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Detail of the EXPERT project

- Publications / Projets de recherche - Anciens projets - EXPERT -

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Personal and/or collective practices of publication are one of the innovating uses of the Internet that are developping the most quickly. Among them, personal websites which form information networks (named "Blogs") when interconnected and tools/websites made for co-publication (websites based on SPIP) or for dialogue (Glasnost) can be distinguished.

We propose to study these usages in order to provide means of training available for the people distant from the Internet. These tools will be able to be re-used by other public authorities, local communities or associations.

On a longer term, the aim is to determine the methods concerning the ways these tools can be used to intensify the individual appropriation of the ICT, the public dialogue and the social integration.

This project is realized in the context of the first invitation to project on the usage of the Internet of the Ministry dedicated to Research and New Technologies. It is realised by M@rsouin, in partnership with the INFINI and Place Publique associations and the cities of Brest and Vandoeuvre-lès-Nancy.

It is planned to last 18 months, from may 2004. A particular website is dedicated to this project.

Goals

The development of the usage of the Internet has highlighted the importance of personal and collective websites in various fields, from the private diary to expert works through the construction of interactive forums and, lately, of websites supporting the expression of the citizens and the dialogue between communities of users (known as "public writing" websites). These websites built by more or less organized individuals or groups profit from the supplying of creation tools and more and more powerful page setting tools and from faster networks.

These publication tools can today be accompanied with software allowing the group's decision such as electronic vote. Pilot experiments, led in particular in Brest and Vandoeuvre, showed that these public discussion tools were effective vectors to develop the exchanges of information taking into account the people distant from the Internet. To go with the development of the uses of the Internet, it is necessary to insist on these innovative practices which come from there to constitute new types of networks. Our objective is thus to study these innovating practices to support, in a second time, the development of re-usable tools means of training on the public writing, dialogue platforms, associative forum...) which are able to let the most people make speeches of quality. The installation of procedures of electronic participation to citizenship in underprivileged districts is also considered.

Experimentation protocol

The experimentation will, first, be done through an inquiry on the practices developed in the two cities mentioned, in

parallel with a study on the different practices of written expression on the Internet, in particular in Blogs (analysis of the websites and participation in some projects of publication, in order to carry out a participating observation). It is only once we have specified the way these tools are suitable that we will work on the training of new potential users. The aim is indeed to start from an analysis of the usage (which will be subject to reports) to go up with the technological tools.

Organization of the project

The project is separated in two sub-projects:

- an inquiry part, realized by Marsouin with the support of local partners. This part aims to realize an inquiry in the field. It is composed by two modules: a survey on personal websites' networks which provide online information (Blogs), on a defined geographical area, in order to control the social context. This area corresponds to surveys made in local fields: Brittany. It will highlight a survey made on local projects of co-publication workshops (using the software SPIP) or of dialogue workshops (using the software Glastnost);

- a development part, realized by local associations. Taking into account the results produced by the first sub-project on the publication behavior, the INFINI and Place Publique associations will realize supports to train people on how to use publication softwares and on the techniques used to make a journalistic writing. These would bring the citizens the tools that would allow them to invest themselves more in the improvement of their websites. In the same time, we will try to understand, thanks to the adjunction of Glasnost, how these 'co-publication' practises can be coupled to dialogue practises, or even to participative democracies. To do so, the work will be based on the experiences already developed in Vandoeuvre and on the initiatives taken by INFINI in Brest.

Consequences of the project

At the end of this project,

- training modules on public writing and publication of information (journalistic writing) will have been developed and can be freely consulted;

- an evaluation of the conditions in which the expression, debate and dialogue tools are used will be written;

- monographies reporting the associative uses, the skills implemented and the approaches of the cities will be written and put online on the partners' websites, and, for instance, on the website of METIS, the center of associative resources.

About the software used

- Glasnost is a free software of "e-democracy". It aims to answer to the needs of the associations, of the local authorities and even of the companies:

- elections and decision-takings,

- publication of articles and small news items (inspired from SPIP)

- accountancy (followed treasury, [under development]),

- management of documents,

- translation.

It is already settled in Vandoeuvre, around participative democracy projects. These projects should be fully operationnal by the year 2004. Brest will also make functional this kind of device during the year 2004, thanks to the INFINI association, and wishes to take advantage of the Vandoeuvre's experience.

- SPIP is a software to produce online articles. Many websites based on SPIP are functional (those on the INFINI servers in particular) and are used by associations. Today the effort put on the use of this tool towards underpriviledged people and towards the collectivities (associations, unions, groups of retired people). This creates a demand for a tool which allows to discuss and to choose the contents suggested.

Technical trainings (installation of the tools) and practical trainings (how the tools work) do exist while trainings on the usages (how the tools can be used, what can be done with it and toward what kind of public) are rather seldom. The aim is therefore to make a state of art on the practises of public expression, creation and diffusion of such supports.

Social demand

Our project answers to the wish - which was, in particular, expressed by two major cities in the diffusion of the Internet: Vandoeuvre and Brest, which respectively received a 5@ and 4@-distinction in the French 'Ville-Intrernet'(*) label - of developing the implication of the citizens and the training of the 'e-society outsiders', encouraging innovating practises such as:

- a network of 70 public access points to the Internet of the country of Brest, associative host INFINI, training of 200 people on public writings and on 'webreports', requests materialized by the annual call on project of the city of Brest.

- experimentation of electronic dialogues, local public space, approach on the development of the eSmart card for Vandoeuvre.

 (*)The 'Ville-Internet' Label let local collectivities have the opportunity to evaluate the implementation of local multimedia services available for everybody.