Chapter XIII

Web Portals:
A Tool for Environmental Management

Martin Kreeb, University of Hohenheim, Germany

Werner Schulz, University of Hohenheim, Germany

Christof Voßeler, University of Hohenheim, Germany

Helmut Krcmar, Technical University Munich, Germany

Annette Rudel, Technical University Berlin, Germany

Abstract

Ecoradar (www.ecoradar.org / www.oekoradar.de) is the name of an innovative Internet portal that sets out to use the simplest and most persuasive means to motivate others to implement sustainable management in those enterprises that have so far taken little or no interest in this subject. This major project, in which over 80 German enterprises and institutions participated, is part of the new funding focus "Integrated Environmental Protection – Instruments for Sustainable Business Management" set by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. The primary task of the portal is the creation of an environmental management community. The purpose of this article is to show the structure and elements of the ecoradar community. Both the creation of a "culture of trust" among the participating enterprises and the

strategy of successful integration of the joint project partners are of specific interest. In the following, the content models are presented and the article examines the ability of the ecoradar community to develop, share and use the available knowledge by using the tools of knowledge management. Finally, the authors describe the technology used to create the portal.

Construction of Ecoradar Knowledge Community

A great variety of research papers have been published in the field of environmental management during the last 20 years. The problem, however, has persisted: conversion of this knowledge into enterprise practice. The development target of the ecoradar portal is to reduce the information costs of those SME enterprises interested in environmental management. In order to achieve this target, a strategic community concept of the third generation has been developed in order to build a knowledge community in the SME sector (Kreeb et al., 2002).

The main emphasis of the ecoradar community is on the knowledge field and the service and project areas. The community started as a project community. For a start, ecoradar, as a classic research project, measures success by certain criteria focusing on timeframe and milestones (Bullinger, 2002). An additional feature is the use of a virtual project team (scientists, consultants, entrepreneurs). A form of virtual cooperation has been implemented by establishing a specific editorship- and tele-cooperation system. These project communities represent the preliminary stage on the way to a knowledge community. Ecoradar is a knowledge network stretched beyond the limits of individual universities and enterprises.

Wenger and Snyder (2000) describe a knowledge community as a "flexible organizational unit, beyond official organizational or informal units. The community is motivated by the common interest of the members in the field of knowledge. Participation is voluntary. The motivation to participate is a positive cost/benefit relation." (Wenger & Snyder, 2000)

The collective benefit is categorized by Rheingold (1994, 2000) using the following three dimensions:

- social use, identification by a common goal

- knowledge capital, use of knowledge from various sources

- community feeling, system of real contacts and experience backgrounds

14 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/web-portals-tool-environmental-management/23456

Related Content

A Conceptual Model for Biomass Supply Chain Sustainability
Konstantinos Petridis, Evangelos Grigoroudisand Garyfallos Arabatzis (2018). *International Journal of Social Ecology and Sustainable Development (pp. 37-53).*
www.irma-international.org/article/a-conceptual-model-for-biomass-supply-chain-sustainability/199059

Are There Really Differences Between Social and Commercial Entrepreneurship in Developing Countries?: An Institutional Approach
Luis F. Hidalgo, Josep Rialpand David Urbano (2020). *Handbook of Research on Smart Territories and Entrepreneurial Ecosystems for Social Innovation and Sustainable Growth (pp. 306-325).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/are-there-really-differences-between-social-and-commercial-entrepreneurship-in-developing-countries/246541

Framework Oriented Approach to Eco-Tourism
Sanjay Mohapatraand Tripti Naswa (2013). *International Journal of Green Computing (pp. 71-82).*
www.irma-international.org/article/framework-oriented-approach-eco-tourism/80240

Application of Circular Economy for Sustainable Resource Management in Kuwait
Osman Gulsevenand Jacques Mostert (2017). *International Journal of Social Ecology and Sustainable Development (pp. 87-99).*
www.irma-international.org/article/application-of-circular-economy-for-sustainable-resource-management-in-kuwait/182550

System and Environment for Tourism 4.0: How Does a Digital System Work for the Promotion and Evaluation of Gastronomic Tourism Fairs?
Danny C. Barbery-Montoya, César A. Vélez Del Hierroand Nathaly Y. Arroba-Hurtado (2020). *Handbook of Research on Smart Territories and Entrepreneurial Ecosystems for Social Innovation and Sustainable Growth (pp. 152-171).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/system-and-environment-for-tourism-40/246532