The Use of Wikis for Regional Development Processes

An Empirical Analysis in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland

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Main hypothesis

It seems to be promising to use the web 2.0 applications to foster processes of regional development. Such platforms can achieve new actors and upgrade the public discourse.
Structure of the Presentation

1. Web 2.0 and Wiki - some definitions and insights
2. Scientific aspects of a social and technological change
3. An empirical analysis of local and regional Wikis
4. Final considerations of the use of wikis for regional development
Definition: Social Web (Web 2.0)

...is the sum of new internet-tools and applications using the world wide web as a platform for data which are created and controlled by the users collectively.
Definition: Social Network Sites (SNS)

- allow individuals to construct a (semi-)public profile within a bounded system
- users can define a list of other users to share a connection with
- users can view and traverse their list of connections and those made by other users
Technological change may cause social change

- Group forming
- sharing
- collaborating
- collective acting

→ new culture of participation

- user generated (created) content completes and partly replaces experts / professional knowledge
Technological preconditions for social change

- the possibility to reach a global audience with nearly no costs
- the access to a huge amount of contents to be used for creating new information
- the possibility to communicate with other users sharing the same interest
Decreasing Transaction Costs (Coase Theorem)

- complexity grows faster than size of a system
- also rapidly the transaction costs for management grow
  - hierarchical organisation needed

new tools for large-scale coordination
  with nearly no costs -
  but no central definition of goals and strategies
Wiki

Definition:
A wiki is a website which allows users to add, remove, edit, and change contents and to structure the existing contents from other users in a very simple way.

- integrates different expertise and viewpoints
- offers the opportunity for participation
- enables flexible time management
- improves transparency
Added value of a local / regional Wiki (...as a hypothesis)

• to manage the amount of information and to increase the quality of information
• to motivate regional actors to participate
• to support the marketing of regional development processes
Hypothesis 1

The added value of a local / regional wiki is to manage the amount and to increase the quality of information.
RegioWiki Detail Categories
Hypothesis 2

The added value of a local / regional wiki is to motivate regional actors to participate.
Number of (active) users
Hypothesis 3

The added value of a local / regional wiki is to support the marketing of regional development processes.
Article traffic statistics

Total traffic per wiki and year

Institute for Systemic Management and Public Governance

Universität St. Gallen
Top 25 – average number of accesses per article
Conclusion

1. It’s an own world – worth to be observed
2. Useful complement of existing tools
3. Cultural change will affect regional development processes
4. Learning a new culture
5. The tip of an iceberg (from a researchers point of view)
Thank you very much for your attention

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