

## **Learning and Organisational Resources for Communities of Practice**

**Type of resource:** Choosing and (individually and collectively) appropriating tools, supporting CoPs in conceiving scenarios of tools uses

**Type of scenario:** Debate & Decide

### **UsesTools: Negotiating, discussing and making decisions about the uses of tools**

#### **Summary**

Once that a CoP has decided which software and services can help them, its members have to negotiate a common way of using them in order to avoid the proliferation of different, incompatible or bad practices.

For this negotiation, they have to keep their unique needs in mind, which often means deciding a set of guidelines on how to use the tools and services, which features to use, which features not to use and even sometimes on which feature a catachresis is needed.

#### **Objectives**

Helping CoPs choosing the right features of the tools and services they have decided to use (in other words, decide of a usage consensus for the chosen tools and services).

#### **Scenario**

1. A CoP decides to use one or more tools or services (see “**ChoicesTools:** Negotiating, discussing and making decisions about the choices of tools”) for a method to do so).
2. However, like it is the case with almost all computer software, these tools and services can do a lot of things, some of them being very useful, some less and some not useful at all for supporting the activities of the CoP.
3. A group of ‘expert’ CoP members (i.e. members who are both well invested in the CoP and accustomed to the usage of computers) test the tool(s) and service(s) and take notes on which features will be used, which features will not and which features will need to be used in a slightly different way than what was intended by the creator of the software. This can be done either in plenary meetings or at a distance, with the help of a forum or a wiki engine, for instance (as for the next two points).
4. This expert group shows the results of their works to a larger part of the CoP and explain their reasoning, taking into account the possible constructive remarks of the audience.
5. Both the notes taken in the third and fourth points are put together and formalized in a methodology guide written for the CoP members who will use these tools and services.

## Tools to support activity

The negotiation process can take place, for instance, with the following tools.

- SweetWiki (<http://argentera.inria.fr:8080/> - <http://palette.ercim.org/content/view/160/119/>)
- CoPe\_it! (<http://copeit.cti.gr> - <http://palette.ercim.org/content/view/156/119/>)
- eLogbook (<http://elogbook.epfl.ch/> - <http://palette.ercim.org/content/view/155/119/>)
- another wiki engine
- a forum engine

The end result could be formalized thanks to

- Amaya (<http://www.w3.org/Amaya/> - <http://palette.ercim.org/content/view/164/119/>)
- LimSee3 (for a visual presentation) (<http://limsee3.gforge.inria.fr/public-site/> - <http://palette.ercim.org/content/view/165/119/>)
- a text editor
- a presentation tool

## Further resources

- “**ChoicesTools**: Negotiating, discussing and making decisions about the choices of tools”. This LOR proposes a method for choosing tools for various CoP activities.
  - The PALETTE services gallery can help in choosing tools for CoPs: [http://palette.ercim.org/component/option,com\\_alphacontent/Itemid,119/](http://palette.ercim.org/component/option,com_alphacontent/Itemid,119/)
  - The PALETTE online modules propose tools for training CoP members to the use of various services: <http://palette.ercim.org/content/view/112/111/>
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