find the documentation related to a topic, therefore it could be files or links, but it should have a clear organization and easy tools to find an issue.

Discussion Area: An area where questions could be placed and discussed. Later the discussion could be incorporate to the appropriate place in the Database. Example: discussion during the course could be a source of knowledge for a graduate or future student.

Networking: An area to maintain the information of the members, information that the user could leave in order that the others could understand his interest etc.

Feedback-survey: A place to launch surveys or results from them.

News: a place for last news related to the field, with comments or not. In side it, should be an area of jobs offers or new training programs.

3 TECHNICAL DECISION

In order to find the appropriate platform for developing the community, discussions has been taken with the IT personnel of the UPV (CIGIP, DOE, GREGAL) on what should be the best platform to establish the requirement described by the members. The project is done without investment therefore the solution has to come from a free platform (programs or hosting). Different alternatives have been analysed as can be seen in table 2.

	Database	Discussion Area	Networking	Feedback surveys	News
Facebook					
Twitter					
Wordpress					
Moodle					
Alfresco share					

Table 2 Alternatives analysed

“Facebook:” a platform that let easy share discussions, connections to the members, but it has not a robust solution to organize information, files and different discussion subjects that could be used as a repository of problems/solutions.

“Twitter”, has a good micro-blogging to place news and comments, but also lacks for handling files.

“Wordpress” an alternative to create a blog with a limit of 3 Gb in the free solution.

“Moodle” a good solution that covers all the requirements and is generally used in the education community (Urcola L., 2011)(Moyle K,2010). “Actually more that 4000 High schools, universities, school and enterprise have registered in “moodle”. His creator Martin Dougiamas has focused on the education areas.

“Alfresco share” also good solutions that cover all the requirements and add a well developed system for keeping organized the information. Besides the UPV department DOE is working and hosting a server for ALFRESCO, so it offers the place for the development.

Therefore a final decision has been taken to work with ALFRESCO, as it will give a good support in all the requirements and it has a strong solution for the files search and also the server capacity of the DOE department and the support of the DOE IT.

4 THE MUIAPLCS SNS, TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

The SNS is being developed with the ALFRESCO solution a Lesser Gnu Public License (LGPL) in the server of the DOE (<http://intranet.doe.upv.es:8080/share/>). Once there is an access to the Alfresco server, the new site MUIAPLCS is available. The SNS has been created with the dashlets offered by the program as documents tray, wiki, blog, forum. It can be seen in the first page of the web solution (fig. 1). Also It is identified the requirements set by the community on the SNS Portal. Database covered by the “documentos” a tray for managing in the community files that can be written on parallel by the members. Discussion area is covered by the forum, wiki, blog. The Networking is solved by handling in open area the information of the members of the site. Feedback and Survey are viewed as part of the forum and can be address with email to a specific subgroup of members. News, there is a specific area of new documents and last movement in the Portal.

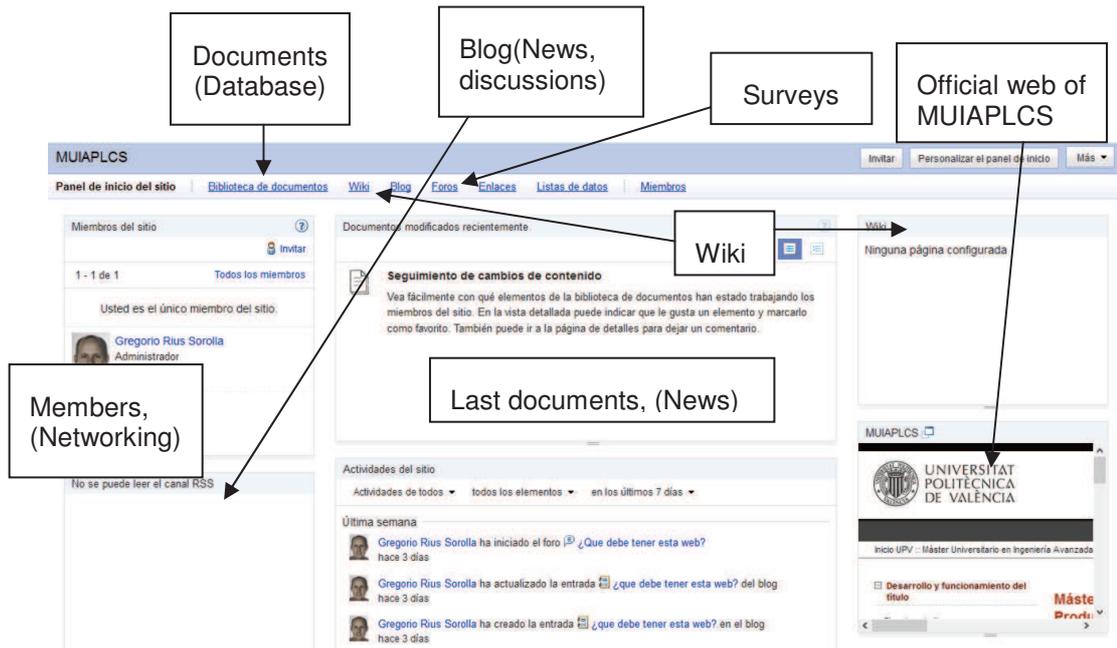


Fig. 1

In the files organization a criteria has been set following the subjects of the Master but also leaving open to create new folders. (Fig. 2). The Alfresco solution allows adding title and comments to each file or folder to help on the information search.

The members are going to be invited as “collaborator” as they will be allowed to read, create and modify files or folders. But they will be only allowed to delete the files that they have created. This configuration helps for an open participation of any member without the possibility of losing information from a member error.

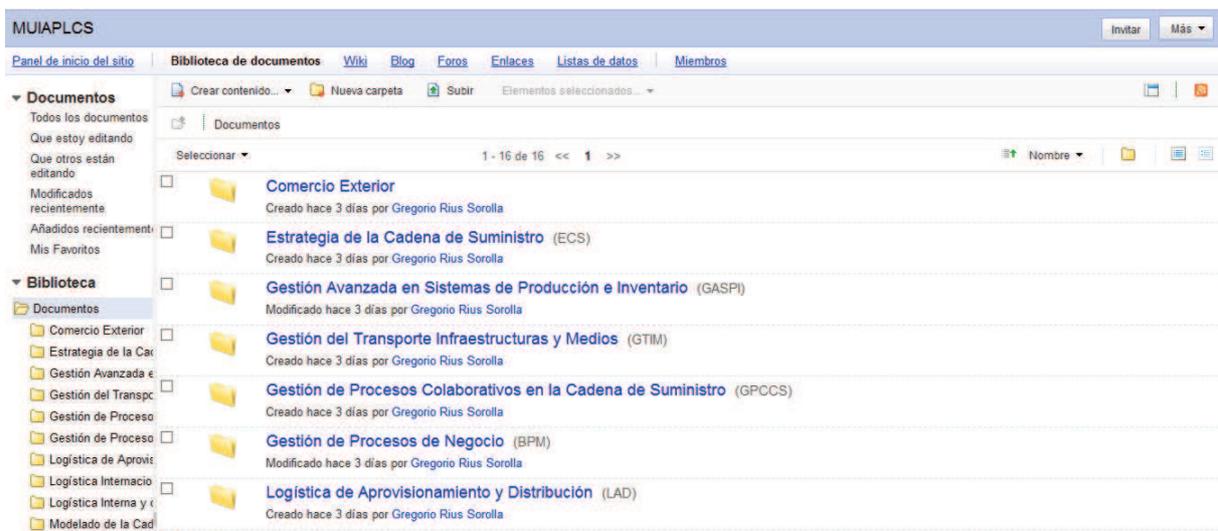


Fig. 2

5 CONCLUSIONS

Clearly the ITCs are a tool for training (not a training itself) and if the interest is created on the students (or community) higher level of knowledge can be arrived (Hernandez *et al*, 2011). A community is an integration of members with different levels of expertise that on the share of knowledge, each member will develop itself and the community (INCLUD-ED, Ojala M., 2012)

This SNS gives a solution for the homogeneous group requirements and the usages or the ongoing interest will define the future of the Portal. "Creating value and content and involving others led users to stay active and loyal" (Vasalou *et al*, 2010)

Even that it is on the initial stage of the idea, the following days or weeks it will be published the Portal to the members.

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