

Teachers' Motivation to Participate in Online Communities - Case: Massidea.org



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This study is conducted as part of the development process of the Massidea.org online community. The key actors of the project are several Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland that have participated in the development process of the Massidea.org online community.

The purpose of this study is to discover what motivates teachers to participate in the Massidea.org online community as well as creating content in it. Furthermore, the study observes the motivations to become involved in the Massidea.org project by comparing two different perspectives, the school's and an individual teacher's in order to obtain an insight of how the project has started and what would be the further operations regarding the implementation process and marketing of the Massidea.org online community.

The theoretical framework consists of motivational theories and several researches that are related to the motivations to participate in online communities. Furthermore, it examines the concept of online communities. The theoretical framework was created in collaboration with Ms. Minna Lehtelä, as she studied the same subject in her thesis from the students' perspective.

The nature of this study is qualitative. The target groups of the study were gathered by sending e-mail to the potential respondents and further contacting them by telephone. In total 14 persons who had participated in the development process of the Massidea.org were interviewed. The respondents were divided into two groups, 7 persons were interviewed from the school's perspective and 7 persons from an individual teacher's perspective. The theme interview method was applied in the collection of the empirical data that concerned motivations to participate in the Massidea.org project, objectives of the project as well as motivations to participate in the Massidea.org online community and utilizing it as a tool in learning situations.

According to the research results participating in the Massidea.org project had given mostly positive experiences, especially at the individual level. The objectives of the project had been achieved well especially on a small scale, nevertheless more effort should be put in the implementation process in the future. The respondents emphasized the importance of functionality and ease of use in the Massidea.org online community. Frequently updated content with good quality and interesting topics were seen as the main motivating factors when thinking about returning to the site. The respondents suggested improvements to the layout of the site. Participating in the content production was done mostly for demonstration purposes.

The positive experiences that the project has given should be emphasized when implementing the Massidea.org online community. Furthermore, functionality, ease of use and layout of the site should be observed.

Key words social media, online communities, sense of community, motivation, higher education, open innovation

Maria Forss

Opettajien motivaatio osallistua verkkoyhteisöjen toimintaan - Case: Massidea.org

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Tämä tutkimus on tehty osana Massidea.org - verkkoyhteisön kehitystoimintaa. Avaintoimijoina hankkeessa ovat suomalaiset ammattikorkeakoulut, jotka ovat olleet mukana Massidea.org - verkkoyhteisön kehitystyössä.

Opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena on löytää vastauksia siihen, mikä motivoi opettajia liittymään Massidea.org - verkkoyhteisön toimintaan sekä tuottamaan sisältöä siihen. Lisäksi tutkitaan sitä mikä motivoi lähtemään mukaan projektiin vertailemalla koulun ja yksittäisen opettajan näkökulmia. Tämä antaa käsityksen siitä, miten hanke on lähtenyt käyntiin ja minkälaisia jatkotoimenpiteitä Massidea.org -projektin jalkauttamisen ja markkinoinnin suhteen tulisi ottaa huomioon.

Työn teoreettinen viitekehys käsittelee motivaatioteorioita sekä esittelee tutkimuksia, jotka käsittelevät motivaatiota liittyessä verkkoyhteisöihin. Lisäksi työssä käsitellään verkkoyhteisöjen merkitystä nykypäivänä. Teoreettinen viitekehys tehtiin yhteistyössä Minna Lehtelän kanssa, joka tutki samaa aihetta opiskelijoiden näkökulmasta.

Opinnäytetyössä käytettiin kvalitatiivista tutkimusmenetelmää. Tutkimuksen kohderyhmä koottiin lähettämällä kutsu sähköpostilla potentiaalisille haastateltaville sekä lisäksi ottamalla yhteyttä puhelimitse. Yhteensä 14 henkilöä, jotka olivat osallistuneet Massidea.org - verkkoyhteisön kehitystoimintaan haastateltiin tutkimusta varten. Haastateltavat jaettiin kahteen ryhmään, 7 henkilöä haastateltiin koulun näkökulmasta ja 7 henkilöä yksittäisen opettajan näkökulmasta. Empiirinen tutkimusaineisto kerättiin teemahaastatteluiden avulla. Haastattelukysymykset koskivat motivaatiota lähteä mukaan Massidea.org - projektiin, projektin tavoitteita sekä motivaatiota liittyä Massidea.org - verkkoyhteisön toimintaan ja sen hyödyntämiseen opetustilanteissa.

Tutkimustulosten perusteella osallistuminen Massidea.org - projektiin on antanut lähinnä positiivisia kokemuksia erityisesti yksilötasolla. Projektin tavoitteet on saavutettu hyvin varsinkin pienessä mittakaavassa, mutta jalkauttamistoimintaan tulisi panostaa tulevaisuudessa. Haastateltavat painottivat Massidea.org - verkkoyhteisön toiminnallisuutta ja helppokäyttöisyyttä tärkeyttä. Usein vaihtuva, laadukas ja mielenkiintoinen sisältö nähtiin motivoivina tekijöinä kun mietittiin palaamista verkkoyhteisöön. Haastateltavat ehdottivat parannusta sivuston visuaaliseen ilmeeseen. Osallistuminen sisällöntuotantoon tapahtui lähinnä havainnollistamisen muodossa.

Positiiviset kokemukset, jota projekti on antanut, tulisi painottaa Massidea.org - verkkoyhteisön jalkauttamisvaiheessa. Lisäksi, toiminnallisuuteen, helppokäyttöisyyteen sekä sivuston visuaaliseen ilmeeseen tulisi kiinnittää huomiota.

Asiasanat sosiaalinen media, verkkoyhteisöt, yhteisöllisyys, motivaatio, korkeakouluopetus, avoin innovaatio

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1 Introduction

The Internet has enabled its users to connect to an ever-increasing amount of information and has allowed users to extend their professional and social networks through participation in online communities. Online communities represent a new type of social formation on the Internet. They offer unprecedented opportunities to develop relationships and social interaction regardless of people's geographical location or time. (Tedjamulia, Olsen, Dean & Albrecht 2005, 1; Pentina, Prybutok & Zhang 2008.)

Developing successful online communities with good sociability and usability requires a full investigation of the community's needs. Sociability focuses on social interaction and is essential in developing online communities, unlike for most other software. Therefore, community developers need to focus on the community itself because involving the community in its own development process supports the participation of the community members. Certain factors that support building relationships, trust and commitment when joining the community are important especially in the launching phase because they attract the people to the community and motivate them returning. In addition to sociability, technical considerations are involved in the development of online communities. Taking into account all the technical considerations can be however challenging because the developers often do not know how many users the system will include exactly, what computer systems they are using or which culture they represent. (Preece 2000, 27, 205, 228-229.)

Utilizing online communities in learning situations can be considered challenging especially in the beginning and therefore it is important to maintain a good level of motivation throughout the whole project. The added value that online communities are able to offer in learning situations is not self-evident at first for many users and therefore some may lose interest very easily. Several studies have observed and surveyed online communities in order to discover for which reasons people participate in them. According to them, the motivations to participate in online communities differ to some extent and therefore observing the motivations of the target groups especially in the launching phase is important. (Heid, Fischer & Kugemann 2009, 36-37.)

This study is conducted as part of the development process of Massidea.org online community. The study concentrates on motivations to participate in the Massidea.org online community, more closely from teachers' perspective. Such questions as what arouses teachers' interest in participating in the Massidea.org online community and creating content in it will be discussed in this paper. Furthermore, the study observes the motivations to become involved in the Massidea.org project by comparing two different perspectives, the school's and an individual teacher's. The concept of online communities as well as different motivational

theories will be presented in this study. In addition, the theoretical framework presents results of previous studies regarding motivations to participate in online communities.

The key actors of the development process of the Massidea.org online community are several Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland that will be presented in Chapter 2.4. The key concepts of this study are social media, online networks, sense of community, motivation, higher education and open innovation.

1.1 Research Background

The concept of Massidea.org, the former Open Innovation Banking System (OIBS), online community was developed by the Web 2.0-based online social networks (OSN) movement that refers to communities and hosted services. Massidea.org is an innovative online community accessible for all Internet users. The users of Massidea.org are able to share and develop ideas, solve problems and share know-how with each other. The main purpose of the project is to utilize the creativity and community of under-utilized students and senior citizens by creating new ideas and solutions that respond to current challenges by taking into consideration also future prospects. The potential customers of the Massidea.org concept are companies, local authorities and public administration. (Santonen 2009b.)

Mr. Teemu Santonen, a principal lecturer of Laurea University of Applied Sciences, first introduced Massidea.org in March 2006. The first demo version of Massidea.org was launched in spring 2009 when it was still known by the former name OIBS. Massidea.org will be presented more precisely in Chapter 2. (Santonen 2009a.)

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to discover what motivates teachers to participate in the Massidea.org online community as well as in the content production. Furthermore, the study observes the motivations to become involved in the Massidea.org project by comparing two different perspectives, the school's and an individual teacher's, in order to obtain an insight of how the project has started and what would be the further operations regarding the implementation process and marketing of the Massidea.org online community.

The objective of the study is to discover what can be seen as problems and barriers for teachers to utilize the Massidea.org online community, what could arouse their interest in participating in the content production and what would motivate them to return to the online community. The final results of this study can be applied in the development process of the Massidea.org online community.

1.3 Delimitations of the Study

This study has two types of delimitations: theory-based limitations and empirical limitations.

The theoretical framework has been limited to a presentation of social media, online networks, sense of community and to different motivational theories. The theoretical concepts will be presented in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4. Most of the theoretical framework was produced in collaboration with Ms. Minna Lehtelä who studied the same subject from the students' perspective in her Bachelor's Thesis.

This study was conducted in Finland and in total 14 interviews were accomplished. The results of this study are based upon these interviews, which limits the results of this study to Finland. The interviewees are working at different Universities of Applied Sciences, which can be also seen as a limitation because no other target groups were examined. This study presents the most important factors that can be applied in the development process of the Massidea.org online community.

The results and conclusions based on this study will be not developed further as well as planning and implementing further operations will be not included in the research project. The purpose of the study is to indicate the most beneficial results of the study that can be applied in the development process of the Massidea.org online community.

1.4 Structure of the Study

This study has three major Chapters: introduction, theoretical framework and empirical framework. The Introduction Chapter presents the research background and the purpose of the study. After the introduction Chapter the Massidea.org online community will be introduced briefly.

The theoretical framework consists of two parts. The first part presents the concept of online communities from the very beginning until today. The concept of sense of community and sense of online community are also discussed in this Chapter in order to understand the functionality of online communities. The second part introduces the concept of motivation and different motivational theories concerning participation in online communities. The motivational framework is explored from a teacher-based perspective.

The empirical framework describes the implementation process of the study as well as analyzing the interview results. The results presented in this Chapter are divided into different categories by subject and further analyzed. The empirical framework also introduces the most

important factors that will have an effect on the development process of the Massidea.org online community. Furthermore, certain development ideas regarding the implementation of the Massidea.org concept will be suggested. The interview questions (Appendices 1 & 2) are presented at the end of the empirical framework after the conclusions.

2 Presentation of Massidea.org

Massidea.org is an online social network that is part of the innovation and knowledge-based systems development program funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). The purpose of Massidea.org is to raise the creativity and community of hundreds of thousand students' to a national competition factor, which all Finnish companies and public actors can cost-effectively use regardless of their size. The objective of the project is to create a permanent structure to an innovation community, which specifically as part of polytechnic education activities generates descriptions of new ideas, the future market environment and customer needs for companies to benefit from. These factors constitute a so-called Innovation Triangle Framework (Figure 1), which includes the innovation bank, visions of the future (foresight theories) and today's challenges (customer and market orientation theories). As the global trend currently shows, network-based services (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Habbo Hotel, My Space) are very popular around the world. Massidea.org also follows the same logic of action. (Santonen 2009b.)

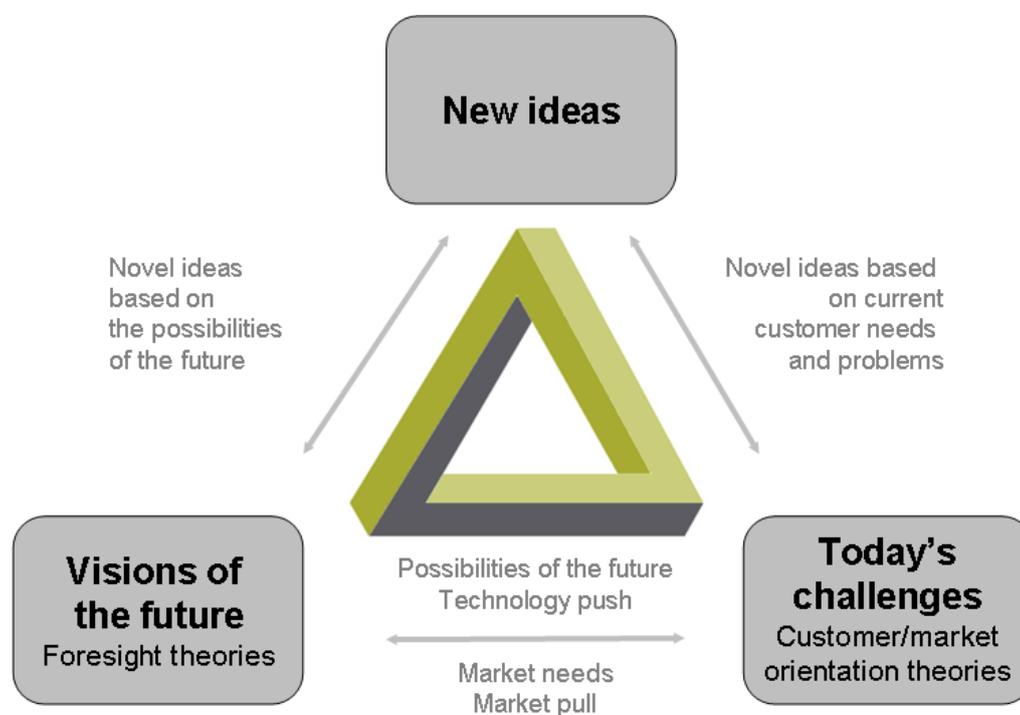


Figure 1: The Innovation Triangle Framework
(Santonen 2009b.)

2.1 Target Groups of Massidea.org

The main operating targets of Massidea.org are small and medium-sized enterprises and public organizations. The Massidea.org concept produces a continually refreshed tool for companies' personal developers, which contains a substantial number of new ideas, future information and market and customer information. The tool supports and nourishes the developer innovation activity and gives companies a convenient opportunity to take advantage of students' alternative perspective in its own operations. (Santonen 2009b.)

2.2 The Concept of Massidea.org

The project seeks to utilize the communal interaction resource and creativity of underutilized students and senior citizens by combining these two resources and creating conditions for a wide-ranging innovation operation in Finnish society, to ensure the innovation environment, international competitiveness and to promote the emergence of innovations and use of them. (Santonen 2009b.)

The purpose of Massidea.org is to create an innovation society that consists of new and innovating ideas shared by university students and the aged population. Students' continuously developed network service produces new ideas, forecasting information about the market environment and customer needs. Consequently, enterprises and the public sector can utilize the ideas that are presented in Massidea.org. (Santonen 2009b.)

The network service and the innovation community related to it constitute a new teaching format, which can be integrated as part of the educational system. The instructors are able to use Massidea.org as a teaching tool and furthermore create contacts with companies, other schools and innovation activities internationally. Teachers are also able to participate in the Massidea.org service development and organizing the content production. (FAQ Benefits of OIBS 2009.)

2.3 Project History

Mr. Teemu Santonen, a principal lecturer of Laurea University of Applied Sciences, first introduced the idea of Massidea.org in a conference in November 2006. In the beginning of 2007, the idea and network base were developed and the first funding was applied for the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation (TEKES), which was however refused. In the end of 2007, the first scientific publication which describes the concept in detail was presented. In 2008, the network sends the second funding proposal to the European Social Fund

(ESF) and soon after that in April 2008 ESF gave a tentative financing decision. (Santonen 2009a.)

The Massidea.org project has achieved a reputation already in the very beginning. In April 24th, 2008 the Finnish Inventor Support Association awarded Massidea.org with the School Konsta award that was given to five interesting projects that were considered as Finnish success stories, and Massidea.org was one of them. The Konsta award was presented by minister Mauri Pekkarinen. In 2008, the first pilot project started and in 2009 the first demonstration version of Massidea.org was released. After the official ESF funding decision in 2009, full-scale operations started. (Santonen 2009a.)

2.4 Functionalities of Massidea.org

Massidea.org is a web-based online community where people can log in. After logging in the users are able create their own profile, i.e. a figure through which they communicate and create content in the online service. This content can be for instance new ideas or market and customer information. The users can also function under a nickname if they wish to keep their real identity secret. At a later phase in the project, active seniors who are willing to share their own experiences and be involved in developing business and public organizations' innovation activity will be also able to participate in content production. Students are encouraged to active and independent work, but integrating the Massidea.org project fully into the daily teaching activities also produces the content. (FAQ Functionalities of OIBS 2009.)

The working principle of Massidea.org is network-like, so that students deposit their own content to the online service. Since the whole network content is open to everyone, another user can for instance continue what another user started or comment on his/her outputs. When there is enough content in the online service, companies and government organizations are able to make use of this information. The purpose is to create the content broad and comprehensive enough that companies would be prepared at a later stage to pay a small licensing fee each month for use of the service. In this way it would be possible to create a motivating system in which students and active retirees could be rewarded for good ideas. However, Massidea.org Web service is not intended to be a profit-making organization, but the incentive system would function as a motivation factor for content providers. (FAQ Functionalities of OIBS 2009.)

Students are much responsible of functionalities of the network service. The project is an ongoing project in which students develop the technical platform, layout, marketing materials, online community overall operation, etc. Anyone can participate in the development, and it is important that students participate in it actively. (FAQ Functionalities of OIBS 2009.)

2.5 People Involved in Developing and Maintaining Massidea.org

Table 1 presents the roles of the different actors in the process of developing and maintaining Massidea.org.

Actor	Role
HAMK University of Applied Sciences	Developing the operations model to the content production and taking care of the launching phase. Corresponds for the testing.
HUMAK University of Applied Sciences	Developing the operations model to the content production and taking care of the launching phase.
Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences	Developing the operations model to the content production and taking care of the launching phase.
Central Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences	Developing the operations model to the content production and taking care of the launching phase.
Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences	Developing the operations model to the content production and taking care of the launching phase.
Laurea University of Applied Sciences	Responsible for the entire project and the business concept. Developing the operations model to the content production and taking care of the launching phase.
Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences	Developing the operations model to the content production and taking care of the launching phase.
Satakunta University of Applied Sciences	Developing the operations model to the content production and taking care of the launching phase.
PIRAMK University of Applied Sciences	Developing the operations model to the content production and taking care of the launching phase. GUI development.
Turku School of Economics Finland Future Research Centre (TEKES)	Responsible for the future projects, analysis expertise and linking Massidea.org project to the high-level international knowledge.
Aalto University	Software development.

University of Lapland	Collector of traveling trends and future mentor.
TAMK University of Applied Sciences	Developing the operations model to the content production and taking care of the launching phase. Prepares and develops technical solutions.

Table 1: People Involved in Developing and Maintaining Massidea.org
(FAQ The role of different actors in OIBS 2009; OIBS People 2009.)

3 Online Communities

The World Wide Web (WWW) has developed from a technological information searching tool to a social and communal media. Already more than 1.5 billion people are using the Internet all over the world. Internet users are able to interact without any limitations regarding the place, time and culture. The Internet is an easily approachable information network where in addition to information retrieval people are able to spend time, make shopping and meet friends for instance. A new phenomenon that has arisen is online networks, communities that function in the Internet. (Salmenkivi & Nyman 2007, 29; Hyytiäinen 2007, 13; Huusko 2009, B2.)

Development of the new web-based applications such as blogs, wikis, podcasts and photo and video sharing, has created new social communities and communal content production. The development of the new Internet can be understood as the concepts of Web 2.0 and Social Media that refer to communal content production and sharing. (Ihanainen, Kalli & Kiviniemi 2009, 135.)

This Chapter explains the concepts of social media and online communities, how online communities have developed, the purpose of them today and what is meant by sense of community and sense of online community. Apart from that, utilizing online communities in learning situations will be discussed in this Chapter, as Massidea.org will be integrated as part of the educational system.

3.1 The Concept of Social Media

The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami illustrates well the power of social media. Information of the catastrophe spread quickly through different forms of social media such as You Tube videos, blogs, instant messengers and text messages. Traditional mass media was not capable of such powerful accurate publicity. (Kalliala & Toikkanen 2009, 18.)

Social media differs from traditional media by being more user oriented. It can be seen as process where individuals and groups build meaning with a help of contents, communities and network technology. Communities function more often in the Internet but they are also possible access with a mobile device. The content that can be created to social media by the users and that is shared with the other users can be for instance text, pictures or videos. (Kalliala & Toikkanen 2009, 18; Mobilive 2010.)

The content is related to user-generated content, peer production and produsage, of which the last refers to utilizing and producing the content. People are no longer only consumers but producer consumers. Apart from using the produced content the users also produce the content itself. The tools of social media are created to support cooperation, when the information is in the Internet it is possible to access anytime anywhere. This way multiple users are able to edit the same information simultaneously. In an entrepreneurship point of view, social media offers plenty of different forms of social networks, new communication tools, common content production, simulations and possibilities to utilize the knowledge of the other users. (Kalliala & Toikkanen 2009, 18, 55.)

Social media is connected to technology, in which media's social nature is emphasized. Computer, or for instance a mobile device has always an important role in the interaction in social media. One idiosyncrasy is the use of the Internet, so the Internet is a tool for the actualization of the social media. (Erkkola 2008, 30.)

3.2 The Concept of Online Communities

The Internet has enabled its users to connect to an ever-increasing amount of information and has allowed users to extend their professional and social networks through participation in online communities (Tedjamulia, Olsen, Dean & Albrecht 2005, 1). Online communities that improve social interaction are part of the concept of social media. The majority of online communities are built around some kind of a discussion forum, but they have also received a new range of social dimensions around, such as three-dimensional environments, and simultaneous interaction. (Hyytiäinen 2007, 13.)

Online communities consist of people, a shared purpose, policies and computer systems. A community cannot exist without having people in it, they share ideas, discuss and create content for instance. One challenge for online community developers is that the broader a community's purpose is the wider range of people can be attracted to it. Therefore, understanding people's behavior is essential in developing online communities. The reasons for participating in online communities vary. In order to develop an online community that

attracts people requires understanding of what motivates them to participate and return in online communities. (Preece 2000 10, 80-82.)

Community policies have an effect on the participation rate in online communities. They determine requirements for joining an online community, the participant's communication style, repercussions for nonconformance and accepted conduct. Without computer systems there are no online communities. They support and mediate social interaction and facilitate a sense of togetherness. (Preece 2000, 10, 94-95.)

3.2.1 History of Online Communities

Howard Rheingold, who has studied extensively online communities, described the concept of online community as follows: "Virtual community is a group of people who meet or do not meet personally and who change their opinions with a help of a computer...". The first online communities were created in the 1970's with a purpose to ease the interaction between researchers. The Internet users were able to post messages and answer other users' messages on bulletin boards and in this way discuss with the other users in a more convenient way. Slowly these bulletin boards started to develop to discussion forums and further to so-called online communities. The first well-known online communities were MUD, WELL and MOO. (Heinonen 2008, 54; Hagel & Armstrong; Hyytiäinen 2007, 13.)

Multi-user dungeon (MUD) is one of the earliest and probably one of the most well known real-time discussion forums (i.a. Heinonen, Rheingold and Hagel & Armstrong). In this role-playing game the user visualizes the game environment and the actions by adopting the role of the character that he/she is playing. The communication form in this game is written. Other well-known online communities that were developed in addition to MUD are for instance MOO (MUD, Object Oriented) and WELL (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link). MOO is a text-based virtual community where physical metaphors are used in the forms of houses and cities. The users move from one place to another and communicate with the other users in the meanwhile. WELL is a discussion forum where the topics differ from serious topics to less serious topics depending on the user and his/her interests. (Preece 2000, 57; Heinonen 2008, 54; Learn about the WELL 2009; Rheingold 1995, 1.)

3.2.2 The Meaning of Online Communities Nowadays

Online communities represent a new type of social formation on the Internet. They offer unprecedented opportunities to develop relationships and social interaction regardless the people's geographical location or time. In the past years online communities have achieved much popularity due to the Internet has developed to a direction where especially interaction

between the users is important. Fast technological development has particularly supported this movement, which leads the Internet closer to social media. (Pentina, Prybutok & Zhang 2008; Haverinen 10.)

Online communities are widely utilized for different purposes. For instance, game communities, dating communities, peer communities, crisis communities, fan communities and interest communities are utilized actively also in teaching and education. Also companies have remarked that online communities can work as a supportive marketing channel and nowadays they are even utilized for recruiting purposes. Lately, especially the employers of marketing and media business sectors have activated themselves in online communities. (Heinonen 2008, 5; Holappa 2007.)

Online communities have also been criticized. For instance researcher Laura Lengel claims that online communities decrease face-to-face interaction between people that leads to isolation. From another point of view, many other researches support online communities and suggest that people can obtain much support and empathy from online communities. However, participating in online communities has been seen as a better solution than not having contact to any communities. (Preece 2000, 24.)

3.3 Sense of Community

Trustworthiness, affection and relationships between people are essential concepts when discussing sense of community (Heinonen 2008, 92). A feeling of togetherness gives an opportunity to the members of a community to express their own personality and compare themselves to the other members of the community. Considering the development of the sense of community it is important that the members of it are mutual, otherwise the development will cease. (Hyytiäinen 2007, 12-13.)

Intimacy belongs to an individual's basic needs and through social relationships individuals seek for approval, care and intimacy (Heinonen 2008, 13). The feeling of community has a positive impact on an individual's health and well-being. The tighter the relationship network is between the individuals the more there will be social capital, which refers to the value of networks and therefore it improves the well-being of all the individuals (Hyyppä 2002, 51). Team spirit supports the creation of trust that leads to reciprocity. A sense of community can also appear through an instrument, for instance a sense of network community that brings new challenges and provide new opportunities for the development of the community. (Hyytiäinen 2007, 12-13.)

3.4 Sense of Online Community

The concept of sense of online community was created in the 1980's by the existence of computers and the Internet. The sense of online community differs partly from the traditional sense of community and what are essential in experiencing the sense of online community are the users and the relationships between them, interaction and presence of technology. (Heinonen 2008, 14, 90; Hyytiäinen 2007, 11.)

Online communities and sense of community are often mixed. A community is a space or a place when the sense of community is an emotional experience shaped by social relationships. Sometimes people do not experience the sense of community in online communities. The user interprets the message always through his/her own feelings without being able to sense the feelings, expressions or gestures of another user. The sense of online community can be shaped or disappeared more easily than the traditional sense of community. (Heinonen 2008, 14; Hyytiäinen 2007, 11.)

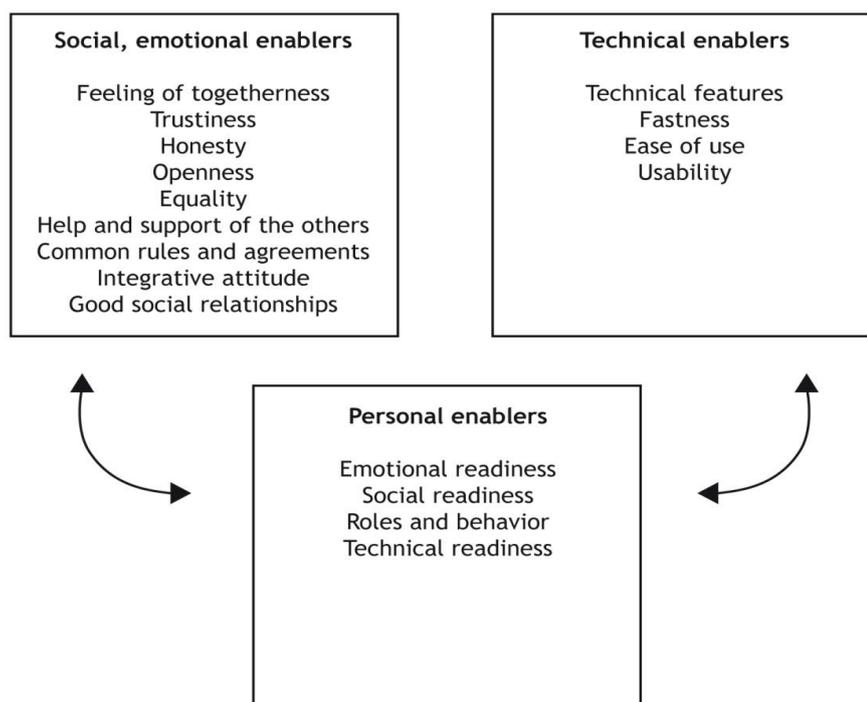


Figure 2: The enablers that have an impact on the sense of online community and their mutual relationships
(Heinonen 2008, 18.)

The sense of community arises outside the network mostly from social and emotional factors when inside the network also the factors affecting technology have an impact (Figure 2). In addition, the user's personal factors have an impact in the creation of the sense of communi-

ty. It is important that all these factors create positive experiences regarding the development of the sense of community. (Heinonen 2008, 17-18)

3.5 Introduction to E-learning

The term e-learning (Electronic Learning) refers to a learning process that takes place on the Internet. It is a relatively new term and not completely established yet. The technological development in the Internet domain in the middle of the 1990's created an interest in e-learning at schools. An essential character in e-learning is cooperation between the users that supports interaction between them. Lifländer (1991) proposes that E-learning consists of different teaching methods, face-to-face interaction as well as distance learning, where the Internet is used as an aid in teaching. (Kilpiö 2003, 21-31.)

E-learning is increasing its popularity as a form of studying and it is already a natural part of the educational system especially in universities and colleges. Online teaching extends the teaching and learning opportunities in educational institutes and responds therefore to various learning challenges. (Kivimäki 2005.)

The advantages of e-learning are for instance the disappearance of time and place linkage, increasing internationality, students' possibility to comment on other students' work and the easiness of retrieving information. Because online teaching requires a physical space and eye contact cannot be obtained, the student needs to be often more active than normally in order to express his/her own presence. Slowness, permanence and textual form of communication and interaction increase the opportunities of more silent students to express their opinions in the network. When the content is textual the students are also able to return to it and answer even after a long period of time. (Heinonen 2008, 84; Preece 2000, 54; Kilpiö 2003, 24.)

There are also several challenges and negative features in e-learning. Students are often not able to meet face to face even if learning is normally considered as a social process (Preece 2000, 55). Textual context creates challenges in interaction between the participants but also in designing the network environment. E-learning also does not support as fast and dynamic interaction as traditional learning. Furthermore, technical problems and inexperience of the users can also create challenges. (Kilpiö 2003, 23-24; Heinonen 2008, 88.)

3.5.1 Interaction and E-learning

What is essential in interaction in online communities is whether the students are familiar with each other before they participate in an e-learning process or not. If they are familiar with each other functions the online network only partly as a communication and an interac-

tion channel. If the students are not familiar with each other before, the formation of the group will happen merely inside the network. Interaction inside the study group and between the study group and the teacher is essential in e-learning because it creates a sense of community. The users will decide though whether they cooperate and interact with each other and the web environment functions as a tool around the users' actions. (Kilpiö 2008, 24; Ihanainen 2009, 82.)

Using different software that allow team working can support the feeling of community and interaction in an e-learning situation. The software enables an active interaction and communication between the users. These virtual rooms consist of different tools such as discussion forums, online directories and tools that enable creating the content and material needed for e-learning. Online conversation in a school environment always requires a teacher's guidance in order to succeed. Apart from that, teachers have responsibility of the content of the discussion as well as objectives of the discussion. (Kilpiö 2008, 31.)

3.5.2 Teacher's Role in E-learning

Even though the process of e-learning follows the same pedagogical logic as a traditional learning process it needs to be observed from a different point of view. The role of a teacher as tutor has a special role in e-learning as the learning happens in a new operational environment. The changes concerning the role of a teacher as a tutor occur gradually and can sometimes create concerns to the teachers. Prejudices, lack of time, unwillingness or fear in opposition to unknown can be obstacles when adapting in the e-learning environment. The fear is often directed to lack of ability towards technical issues or incapability to apply new teaching practices. (Kilpiö 2008 ,27-31.)

The tutor's role can differ from technical support to a content specialist. The tutor is responsible for pedagogical, social, functional and technical guidance. The pedagogical role includes helping the students to achieve their learning objectives as well as providing information, creating connections and giving feedback. The social role is to create and maintain a friendly and interactive environment. Grouping is also an important factor that affects the amount of interaction in web discussions. The functional role means that the tutor places time limits and creates forms. This is especially important because many functional reasons can prevent participation in an online conversation. The tutor also has a technical role and if needed he/she helps the students to become familiar with the environment and its operational principles. (Ihanainen 2009, 53-55.)

3.5.3 E-learning and Motivation

The sense of community is the principal motivation factor in e-learning. Because e-learning does not include such concrete motivation factors, which are normally related to traditional learning such as a feeling of being part of a study group or face-to-face interaction, the teacher's responsibility is to create such situations. He/she is responsible for mentoring, encouraging and supporting students' interaction in the new environment. According to Ihanainen (2009, 82), the more silent participants weaken the motivation of the more active participants because it is easier to identify who are participating and who are not in the on-line conversation. (Kilpiö 2003, 26.)

3.5.4 Teacher's Attitudes Towards the Use of Online Communities

According to an inquiry made for 746 teachers from different educational levels around Finland there are significant differences between the usage of social media depending on their age, location and educational level. University of Applied Sciences teachers are the most frequent users in utilizing social media and platforms in teaching. The differences between the age groups are remarkable and the number descends when the age increases. On the average 6 % utilize social media in teaching. In the University of Applied Sciences the number is the highest, approximately 15 %. The next are high schools, vocational institutes and universities. (Puustinen, 2009.)

Social media is utilized in different ways in teaching. For instance, YouTube videos are often utilized in demonstrating and blogs and wikis are used in communication. Some teachers share homework and other course material through blogs. Electronic learning platforms are familiar to half of the teachers. In larger schools and institutes on the average two thirds of teachers utilize platforms and in smaller schools only one third. Learning platforms are most utilized in Universities of Applied Sciences where 85 % of teachers are familiar with them. The most utilized platforms are Blackboard, Moodle, Fronter, Optima, Pedanet and Opit. (Puustinen, 2009.)

4 Motivation in Participating in Online Communities

This Chapter introduces the concept of motivation. Different motivational theories and research results concerning the participation in online communities will be presented in the following Chapters. Furthermore, motivation and e-learning will be discussed at the end of this Chapter.

4.1 The Concept of Motivation

Motivation is a theoretical concept that helps in understanding and analyzing human changeability of behavior. Motivational concepts, from the perspective of a human, explain why people do certain matters or act in a certain way at particular times. It describes the options of the human mind; why do people choose a certain way of acting and what leads them into these options. This is called psychological hedonism and it is one of the oldest constructs in motivation. According to the psychological hedonism, people tend to seek rather objectives and activities, which offer them the admired results. (Beck 2000, 2-3.)

Motivational concepts also explain the intensity and persistence of behavior, how high the level of motivation is and how persistent the behavior is. These two factors are not always comparable, a person can at the same time be highly persistent and have a low intensity of behavior. According to Deci & Ryan (1994), action that has not objectives cannot be called motivational action (Petri & Govern 2004, 16; Kansanen & Uusikylä 2002, 26).

4.2 The Basis of Motivation

The basis of motivation consists of needs, and values and motives. A need can be defined as a state of intrinsic imbalance that influences a person's desire to achieve complete balance. The theory of frustration specifies that satisfaction leads to a decrease of needs and frustration to an increase of needs. (Ruohotie 1998, 51.)

According to Alderfer, a person has three categories of basic needs: 1) existence needs, 2) relatedness needs and 3) growth needs. Alderfer claims that these different needs are related to each other. Dissatisfaction of higher level needs causes appreciation of lower level needs and when achievements lead to an increase in a target level, failures lead to a decrease of a target level. However, return to the lower level needs is considered as temporary as a person seeks to reenter the higher level needs if a possibility appears. It seems that the more the person has satisfied his/her growth needs the more he/she tries to implement and develop him/herself. Values instead represent desired objectives of an activity that are related to achievements and plans regarding such concrete factors as work, family, education or free time. There is an interaction between these two factors, values and achievements and it appears when there is a change in the objectives. The same values do not appear in the same way with different people or in different situations. (Ruohotie 1998, 51-54.)

4.3 Intrinsic versus Extrinsic Motivation Concepts

Motivation can be studied from different dimensions and probably the most common and well-known technique is to divide it into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic and extrinsic motives are the incentives a person is trying to achieve and that are being rewarded internally and/or externally. In other words, we can discover if the person is motivated by his or her own will or by an external objective. These two categories are always completing one another, the extrinsic motivation can be obtained very quickly but if it does not arouse the intrinsic motivation it can diminish very easily. (Ruohotie 1998, 37-38.)

Learning motivation is often divided into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Deci & Ryan (1985) divide this judgment into three psychological needs, which have an influence on human behavior, the need for autonomy, community, competence and performance. (Kansanen & Uusikylä 2002, 27.)

When motivation is intrinsic, it comes from the activity itself or from intrinsic rewards. Accomplishing and developing oneself is often related to intrinsic motivation and in this case challenging and educating work can be seen as a motivating factor. Also versatility and meaningfulness of the work are good examples of intrinsic rewards. Intrinsic rewards are often long-lasting and are normally more effective than extrinsic rewards. Many researchers have also compared curiosity to intrinsic motivation, for instance Beswick in 1971. They suggest that curiosity leads to information search and the purpose is to find information that eliminates or reduces uncertainty. (Ruohotie 1998, 37-41; Kansanen & Uusikylä 2002, 27.)

When a person is motivated by external factors such as rewards, money, honor, pressures and punishments these are called extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic rewards are objective and they appear in the form of a process or a matter. They can often be derived from a work community and are obtained through an organization or its representatives. Extrinsic rewards are not as long-lasting as intrinsic rewards and therefore it restricts their power. Extrinsic motivation does not always create as much positive images as intrinsic motivation and especially according to concept of learning it is not desirable. (Ruohotie 1998, 37-41; Kansanen & Uusikylä 2002, 31.)

4.4 Motivation Factors in Utilizing Online Communities

The social communities where there is not a commercial provider or direct economic purpose for interaction among participants, such as Facebook and My Space, are gaining participants and it seems interesting to know why individuals return to the communities, how satisfied

they are, and also what the main orientation or type of satisfaction they report is when rating their level of satisfaction. (Gaston-Breton, Duque & Lado 2009, 9.)

The following Chapters present the results of previous studies that have studied the motivations to participate in online communities.

4.4.1 Motivation, Satisfaction and Continuance Intention

The study from Gaston-Breton et al. (2009) concentrates on a subject that has still very little academic literature available; the motivations to participate in online communities and the communities' impact on satisfaction and continuance intension. The study proposes that it is the psychological processes that makes online communities popular and that the motives to participate in online communities could have an impact on the attitudes and the behavior of the participants. The results of this study suggest that the motives to participate in online communities have hedonic, functional and social roots and that support, identification, attachment, relationship and obligation can be seen as the main motivations to be involved in an online community. The study also observed that if the online community corresponds well the motivations and satisfaction of the participants it will have a higher potential to retain the participants. (Gaston-Breton et al. 2009, 4, 21.)

The study from Gaston-Breton et al. (2009) is based on the Table 2 that presents the main results of the previous studies regarding the motivation factors towards the participation in online communities that has been utilized also in their study.

Authors	Type of VC	Classification of Motives, Needs, Benefits	Methodology	Results
Pentina et al. (2008)	Virtual communities in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Socially oriented (social integration, entertainment and status enhancement) - Informational/Purposive - Transactional 	Online survey to 533 undergraduate students belonging to a VC + PLS	The main motives are: 1) Informational Purposive, 2) Social oriented, 3) Transactional
Popp et al. (2008)	Virtual Brand Community	25 different items / motives to participate	Online survey of 4534 members + Factorial analysis	The dominant dimensions are: 1) Community related motives, 2) Brand related motives, 3) Added values

Gupta & Kim (2007)	Website of an online store for mothers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cognition (functional usefulness, social usefulness, system quality) - Affect (pleasure, arousal) 	Online survey of 275 women participants + LISREL	The main antecedents of "Attitude towards VC" + "Commitment to VC" are: 1) System quality, 2) Functional Usefulness, Pleasure
Dholakia et al. (2004)	Network VC and small group VC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self referent values (Purposive, Self-discovery), - Group referent values (Interpersonal, enhancement) - Entertainment value 	Online survey of 545 regular participants of the 264 different VC + LISREL	The main antecedents of "Desire" + "We intentions" + "Participation behavior" Purposive value, 2) Entertainment value, Self-discovery
Henning-Thurau et al. (2004)	Web-based consumer opinion platforms	11 potential motives to participate in eWOM (read and write comments in platforms)	Online survey of 2 000 consumers + Factorial analysis	The 4 main motives to participate are: Social benefits, 2) Economic incentives, Concern for others, 4) Extraversion/Self enhancement
Wang & Fesenmaier (2004)	Online travel community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Functional (information, efficiency, convenience) - Social (trust, communication, identification involvement) - Psychological (belonging, relationship, affiliation), - Hedonic (amusement, fun, enjoyment, entertainment) 	Online survey to 322 members of the VC + LISREL	The main antecedents of the "Nature of participation" are: 1) Social, 2) Functional, Hedonic
Bagozzi & Dholakia (2002)	Virtual community of chat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual-level motives (attitudes, positive and negative anticipated emotions) - Group-level motives or social identity (self categorization, affective commitment, group based self esteem) 	Paper survey of 157 regular participants + LISREL	The main antecedents of "Desires" + "intention to participate" are: 1) social identity, 2) positive anticipated emotions

Table 2: Empirical studies on motivations to participate in VC
(Gaston-Breton et al. 2009, 7.)

A research from Dholakia et al. (2004) examines the social identification in virtual communities. The research investigates for instance people's motivations and needs to join social networks. These motivations are giving and receiving emotional support, meeting similar people, finding new friends, socializing and networking and discussing similar interests.

Gupta and Kim (2004) examined the commitment to a virtual community from the perspectives of balanced beliefs and emotional matters. Balanced beliefs include such matters as quality, functionality and logicity of the virtual community when emotional matters include such matters as pleasure and arousal that the community creates. According to Gupta and Kim (2004), functionality, social benefit and pleasure are contributory factors when joining virtual communities. (Pentina, Prybutok & Zhang 2008, 3.1.) Bagozzi et al. (2002) in turn suggest that functional objectives, such as the symbiotic exchange of useful information and hedonic objectives with the creation and consumption of a positive, confluent experience through interaction. (Gaston-Breton et al. 2009, 5.)

Wang and Fesenmaier (2003) identify four motivation factors that have an effect on the individuals' investment in virtual communities, efficacy, status, instrumental and expectancy. They draw the conclusion that the easiness of communication and the users' personality are important factors concerning the activity in virtual communities. They also confirmed that different needs such as functional needs, social needs, psychological needs and hedonic needs are the basis in participating in virtual communities. They came to the conclusion that different age groups have different needs that motivate them to participate in virtual communities.

Dholakia et al. (2004, 2.1) suggest that the functionality of groups shapes members social identification within these groups. Virtual community needs to have also a purposive value (receiving information, possibility to communicate and problem solving etc.). On the basis of this the stronger motivations to participate in online communities due to social interaction would lead to the birth of stronger group identity (Pentina, Prybutok & Zhang 2008, 3).

The social identification can be divided into three categories: cognitive self-categorization, affective commitment to the group and evaluative group self-esteem. The cognitive aspect of social identity reflects the process of self-categorization emphasizing similarities between self and other group members. Generation of affection towards the group is an important factor. Generation of deeper relationships can lead to a stronger identification with the group because the members join the online communities due to same interests and values. (Pentina, Prybutok & Zhang 2008, 3.1.)

The main motives to participate in online community according to these previous studies presented in the Table 2 are related to informational or functional objectives and after that to social-oriented needs and hedonic objectives and finally to psychological needs. It can also be noticed that individual-level motives have an impact on group-level motives. (Gaston-Breton et al. 2009, 6.)

4.4.2 Goal-based Framework versus Needs-based Framework

Several researchers have suggested Maslow's hierarchical needs theory as an appropriate tool in understanding users of online communities. Maslow's hierarchical needs theory suggests that passive members do not participate due to their psychological or security needs are not fulfilled when active members participate due to their social and esteem needs are fulfilled. Also regarding Bishop's earlier studies online communities should provide such aspects that fulfill the basic needs of an individual so that the higher needs would also be fulfilled. (Bishop 2006, 2.)

Bishop claims that the hierarchical needs theory is questionable because it is possible for an individual to be sociable and creative at the same time without involving the feeling of security. According to Mook (1987), even though individuals' so-called security needs are not fulfilled they still want to socialize and communicate with users in a similar situation to themselves. Interaction can be achieved even though the individuals participating in online community do not have a feeling of security or their physiological needs are not being fulfilled. (Bishop 2006, 2.)

To interact in online communities does not necessarily require the need for being psychologically satisfied. Therefore, actions in online communities are linked more to goal-based than need-based theories. For instance, the reason why such members who have never taken a participatory action use online communities cannot be explained by needs-based theories, as their deficit needs are not being met. According to the study of Preece, Nonnecke and Andrews (2004), members who do not feel a need to participate either do not like the group, cannot use the software properly, want to examine the group more or think that they were being helpful enough. According to March (1991) the participation in online communities is based on the beliefs of the actions an individual has taken. (Bishop 2006, 1 & 2.)

The reason why some members are not participating can be for instance unfavorable experiences in a community such as negative comments. Negative beliefs can decrease the interest in participating in online communities and therefore they have a direct influence on the objectives while the individuals with more positive beliefs of what their actions will achieve will have a higher participation rate. Even though objectives are closely linked to individuals'

participation in an online community, they do not lead the force behind the actions individuals take. (Bishop 2006, 2.)

The previous studies concerning participation in online communities have been focusing more on examining why individuals do not participate than trying to discover reasons why the active members constantly share their knowledge and experiences in an online community. (Bishop 2006, 1.)

4.4.3 Bishop's Ecological Cognition Framework

Bishop suggests a 3-level conceptual framework (Figure 3) that helps in understanding why individuals participate or do not participate in online communities. The framework suggests that individuals are motivated by a desire to put into practice an action. They draw a conclusion whether this action meets their objectives, plans, values, beliefs and interests, they use their abilities to put into practice the action and they perceive the environment they are part of. (Bishop 2006, 3.)

Level 1 concentrates on desires, level 2 addresses cognition, and level 3 emphasizes interpretation and interaction of members with their environment. Social network literature divides the members of communities into three groups that supports the 3-level framework; users seeking for new contacts, users seeking for better contacts to replace the existing ones and potential users who can be converted from beginners and short-term goal-oriented users through increased interactivity. (Pentina, Prybutok & Zhang 2008, 3.1.)

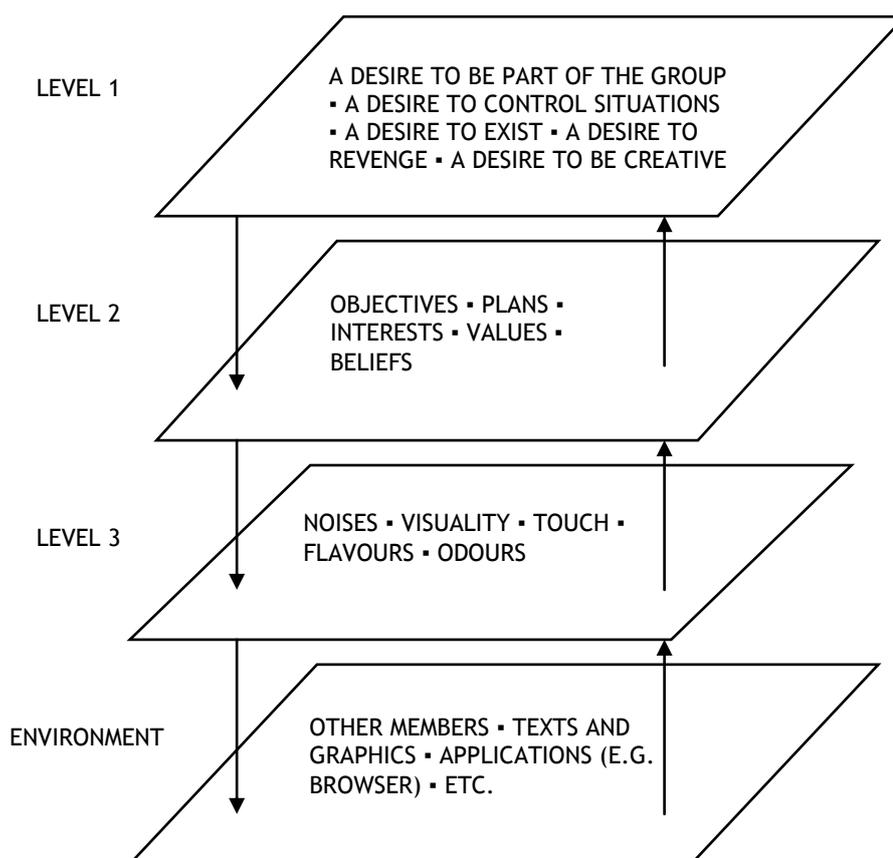


Figure 3: The Ecological Cognition Framework
(Bishop 2006, 3.)

Level one concentrates on the individual's desires with five different categories that are most likely to occur in online communities. These categories are social, order, existential, vengeance and creative. How this framework differs from needs-based theories can be explained by the fact that individuals are motivated by their desires instead of their needs to execute their actions that will most likely occur in online communities. An individual who is constantly participating in an online community can be executing several desires. (Bishop 2006, 3.)

The social category presents the desire to socialize and communicate through an online community by posting messages or participating in discussions. The order category presents the desire to organize the Web content and take control of situations inside the online communities. The existential category includes desires to eat and drink that shape their interactions in computer-mediated environments. The vengeance category presents the desire to revenge on other users by posting negative comments for instance. The reason why this category is included is because members of online communities are more aggressive compared to members in traditional communities. The creative category is linked to the desire for solving problems or creating content. (Bishop 2006, 3.)

Level two concentrates on the individual's cognitions, which are objectives, plans, values, beliefs and interests. This level suggests that an individual takes into account his/her existing objectives, plans, values, beliefs and interests before taking action based on his/her desires. The objectives can be either short-term or long-term when plans are creations of experienced desires. Beliefs are arguments that an individual believes to be true, which can be easily changed if an individual experiences ambivalence for instance. Values on the other hand are personal principles that are shaped by interactions in a certain environment and are not as easily changed. Interests describe the connections that an individual is seeking to maintain and if an individual has interest in something the beliefs are unlikely to be changed. (Bishop 2006, 3 & 3.2.)

The framework suggests that an individual develops a plan to perform concerning his/her desire. However, if the plan seems to be in ambivalent with their beliefs they do not perform the desire. For instance, an individual can have a desire to be social and be willing to communicate with other persons, but in the meanwhile he/she feel not helpful by doing so. In some cases an individual can experience inhibition and do not perform due to that the plan how to perform the desire was inconsistent with his/her existing plans, values, objectives, or interests. (Bishop 2006, 3.2.)

Level three concentrates on the individual's means to interpret and interact with his/her environment, which are haptic, auditory, visual, gustatory and olfactory. The environment consists of other individuals, artefacts and structures among other things. Artefacts can be seen as forms of text or graphics that offer perceived accessibilities that are referred to applications and softwares. Haptic abilities are related to the sense of touch and interaction through touching and the auditory abilities to hearing and speaking. Visual abilities are the sense of sight and the ability to imagine visual images. Olfactory abilities are related to the sense of smell and gustatory to the sense of taste. (Bishop 2006, 3.)

The ecological cognition framework suggests that when an individual is seeking for opportunities to meet his/her desires he/she will make decisions based on how he/she perceives his/her environment, including in the decisions his/her objectives, plans, values and beliefs. Beliefs have a strong impact on individuals' decisions regarding whether they perform their desires or not and whether they meet their existing plans, objectives and values. An individual's plan needs to be ambivalent with his/her cognitions in order to perform the desire, which leads to the interaction with the environment. (Bishop 2006, 3.3.)

4.4.4 Sociability and Usability Concerns

Encouragement of users in online communities is important, especially in the beginning. The next Chapter introduces Preece's (2003) observations on how people can be encouraged to participate in online communities.

The concept of the online community should be defined clearly so that potential users will be able to become familiar with its objectives immediately. Also an appropriate name and clear definition will help people to understand their own and other peoples' objectives to participate in the online community. These factors create consensus inside the online community, build trust and restrict also the creation of not-wanted conversations. Rewards encourage in reciprocity. For instance, by taking into account positive and helpful comments inside the group the members can be encouraged to create good norms and values. (Preece & Maloney-Krichmar 2003, 21, 26.)

Information regarding sufficient privacy policy encourages people to participate in online communities. Nowadays, users insist the guarantees that the information they have added in the online community will not be given to third parties. The online community needs to have a clear privacy policy so that it creates trust and the users will have a feeling that the information they have added to the community is safe. (Preece 2000, 104.)

Hectic conversation, new ideas and constantly updated content make the online community interesting. In addition to sociability, the users appreciate functionality and usability of the online community. The usability supports peoples' creativity, productivity and creates a better feeling for the user. Online communities with bad functionality are often experienced as frustrating and time-consuming. Therefore, administrators should put emphasis on designing the online community as standardized, controlled and logical so that the members would experience it as reasonable and effective to use. (Preece 2000, 82-133.)

Table 3 presents facts that are recommended to consider when creating an online community so that most of the potential users would experience the online community as useful and attractive.

User Question	Usability Concerns	Sociability Concerns
Why should I join this community?	Does the community have a clear and meaningful name? Is there a clear description of the community's purpose? Is the content attractively presented (design, color, graphics, etc.)? Will the site be updated regularly?	What title and content will communicate the community's purpose effectively and attract people?
How do I join or leave?	Are the instructions for registering clear-cut? Is it short procedure? Is there a statement ensuring privacy and confidentiality?	Should this be an open or closed community? How sensitive are the issues and participants? Do we want to control who joins?
What are the rules?	Are policies clearly and concisely worded, and appropriately positioned?	What policies are needed? Should a moderator guide and enforce rules? Do we need disclaimers or other statements of intent?
How do I read and send messages?	Has appropriate support been defined and provided (e.g., templates, emoticons, FAQs, single messages or digests for list servers, etc.)?	Is support needed for newcomers? Should the system facilitate sending private and group messages?

Can I do what I want easily?	What capabilities will best meet communication needs (e.g., different formats for information, such as Web pages, FAQs, content variation; search facilities, effective help at the appropriate level; private communication, etc.)?	What is the best way to ensure that the community is a congenial place, one where people can do what they want to do? What are the communication needs of the community?
Is the community safe?	What are the best ways to protect personal information, secure transaction processing, support private discussion, and protect members from aggressive behavior?	Will the community need a moderator to ensure appropriate behavior? What level of confidentiality and security is needed?
Can I express myself as I wish?	Will users need, want or expect emoticons, content icons, a seamless link to private email, Web pages, and so on?	What kind of communication capabilities does a community with this purpose require, and how should they be supported?
Why should I come back?	How often and by what method should content be changed (e.g., news, broadcast, provocateur to stimulate discussion, etc.)?	What will entice people to return on a regular basis?

Table 3: Checklist for Eight Heuristics
(Preece 2000, 291.)

5 Research Approach

This part of the study illustrates how the empirical study has been conducted. Chapter 5.1 introduces the research methods applied in this study. Data collection methods are presented in Chapter 5.1.1 and interview methods in Chapter 5.1.2. Reliability and validity of the study will be discussed in Chapter 5.2.

5.1 Choice of the Research Method

People make questions and interpret things in many different ways according to their own understanding. In research, as in daily life, people ask such questions as how much, how often, how many and what time. In the same way people are interested in matters that cannot be measured quantitatively such as, if a film or a book is exciting or if a suit looks stylish. In research this is called qualitative reasoning. In general, the nature of the study defines the method that is used in a research. A research can include both qualitative and quantitative

methods and therefore those can be seen as complementary methods. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2004, 151-152; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2004, 28.)

The nature of this study is qualitative. The purpose of the qualitative study is to understand and gain insights as well as construct explanations or theory. Qualitative research has an emphasis on understanding. It tends to be explorative and flexible because of unstructured problems but it may sometimes allow for tests of hypotheses. In qualitative research data collection and analysis are often conducted simultaneously because the collected data that is analyzed may initiate new questions and lead to further data collection. As more data are collected and analyzed the clearer the problem gradually becomes. (Ghuri & Gronhaug 2005, 202-204)

5.1.1 Data Collection

The data collection method for acquiring primary data depends on the research problem and which type of data is needed (Ghuri & Gronhaug 2005, 108). In this study, the primary data collection has been gathered through theme interviews with semi-structured interview questions. The interviews were conducted in Finland in October 2010 and in total 14 persons from several Universities of Applied Sciences were interviewed separately.

In order to obtain more detailed answers concerning the Massidea.org online community and the whole project itself, the interviewees that were selected in this study were part of the Massidea.org project and were working at the several Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland. The interviewees were divided into two groups. The first group represented the teachers who had participated in the project launching phase and the second group teachers who had participated in the content production. One person from single group was interviewed from each school. Due to interviewees could not be met personally all the interviews were completed over the telephone. The telephone conversations were recorded and written separately after interviewing.

The potential respondents who had participated in the project launching phase were first contacted by email (Appendices 3 & 4). They were asked whether they were part of the launching phase and whether they were interested in participating in the interview. After confirming that they had participated in the project launching phase personal interviews were conducted. The interviews lasted approximately from 15 to 20 minutes.

The persons who had participated in the content production were also contacted first by email (Appendices 3 & 4) asking the approval for a personal interview. These contacts were acquired in the interview process of the persons who had participated in the launching phase.

They were asked to name a person who had participated in the content production in that particular University of Applied Sciences. The interviews for the teachers who had participated in content production lasted approximately from 20 to 30 minutes.

5.1.2 Interview Method

In this research, the theme interview method was applied. It differs in many ways from other interview techniques that are used in academic research. The theme interview is influenced by the focused interview (Merton, Fiske & Kendall 1956) but it does not require certain experimentally achieved experience. All individual experiences, thoughts, beliefs and feelings can be interpreted with the help of this method. The theme interview is closer to the unstructured than the structured interview. In this semi-structured method the interview aspects, topics and themes are the same for all the interviewees but the questions do not follow any specific forms or order as the in the structured interview. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2004, 47-48.)

The main questions of the interview (Appendix 1), which was conducted for the teachers who were part of the launching phase, concerned the motivations to become involved in the project as well as the objectives of the project from the school's perspective. Such questions as what motivated the school to become involved in the project, what objectives the project had and how they have been achieved so far as well as what could have been done differently were presented in the interview.

The main questions of the interview (Appendix 2), which was conducted for the teachers who had participated in the content production, concerned the motivations to become involved in the project as well as the objectives of the project from the teacher's individual perspective. The interview also included questions about the motivations to participate in the online community as well as about the functionalities of the online community. Such questions as what motivated the person to become involved in the project, what personal objectives were set up and how they have been achieved so far as well as what could have been done differently were presented in the interview. Furthermore, questions regarding motivations to participate in the Massidea.org online community were presented. Such questions as what motivates the interviewees in participating in the Massidea.org online community, what is important in terms of attractiveness in the online community and what motivates in the content production were presented to the interviewees.

The interview results will be presented in Chapter 6 and the interview questions can be found in the appendices (Appendices 1 & 2).

5.2 Reliability and Validity of the Study

In a research the researcher is trying to avoid errors. However, the reliability and validity can vary. Reliability refers to the measurement repeatability, in others words its ability to give non-random results. The results can be considered as reliable if the data is collected from reliable sources and confirmed by similar information from other sources. Validity refers to the research method's ability to measure exactly what is supposed to be measured. For instance, the answers to a questionnaire can be understood differently than the researcher had thought. If the researcher interprets the questions to his/her own model of thinking the results cannot be considered real and valid. (Hirsijärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2004, 231.)

The theoretical part of this research can be considered to be reliable. The secondary data was collected mostly from textbooks and articles that were retrieved from the Internet. All the data concerning the motivations to participate in online communities is relatively new as the phenomenon is very recent. The reliability of the empirical section can be considered to be reliable based on the interview memos that were written down after every interview. The interviews were recorded with a mobile device's recorder that functioned well in every interview.

The validity of the study can be based on all the interviewees had been involved in the Massidea.org project, thus they had a good knowledge of the online community and they were able to give informative answers, though the interviews were completed over the telephone and were relatively short might have given a more narrow perspective to the study. Due to a limited time for preparing the research another interview was not possible to accomplish. The researcher's own pre-understanding of the research phenomenon is based on studying the literature related to the subject as well as their own participation in online communities. However, having being directly involved in the Massidea.org online community or the development of the Massidea.org online community might have given more insight to the study but then again it could have biased the study. The validity of the study might have been affected by the fact that the boundaries between social media, online communities and Internet sites are not distinct and therefore it cannot be sure that all the respondents were well aware of all these concepts and if that had affected their answers.

6 Analyzing the Empirical Data

This part of the study presents the research results. The Chapter 6.1 compares the differences between the results of the respondents who answered from the school's perspective and the results of the respondents who answered from their individual perspective about motivations and objectives regarding the Massidea.org project. The Chapter 6.2 presents the results

of the motivations to participate in online communities in general and the last Chapter 6.3 presents the results of the motivations to participate in the Massidea.org online community and his/her personal opinions of the online community.

6.1 Motivations and Objectives Regarding the Massidea.org Project

This Chapter presents the results of the motivations and objectives regarding the Massidea.org project from two different perspectives. The respondents were divided into two groups, the first group represents the persons who were part of the launching phase and answered the interview questions from the school's perspective. The other group represents the persons who were involved in content production and answered the interview questions from their individual perspective. At the end of the Chapter all the results will be summarized. The interview results (Table 4) can be found at the end of the summary.

6.1.1 Motivations to Become Involved in the Project

An interesting new way of creating ideas in social media and a desire to include it in the study program were seen as the main motives to become involved in the Massidea.org project from the schools' perspective. The respondents emphasized also the importance of involving students in the project in order to provide them new opportunities and readiness and knowhow of the future challenges so that they could benefit from these in the future working life. Also networking and cooperation of different universities, enterprises and organizations were seen as motivating factors.

The respondents who answered from their individual point of view emphasized the importance of the new interesting idea but also networking and development of the online community when asked about the motivations to become involved in the project. The respondents were also interested in participating in the content production as well as in the implementation of the project, especially to students.

6.1.2 Objectives of the Project

From the schools' perspective the main objectives of the project were implementation of the project and a possibility to utilize the online community as a tool in learning situations so that students could benefit from it. The respondents who answered from the schools' perspective emphasized also certain quantitative objectives such as how many students had participated in the content production. Training students for their future working life and the new challenges that it will create were also seen as an objective. Most schools had formed a written document of the objectives.

The objectives of the project from an individual point of view were related mostly to implementation of the project to other potential users and motivating especially students in the activity as well as involving them in the content production. Also giving students opportunities to operate through new activities was mentioned as an objective as well as networking and increased conversation.

6.1.3 Assessment of the Achieved Objectives

When asked to evaluate how well the objectives had been achieved so far from the school's perspective, most of the respondents considered that they had acquitted themselves well even if they had not been able to reach the original objectives regarding for instance the participation rate in the project. A few of the schools thought that they had not achieved the objectives so far. The most common reasons were that they had not been able to implement the project as assumed and motivate people to become involved in the project. More efforts could have been made in terms of being more active in the implementation process as well as planning working hours so that there would have been more time to dedicate to the implementation of the project.

The respondents' individual objectives were achieved mostly as planned. On a small scale they were achieved well but on a wider scale not as well as expected. Single teachers and students were succeeded to motivate to become involved in the project but larger groups of people were not succeeded to motivate as expected. More activity in the implementation process and finding partners for the project could have been helpful in terms of achieving the objectives, though having time for the implementation process besides other work was considered as being difficult.

6.1.4 Summary of the Results

Based on the previous results (Table 4) can draw a conclusion that the motivations and objectives of the project vary to some extent depending on the perspective. This Chapter observes the differences between these two groups of respondents.

The main motivating factor regarding participation in the project was the fresh and interesting concept of the Massidea.org online community. From the schools' perspective the motives to become involved in the project were related to creating new innovations and providing students new opportunities as well as creating their awareness of the future challenges that will support them in the future working life. From the individual perspective the motives concentrated more on the practical side, implementation and development of the online com-

munity as well as involving students in the project. Furthermore, both perspectives emphasized the importance of networking.

The main objective of the project from both perspectives was implementation of the project. From the schools' perspective the objectives were also strongly related to renewing students' learning process with the help of this tool. The respondents who answered from their individual perspective emphasized mostly the implementation process of the project and involving students in the content production as their objectives.

Some differences can be noticed between the groups when examining how well the objectives had been achieved so far. Respondents who answered from the school's perspective found more negative aspects but nevertheless most of them were satisfied with the objectives that were achieved so far. Respondents who answered from their individual perspective considered that the objectives had been achieved well, especially on a small scale, even though larger groups of people were not succeeded to motivate to become involved in the project. Both of the groups assumed that more activity in the implementation process could have supported achieving the objectives more successfully.

	School's perspective	Teacher's perspective	Summary
Motivations to get involved in the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The interesting new way of creating innovations in social media - Desire to include the online community in the study program - Networking and cooperation of different universities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The interesting new concept and innovation - Networking - Participating in the development process of the online community 	From the schools' perspective the motives where related to creating new innovations and providing students new opportunities and from the teachers' perspective they were concentrating more on the practical side, implementation and development of the online community.
Objectives of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Renewing students learning process - Implementation of the project - Most of the schools had formed a written document of the objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of the project - Involving especially students in the content production 	The main objective of the project from the both perspectives was implementation of the project.

Assessment of the achieved objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most of the schools thought that they had achieved the objectives well - Small amount of the schools thought that they had not achieved the objectives well enough due to that not enough people were involved in the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The objectives had been achieved as assumed - On a small scale well but on a wider scale not as expected 	The objectives had been achieved well especially from the teachers' perspective, the respondents that answered from the schools' perspective found more negative aspects.
What could have been done in order to achieve the objectives better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participating more actively in the implementation process - Planning working hours better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participating more actively in the implementation process - Searching more actively partners for the project 	Both of the groups assumed that more activity in the implementation process could have supported achieving the objectives more successfully.

Table 4: Comparison of the research results between the two groups of respondents regarding the motivations and objectives of the project

6.2 Use of Online Communities

The respondents who were interviewed from an individual perspective were asked questions also regarding their use of online communities in general. This Chapter presents the respondents' general activity in online communities. All the answers are summarized at the end of the Chapter. The interview results (Table 5) is at the end of the summary.

6.2.1 In What Situations Online Communities are Utilized

The respondents use online communities mostly for professional purposes but to some extent also during their free time. Online communities are mostly utilized for information retrieval and teaching purposes but during the free time also for socializing. One reason for participating in online communities that was mentioned by several respondents was to stay attuned to the times.

6.2.2 For Which Purposes Online Communities are Utilized

The online communities that are utilized for professional purposes are mostly the workplaces' own portals that can be utilized for instance for teaching purposes. All the respondents naturally use Massidea.org online community, as they are involved in the project. The online

communities that are used during free time are mostly related to the respondents' personal interests. The most commonly used online communities are Facebook and LinkedIn in addition to Massidea.org.

6.2.3 Activity in Online Communities

Most of the respondents consider themselves active in online communities. Only a few of the respondents did not consider themselves active in online communities. The activity in online communities is clearly more related to work than free time and it appears most often in the form of content production. Online communities also function often as tools in teaching. During free time the activity in online communities is mostly browsing the sites.

6.2.4 Summary of the Results

Based on the previous results (Table 5) can be drawn a conclusion that all the respondents are familiar with online communities. Most of the respondents have a good knowledge of different types of online communities and they consider themselves active in online communities. Online communities are used mostly at work but also during free time and utilized for information retrieval, teaching purposes and for socializing. The respondents that did not find themselves active in online communities were mostly interested in browsing the sites but not participating for instance in content production like the most active respondents did.

	Results	Summary
What kind of online communities are utilized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workplaces' own portals - Online communities that can be utilized for teaching purposes - Massidea.org - Facebook - LinkedIn 	Workplaces' own portals that can be utilized for instance for teaching purposes are the most used online communities. In addition, everyone uses Massidea.org. The online communities that are used during free time are mostly related to personal interests such as Facebook and LinkedIn.
In what kind of situations online communities are utilized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At work - During the free time 	The respondents use online communities mostly for professional purposes but to some extent also during their free time.

For what purposes online communities are utilized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional purposes - Teaching purposes - Information retrieval - Socializing 	Online communities are mostly utilized for information retrieval and teaching purposes but during free time also for socializing.
Activity in online communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional purposes → active - During the free time → less active 	Most of the respondents consider themselves active in online communities. Only a few of the respondents did not find themselves active in online communities.
How the activity occurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional purposes → content production, teaching purposes - During free time → browsing the sites 	The activity in online communities is more related to work than free time and is normally related to content production or for teaching purposes. During free time the activity in the online communities is mostly browsing the sites.

Table 5: The research results regarding the use of online communities in general

6.3 Opinions Regarding the Massidea.org Online Community

The respondents who participated in the interview from an individual perspective were asked questions also regarding the Massidea.org online community in order to discover what affects their motivation to participate in it and what opinions they have of it. This Chapter presents the results of the teachers' opinions regarding the Massidea.org online community. All the answers are summarized at the end of the Chapter. The interview results (Table 6) are at the end of the summary.

6.3.1 Motivations to Participate in the Massidea.org Online Community

When asked about the motivations to participate in online communities most of the respondents mentioned networking as a motivating factor. Also developing new challenges was seen as a motivating factor. Some of the respondents emphasized the importance of their own professional development as well as providing new opportunities to students. They considered that participating in online communities would be essential in order to stay attuned to the times.

6.3.2 Motivations to Return to the Massidea.org Online Community

Frequently updated content with good quality and interesting topics were considered as the most significant factors when considering returning to the Massidea.org online community. The respondents were interested in following how the content that was produced by the students would be developed over time, how the users would react to the content that was produced by other users and how they would comment on it. Some of the respondents were also interested in commenting on the students' texts.

6.3.3 Attractiveness of the Massidea.org Online Community

Functionality and ease of use was considered as the most important factors in terms of attractiveness in the Massidea.org online community. In order to be willing to use the site the respondents mentioned that it should function properly and in addition it should be easy to use. When asked to define more clearly what they meant by good functionality and ease of use the respondents mentioned that the online community's content should be clearly categorized, logically designed and the search engine should function properly so that they could find the interesting content easily. Also interesting topics, layout and targeting the content were seen as important factors.

When asked the respondents' opinions about what interesting elements the Massidea.org online community could contain they suggested several particular possibilities such as to communicate between groups and to communicate through different communication forms such as sounds. Also some competitive elements were found interesting. The respondents did not have any common suggestions regarding the elements that Massidea.org could contain.

6.3.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Massidea.org Online Community

As a positive aspect of the Massidea.org online community the respondents mentioned a possibility to utilize group thinking. One of the respondents mentioned that it is interesting if not only specialists but also a large number of people is able to share their thoughts through online communities. The sense of community was also seen as a strength of the online community. The respondents considered that the online community was interesting because it connects different people around the world.

The visual appearance of the Massidea.org online community and quality control of the content were considered as negative aspects of the Massidea.org online community. The respondents considered that the online community should have some restriction on what content can be added to the site but they also considered that defining the rules could be challeng-

ing. Also information security and copyright were mentioned as weaknesses of the online community. Copying ideas was considered as a negative aspect.

6.3.5 Content Production in the Massidea.org Online Community

Most of the respondents were not very active in content production. The respondents thought that their role was more being a tutor for students and other teachers and motivating them in the content production. The respondents produced the content mostly for demonstration purposes. Students had produced most of the content during study modules by creating challenges and commented on other students' writings but also a few of the respondents had written articles in the online community.

When asked what motivated the respondents in content production they mentioned an opportunity to create new ideas and making them visible, as well as motivating students in the activity as motivating factors. Regarding the respondents, participating in content production had given positive experiences but involving students in their free time was considered as difficult.

6.3.6 The Strengths and Weaknesses of E-learning

As the respondents use online communities in learning situations they were asked questions regarding the strengths and the weaknesses of e-learning.

As strengths the respondents mentioned independence of time and place. Also utilizing group thinking and internationality were mentioned as positive aspects. The answers of the respondents were congruent. As a major weakness the respondents mentioned lack of face-to-face interaction. According to the respondents in most of the learning situations the presence of a teacher is required at least partially. Learning how to use the tools that are required in e-learning situations and creating a connection with the students via online forums creates challenges to the teachers that were also seen as weaknesses.

6.3.7 Summary of the Results

Based on the previous results (Table 6) networking was seen as the main motivating factor when participating in the Massidea.org online community but also developing new challenges was considered as a motivating factor. When considering returning to the site frequently updated content with good quality and interesting topics were considered as the most significant factors.

According to the respondents the online community should be designed so that it would be functional and easy to use. They also suggested different elements the site could contain, for instance different communication forms such as sounds and a possibility to communicate between groups so that the users outside the group would not have access to the content. Any coherent suggestion regarding the elements that the online community could contain did not clearly emerge.

The respondents mentioned also some positive and negative aspects of the online community. Utilizing group thinking was seen as the most interesting factor in the online community but also the sense of community arouses positive images. The respondents drew attention to the online community's visual appearance, which would need improvement according to them.

All the respondents had participated in content production but most of them were not very active in it. Motivations to participate in content production were related to making new ideas visible and motivating students in the action.

The respondents mentioned independence of time and place and lack of face-to-face interaction as strengths and weaknesses of e-learning situations.

	Results	Summary
What motivates to participate in Massidea.org online community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Networking - Developing new challenges - Professional development - Providing students new opportunities - Staying attuned to the times 	Networking was seen as the main motivating factor as well as developing new challenges. Some of the respondents emphasized the importance of their own professional development and providing new opportunities to students. Staying attuned to the times was also mentioned as a motivating factor.
What motivates to return to Massidea.org online community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequently updated content - Quality of the content - Interesting topics - Development of the content → what kind of comments are given etc. - Commenting on students writings 	Frequently updated content, good quality and interesting topics were seen as the most significant factors. The development of the content and commenting to it as well as commenting themselves to the content was also mentioned as motivating factors.

<p>What is important in terms of attractiveness in Massidea.org online community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Functionality - Ease of use - Interesting topics - Layout - Targeting the content 	<p>Functionality and ease of use was seen as the most important factors in terms of attractiveness in Massidea.org online community. Also interesting topics, layout and targeting the content were seen as important factors.</p>
<p>What kind of elements Massidea.org online community could contain</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication between groups - Different kind of communication forms - Competitive elements 	<p>Different communication forms such as sounds, a possibility to communicate between groups and some competitive elements were mentioned as interesting elements. Any common suggestions did not clearly emerge.</p>
<p>Positive aspects of Massidea.org online community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilizing group thinking - The sense of community - Connects different kinds of people around the world 	<p>Utilizing group thinking was seen as the most positive factor. The sense of community and the possibility to connect different people around the world was also found as positive aspects.</p>
<p>Negative aspects of Massidea.org online community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visual appearance - Lack of control in the content that can be produced - Information security - Copyrights 	<p>The visual appearance of the online community was seen as the most negative aspect as well as lack of control in the content. Also information security and copyrights were mentioned.</p>
<p>In which way the participation in the content production occur</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In study modules for demonstration purposes - Assisting students to the content production - Writing articles to the online community 	<p>Mostly for demonstration purposes in study modules as well as assisting students to the content production. A few of the respondents had also written articles in the online community.</p>
<p>How active is the participation in the content production</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not very active 	<p>All the respondents had participated in the content production but most of them were not very active in it.</p>

What motivated in the content production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to create new ideas - Making new ideas visible - Participating students in the action 	Motivations to participate in the content production were related to making new ideas visible and motivating student in the content production.
What kind of experiences the participation in the content production has given	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive experiences - Interesting and pleasant - Students not interested to participate in content production during their free time 	Participation in content production had given positive experiences but involving students in the project in their free time was considered as difficult.
Strengths of e-learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independence of time and place - Utilizing group thinking - Internationality 	Time and place independence was seen as the main strength of e-learning. Also utilizing group thinking and internationality were mentioned.
Weaknesses of e-learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of face-to-face interaction - Problems in learning how to use the tools required for e-learning - Developing a connection to students via online communities 	Lack of face-to-face interaction was seen as the main weakness of e-learning. Problems in utilizing the tools that are required for e-learning and developing a connection via online communities were also mentioned.

Table 6: The research results regarding the opinions of Massidea.org online community

7 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to discover what motivates teachers to participate in the Massidea.org online community as well as in the content production. The research also wanted to observe the motivations to become involved in the Massidea.org project by comparing two different perspectives, the school's and an individual teacher's perspectives in order to obtain an insight of how the project started and what would be the further operations regarding the implementation process and marketing of the Massidea.org online community.

This Chapter presents the conclusions that can be made based on the research results. Furthermore, certain development ideas will be suggested regarding the implementation process

and the development process of the Massidea.org online community. The limitations of the study will be presented in this Chapter as well as suggestions for future research.

7.1 Contributions of the Study

Table 7 presents the main results and conclusions of the study. After the Table the results and conclusions of this study will be observed more closely.

	Main Results	Conclusions
Motivations & objectives and achievements regarding the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The concept was considered as fresh and interesting - From the individual perspective the motives were concentrated more on the practical aspects - The main objective was implementation of the project - The objectives had been achieved well especially on a small-scale - Respondents from the schools' perspective were not as satisfied with the results 	<p>The concept of the project was considered as interesting and participating in the project had given mostly positive experiences, especially at the individual level → even though larger groups of people were not succeeded to motivate to become involved in the project the positive experiences that the project has given signify a good potential to implement the Massidea.org project more widely.</p>
Motivations to participate in the online community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Networking 	<p>Emphasizing the opportunities that the Massidea.org provides and the importance of networking and cooperation of different actors in the project is essential in the implementation process of the Massidea.org online community.</p>
Motivations to return to the online community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequently updated content with good quality and interesting topics - Functionality and ease of use 	<p>The development of the content attracts in returning to the online community. How it would remain interesting and attractive so that people would be interested in returning to it should be observed. Also the functionalities and visual appearance of the online community should be emphasized in the implementation process of the Massidea.org online community so that it would support creating commitment to it.</p>

<p>Motivations to participate in the content production</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respondents were not very active in content production - Participation in content production was considered interesting but arranging time for that was considered as difficult 	<p>The developers of the Massidea.org should pay attention to implementing the project more actively and motivating other teachers to the action so that they could in turn get the students involved in the content production.</p>
<p>Opinions of e-learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive aspect: independence of time and place - Negative aspect: lack of face-to-face interaction 	<p>Different opportunities that e-learning can provide should be emphasized in the implementation process of the Massidea.org online community.</p>

Table 7: The Main Contributions of the Study

When observing the differences between the two groups of respondents regarding the motivations to become involved in the Massidea.org project both of the groups considered that the main motivating factor was the fresh and interesting concept of the Massidea.org online community. According to the research results can be noticed that the motives to become involved in the project from the schools' perspective were related more to bigger challenges such as providing students new opportunities and creating their awareness of the future challenges that will support them in the future working life. From the individual perspective the motives were concentrated more on the practical aspects, implementation and the development of the online community as well as involving students in the project.

The main objective of the project according to both of the groups was implementation of the project. Renewing students' learning process by utilizing the online community as a tool was considered as a strong objective of the project from the schools' perspective. The respondents that answered from their individual perspective emphasized the importance of involving students in the content production.

According to most of the respondents the objectives of the project had been achieved well. However, some differences are noticed between the groups when examining how well the objectives had been achieved. The respondents who answered from the school's perspective were not as satisfied with the results as the respondents who answered from their individual perspective, who thought that the objectives had been achieved well, especially on a small scale. When asking the respondents what could have supported them in achieving the objectives, both of the groups thought that involving themselves more actively in the implementa-

tion process would have been essential, though arranging time for the implementation process was considered difficult.

The respondents who answered from their individual perspective were asked to define what motivated them to participate in the Massidea.org online community. Networking was considered as the main motivating factor. Also the research of Dholakia (2004) suggests that networking motivates people to join online communities. Developing new challenges was also mentioned as a high motivating factor. Therefore, emphasizing the opportunities that Massidea.org provides and the importance of networking and cooperation of different actors in the project is essential in the implementation process of the Massidea.org online community.

When asked further what would be the positive aspects of Massidea.org online community, the answers revealed that utilizing group thinking was seen as the most positive aspect but also the sense of community was mentioned as a strong positive aspect. According to Chan et al. (2004), the feeling of community has a positive impact when participating in online communities.

The respondents drew attention to the online community's visual appearance, which was not satisfying. Control of the content that can be produced in the Massidea.org online community was also mentioned as a negative aspect. A few of the respondents were concerned about the quality of the content. They wondered how it could be controlled so that it would remain interesting and of high quality so that they would still have an interest to return to the online community.

When considering returning to the Massidea.org online community, frequently updated content with good quality and interesting topics were considered as the most significant factors. According to Preece (2000) sociability is essential in online communities. Hectic conversation, new ideas and constantly updated content make the online community interesting. As a result of this study as well as Preece's study it seems that the development of the content attracts people to return to the online community. The developers of Massidea.org online community should pay attention to what content are produced in the online community and how the online community could maintain development of the content so that people would be interested in returning to it.

Functionality and ease of use were considered as the most important factors in terms of attractiveness in the Massidea.org online community. Gupta and Kim (2004) suggest that balanced beliefs, which include matters things as quality, functionality and logicity of the online community and emotional matters, which include pleasure and arousal that the community creates, have an effect on the commitment to online communities. According to

Preece (2000) usability supports peoples' creativity, productivity and creates a better feeling for the user. Online communities with bad functionality are often experienced as frustrating and time consuming. As a result of this study as well as the previous studies, the administrators of Massidea.org online community should put emphasis on the functionalities of the online community so that it would support creating commitment to it.

In order to discover what would be essential when considering designing or making improvements to the Massidea.org online community the respondents were asked to suggest different elements that the site could contain. Different communication forms such as sounds and a possibility to communicate between groups so that the users outside the group would not have access to the content were suggested. Preece (2000) suggests paying attention to the sociability concerns regarding the communication forms that an online community requires and how they should be supported. In addition, Wang and Fesenmeier (2003) propose that ease of communication is an important factor concerning activity in online communities.

Motivations to produce content in Massidea.org online community were mostly related to making new ideas visible and motivating students in the content production. All the respondents had participated in the content production but most of them did not consider themselves very active. Participating in the content production had given positive experiences but involving students in the activity in their free time was considered difficult. The content production was mainly completed in order to demonstrate for students how the online community functions. The developers of Massidea.org should pay attention to implementing the project more actively and motivating other teachers in the project and in the content production so that they could in turn motivate students in the content production.

As Massidea.org online community will be integrated as part of the educational system the respondents were asked questions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of e-learning. The respondents mentioned independence of time and place as a strength of e-learning. Also utilizing group thinking and internationality were mentioned as positive aspects. Also according to Preece (2000) the independence of time and place linkage and increasing internationality can be seen as advantages of e-learning. When presenting the Massidea.org online community to other teachers these aspects should be emphasized in order to motivate the teachers to participate in the online community.

According to the respondents the most significant weakness of e-learning situations is lack of face-to-face interaction. Also researcher Laura Lengel claims that online communities increase face-to-face interaction between people. But then again, many other researchers support online communities and suggest that people can obtain much support and empathy from online communities. For this reason, it would be essential to inform teachers about all the

benefits of e-learning and the different perspectives that it provides teaching. A combination of traditional learning and e-learning can be seen as an option thus it should be emphasized when presenting the concept to other teachers.

According to the respondents also lack of technical skills can affect their participation in online communities, which was seen as a weakness of e-learning. Also Heinonen (2008) has paid attention to the fact that technical problems and inexperience of users can create challenges as well as Preece et al. (2004), who claim that a reason why some members do not feel a need to participate in online communities can be due to lack of experience in using the software properly. As already observed, the Massidea.org online community should be designed so that it supports usability. Ease of use and for instance providing support for the use could attract more teachers to utilize the online community.

Interacting with the students via online forums creates challenges for the teachers, which was also considered as a weakness. Also Kilpiö (2003) suggests that that e-learning does not support as fast and dynamic interaction as traditional learning. Providing enough information regarding the benefits of utilizing Massidea.org online community in learning situations could arouse teachers' interest in utilizing it in teaching.

According to the research results the project has given mostly positive experiences, especially at the individual level, for most of the people who have participated in it. As already mentioned, the objectives of the project have been achieved quite well and therefore can be assumed that the participants must have considered that they have succeeded in some ways in what they have been doing. Even though larger groups of people were not succeeded to motivate to become involved in the project so far do not eliminate the possibility to obtain this objective in the future. All the positive images that the project has created until now, even only at the individual level, signify a good potential to implement the Massidea.org project more widely.

Emphasizing the positive experiences such as usefulness of the tool when marketing the concept of Massidea.org to other users is essential. The concept of the project was considered interesting and the respondents also considered that participating in the project would give students new opportunities when integrating the project as part of the educational system. Training the students towards future challenges, utilizing group thinking and fostering students' creativity were considered as positive aspects of the Massidea.org online community.

As the concept of Massidea.org is relatively new it needs much support from the people involved in the project. All the positive aspects that the project creates should be emphasized when implementing the Massidea.org online community. By providing examples of the positive

experience that the project has given, for instance by inviting those people who have participated in the project to tell about their experiences in other schools, could be essential in order to succeed with the implementation process.

The respondents paid attention to the fact that the required tools for the activity in the online communities are not familiar to all teachers and in some cases this can create problems in the use. Therefore, arranging for instance schooling and providing support to the users of the Massidea.org online community can be considered important because in case the users are not able to use the tool properly they will not be able to realize all the benefits that it offers.

In order to succeed with the implementation process and achieve the wanted objectives the project needs people working for the objectives. As the results show, the teachers who were involved in the content production thought that the project was interesting and were willing to motivate also students involved in the action but the problem was arranging time for the implementation process. As a few of the respondents' already mentioned, by planning more carefully the working hours and trying to arrange time for the project, the objectives could be better achieved. Depending on the resources, the schools that are involved in the implementation process of Massidea.org could recruit more people to implement to project. In this way the responsibilities would be divided into several people.

7.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Due to time and place limitations the interviews were executed over the telephone. The interviewees could not be met personally due to geographical distances. In order to obtain a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon a second interview would have been essential. This was however not possible due to time limitations. Also the lengths of the interviews were inadequate, which was also due to time limitations. By eliminating the place and time limitations there is a possibility that more precise results could have been achieved.

Also the conciseness of the target group can be considered as a limitation. All of the respondents were working at Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland and furthermore were familiar with the development project of the Massidea.org online community. No other target groups were examined and this might have somewhat affected the results. Therefore, larger target groups should be examined in order to obtain a better understanding of the research problem and in order to be able to generalize the research results.

The fact that the respondents were involved in the project might have affected their perspective when answering the interview questions. No external estimations were achieved in

this research that could have been necessary in order to discover whether there would be significant differences between different groups of respondents. Therefore, the suggestion is to examine several different target groups.

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INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GROUP 1

School's perspective

1. What motivated the school to get involved in the Massidea.org project?
2. What kind of objectives were set up at the school regarding the Massidea.org project?
 - Was any kind of written document prepared regarding the objectives that were set up at the school?
3. How well the objectives have been achieved so far?
 - Estimation of the school's actions. How they have functioned either not functioned?
 - What could have been done differently in order to achieve the objectives better?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GROUP 2

Individual teacher's perspective

General questions regarding the use of online communities:

1. What kind of online communities you use?
 - In what kind of situations you use online communities?
 - For which purposes you use online communities?
2. How active is the use of online communities?
 - How does the activity in online communities occur?
 - How long time you use approximately in the online community per time?

Questions regarding Massidea.org online community:

1. What motivated personally to get involved in the Massidea.org project?
2. What kind of objectives you set up regarding the project?
 - How well the objectives have been achieved so far?
 - What could have been done differently in order to achieve the objectives better?
3. What motivates to participate in the Massidea.org online community?
4. What motivates to return to the Massidea.org online community?
5. What would be important in terms of attractiveness in the Massidea.org online community?
 - What kind of elements Massidea.org online community could contain?
6. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Massidea.org online community?
 - What could be found as obstacles?
7. In which way you have participated in the content production in the Massidea.org online community?
 - How often you participate in the content production in Massidea.org online community?
 - What motivates you to participate in the content production?
 - How the content production was implemented as a whole?
 - What kind of experiences the content production gave?
8. In which ways Massidea.org could be utilized in teaching?
 - The strengths and weaknesses of e-learning?
 - What could affect the motivation to utilize online communities in learning situations?
 - What kind of role you have in e-learning?

Hei,

Olen Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulun opiskelija ja teen opinnäytetyötä Massidea.org - verkkoyhteisöstä. Opinnäytetyöni tarkoituksena on tukea verkkoyhteisön kehittämistyötä. Tutkimuksessa haetaan vastauksia mm. siihen, mitkä motivaatiotekijät vaikuttivat projektiin mukaan lähtöön ja minkälaisia tavoitteita hankkeeseen liittyi. Lisäksi tutkimuksessa etsitään vastauksia siihen, mitkä tekijät motivoivat opettajia Massidea.org - verkkoyhteisön käyttöön sekä sisällöntuotantoon.

Tarkoitukseni on haastatella ensin hankkeen alkuvaiheessa mukana olleita avain-/yhteyshenkilöitä hankkeeseen mukaan lähtöön liittyvistä tekijöistä ja tavoitteista ammattikorkeakoulun näkökulmasta. Tämän jälkeen haastattelen sisällöntuotantoon osallistuneita opettajia verkkoyhteisön käyttöön liittyvistä motivaatiotekijöistä.

Tiedustelen siis, oletko mahdollisesti ollut hankkeen alkuvaiheessa mukana ja voisimmeko sopia haastatteluaian aiheeseen liittyen? Ehdottaisin heti ensi viikon alkua esimerkiksi maanantai - keskiviikko aikaväliä, mutta mikäli alkuviikko ei käy voimme toki sopia haastattelulle toisen ajankohdan. Avain-/yhteyshenkilöiden haastattelu tapahtuu puhelimitse ja se nauhoitetaan. Haastattelun kesto on n. 15-20 min.

Toivoisin pikaista yhteydenottoa asian tiimoilta. Mikäli et ole ollut hankkeen alkuvaiheessa mukana, voisitko ystävällisesti ohjata sähköpostin oikealle henkilölle tai ilmoittaa hänen yhteystietonsa minulle.

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Maria Forss
e-mail: maria.forss@laurea.fi

Hi,

I'm a student in Laurea University of Applied Sciences and currently working on my bachelor thesis concerning Massidea.org online community. The purpose of the study is to support the development process of the online community. The study seeks to find answers i.e. to what motivated to get involved in the project and what kind of objectives were set up regarding the project. Furthermore, the study is trying to find answers to what motivated teachers to participate in the online community and in the content production.

My intention is to interview first persons that have participated in the project launching phase regarding the motivations to get involved in the project and the objectives of the project from the school's perspective. Afterwards, I'm planning to interview teachers that have participated in the content production regarding the motivations to participate in the online community.

My question is whether you were part of the launching phase and furthermore if you would be interested in participating in the interview? I'd suggest early next week, for instance between Monday and Wednesday but in case it is not suitable for you we can of course try to find another time for the interview. The interview of the persons that were part of the launching phase will be done over the telephone and it will be recorded. The duration of the interview is approximately from 15 to 20 minutes.

In case you did not participate in the project launching phase please transfer the message to the right person or kindly provide me her/his contact information. I'm looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards,

Maria Forss
e-mail: maria.forss@laurea.fi