

Integrating Mobile Learning Services into a Virtual Community System

The paper presents our experience in integrating mobile learning services into a system oriented to the management of virtual communities. The idea of virtual community applied to eLearning particularly stimulates the idea of mobility, because the participants normally request to interact "anyplace, anywhere, anytime" with the other members. The system provides a way of aggregating people acting in an educational institution (our Faculty) through the availability of many services, some of which have their counterpart for mobile devices. We present here three services oriented to mobile learning. The first tool is a notification system that uses SMSs to inform the user about many events related to the educational institution and/or changes in the community to which the subject is enrolled (course, faculty, laboratory, research group etc.). This notification can regard the most disparate situations: availability of new learning materials, changes in a lesson/exam schedule, reminders regarding university fees deadlines etc. A second tool allows the users to leave "sticky notes" to members of communities the subject is enrolled in. The user can post, read and manage sticky notes from the mobile device or from the web indifferently. The third module is a chat usable from both the web and the mobile device, integrated with the system in a very tight way. All these tools have the web-based counterpart, i.e., the identical application developed using dynamic web pages. The paper presents problems, both technical and organizational, pitfalls and some surprises we found in developing these services for mLearning contexts.

Luigi Colazzo, University of Trento
Department of Computer and
Management Sciences, Trento, Italy

Andrea Molinari, University of Trento
Department of Computer and
Management Sciences, Trento, Italy

Luigi Colazzo is a professor in the Department of Computer and Management Sciences of the University of Trento in Italy. He is the author and co-author of numerous publications and papers at international conferences. He has served as organiser and chair of many workshops and conference sessions in the field of ICT, eLearning and mLearning.



Andrea Molinari is a professor in the area of information and communication technologies in the Department of Computer and Management Sciences of the University of Trento in Italy. He is the author and co-author of numerous publications and papers at international conferences. He has served as organiser and chair of many workshops and conference sessions in the field of ICT, eLearning and mLearning.

