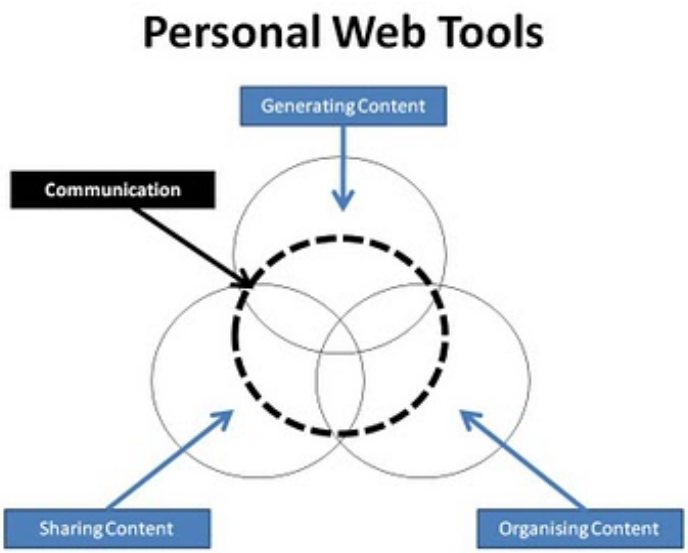
12th July 2010

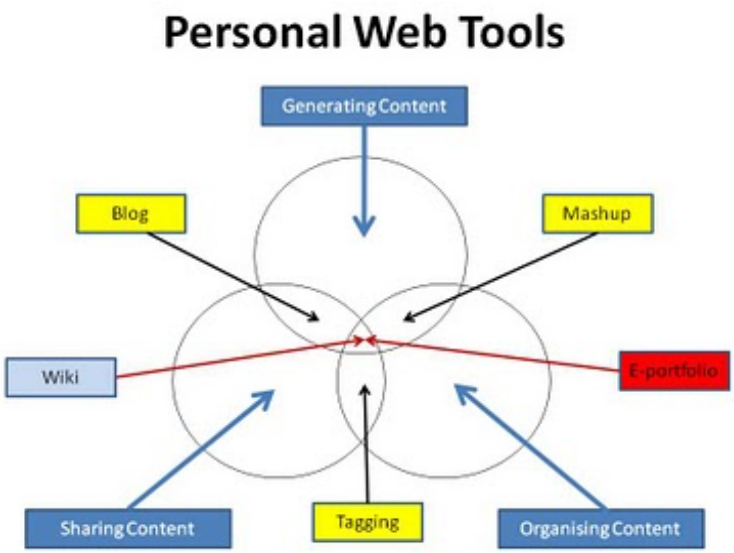
Physiology of a PLE



[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_p0M9IDN4_TM/TDn0tMvGkgI/AAAAAAAABa4/WjEHWEIclfk/s1600/Personal+Web+Tools.jpg]

Yesterday I posted my views on what I think are the essential components of a Personal Learning Environment - the Anatomy of the PLE [http://steve-wheeler.blogspot.com/2010/07/anatomy-of-ple.html] . Today, I want to examine some of the functionality of PLEs - the physiology if you will - what is it that learners need from their PLEs? The slide to the left represents the three main functionalities I believe are the most important functions learners need for lifelong learning in a digital age. You will note that the functionality is exclusive to the personal web tools (PWTs) I outlined in yesterday's post. However, given that the context of the PLE is much wider than the web tools a student uses, it is possible to apply creation, organisation and sharing of content to a wider range of practices including analogue content, such as newspapers and magazines, realia (visits, real experiences, encounters, conversations) and other non-digital materials. Whether these remain analogue, or are in someway captured in digital format remains the choice of each indivdual lifelong learner.

There are other functionalities of course, but I believe that the essence of the physiology of most PLEs is represented in the diagram presented here. A fourth component, communication - which includes sharing, discussion and dialogue in both synchronous and asynchronous modes, can be represented as an overarching circle within the Venn diagram.



[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_p0M9IDN4_TM/TDn0XeVpwkI/AAAAAAAABaw/ntpvX150rIM/s1600/Physiology+of+a+PLE.jpg]

Such key functions of the PLE (Personal Web Tools component) can be managed through a number of tools, and learners each have their individual preferences, all of which ensures that each PLE will be unique to that individual learner. Some of these tools are represented here in the second figure, but these are by no means exhaustive, and of course, many are interchangable for different tasks and purposes. Note that the e-portfolio sits across all functionalities, and is the most likely tool to be provided by the institution. There is plenty more I could say but I will leave that for another blog post. I hope that these concept maps provide a more detailed set of ideas which provide a clearer view of how and why PLEs can be created, developed, managed and used by learners.

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Labels: PLE, personal web tools, personal learning, realia, #ple_bcn