

Social Thinking to Design Social Software : A Course Experience Report

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Outline

- Is software social?
- Define « social »
- Social software characteristics
- Reasons for change
- Social SE vs SE
- Course Design
- Student projects
- Doing it!
- Conclusions

Is software social?

- Any piece of software has a social dimension

Features	Activities
social networks	connect, help, communicate
forums	help, communicate, inform, question
tags	connect, share, organize, abstract
blogs	share, communicate, inform
shared repositories	share, program, document
emails	connect, help, share, communicate, collaborate
feeds	notify, inform, abstract
wikis	collaborate, educate, document
online polls	decide

Define “Social”

- Of or relating to **society** or organizations
- Of or relating to rank or status in society
- Relating to or designed for **activities** in which **people** meet each other for **pleasure**
- Needing of **companionship** and therefore best suited to live in a **community** (we are **social beings** as well as **individuals**)

[Oxford Dictionary]

Reasons for change

- Global problems awareness (environment, climate...)
- Social problems (poverty, handicap, alcoholism, unemployment...)
 - Hardware, Mobile networks
 - The internet, Open-source
 - Social production, Global communities

Social software

- globally contributes to improve society.
- supports social interaction.
- (collective intelligence, serendipity)

Involves :

- solidarity, empathy, problem solving
- participation, cooperation, collaboration
- information sharing,

Social SE vs SE

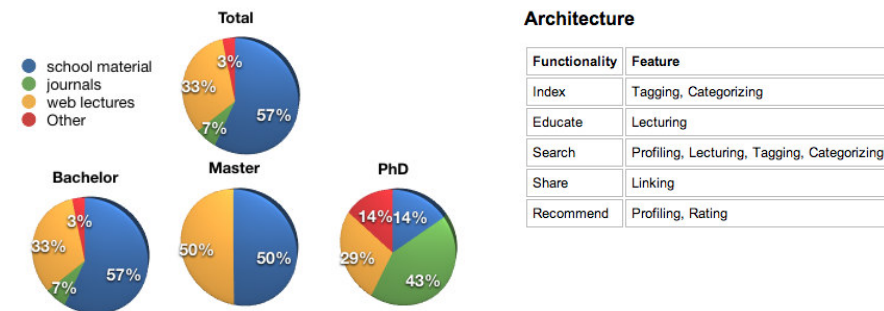
- Social problems VS contracts
- People VS clients
- Evidence VS Requirements

Course Design

- Technology background, 5 weeks
- Problem formulation, 1 week
- Social research, 2 weeks
- Rational design, 2 weeks
- Software development, 3 weeks
- Evaluation, 1 week

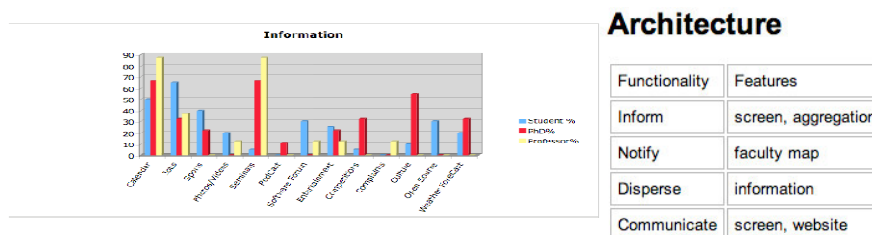
Students project : OSLP

- Problem: Computers and Education
- Solution: A shared repository of pointers to online courses



Students project : WinCS

- Problem: Communication in the faculty
- Solution: A screen in the entrance displaying relevant information

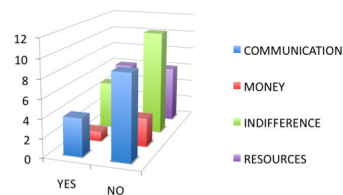


Students project : Kiwish

- Problem: Poverty in the world
- Solution: a solidarity network to support charity projects

Findings

Social Network	Communication	Money	Indifference	Resources
YES	5	1	5	6
NO	8	3	11	6



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Architecture

Functionality	Features
"HELP"	"CHARITY PROJECTS, SEARCH, NOTIFICATION"
"COMMUNICATE"	"NOTIFICATION"
"WISH"	"KIWISH LISTS, CHARITY PROJECTS"
"CONNECT"	"SEARCH, SOLIDARITY NETWORK, NOTIFICATION"

Doing it!

- Nepomuk (the social semantic desktop) summer school
- Team of 6 people
- Discussion around socialness
- Writing a scenario which illustrates socialness
- Making a prototype

Persona: Marie from Institut Pasteur



Scenario : Marie visits Rwanda

Marie is visiting a small village outside Kigali helping out a Non Governmental Organisation to document how their projects are going in the village. Marie is looking for some sort of transportation. Unfortunately, the bus seems to be cancelled for the rest of the day.

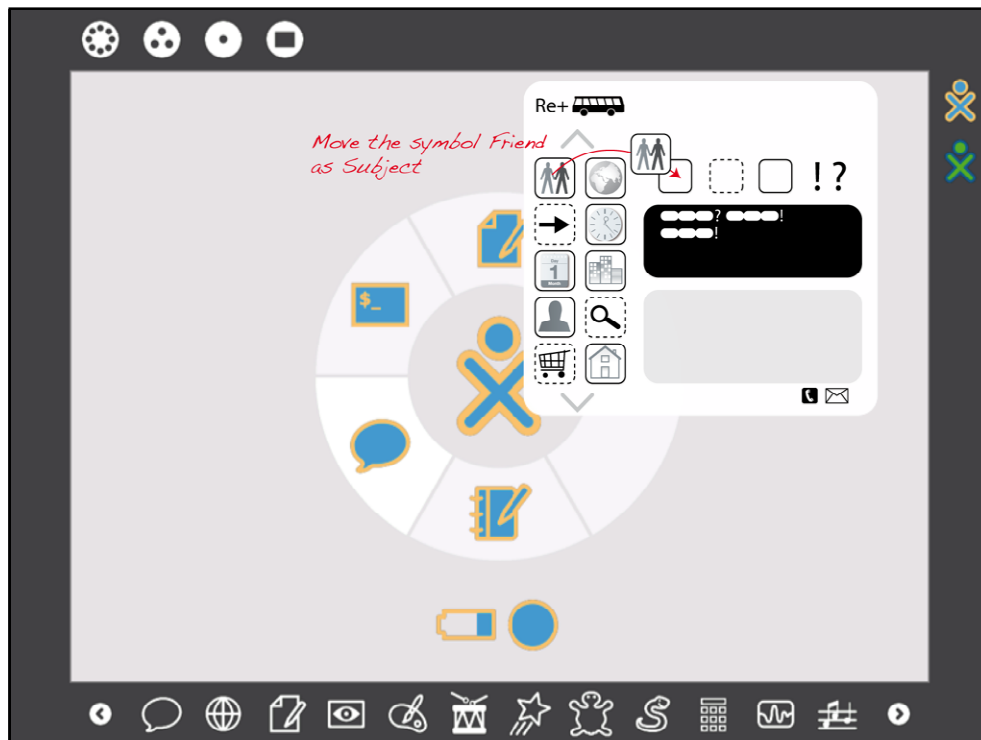
Fortunately, Marie has friends in the village. Gestures and laughter are enough to understand each other at least on a fundamental level.

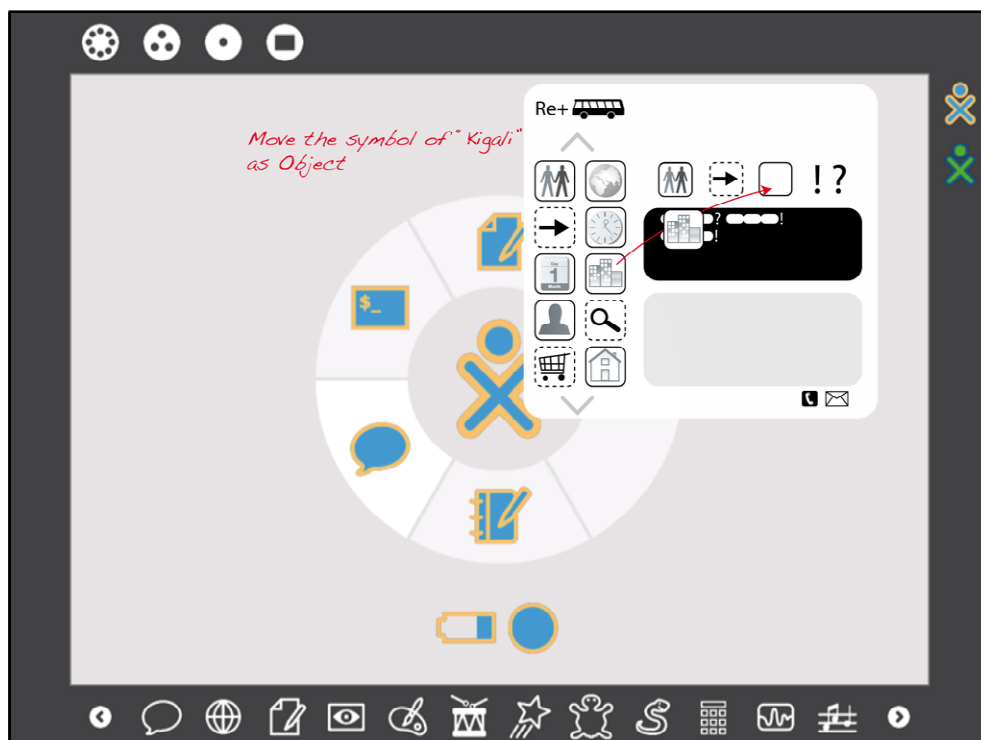
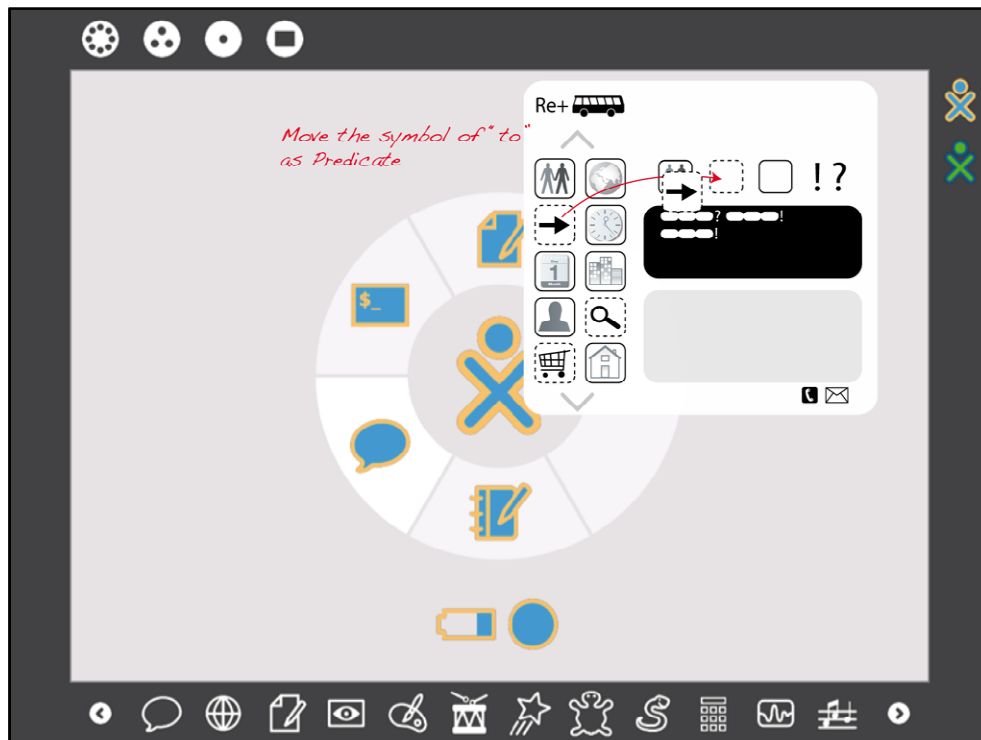
Marie visits Rwanda

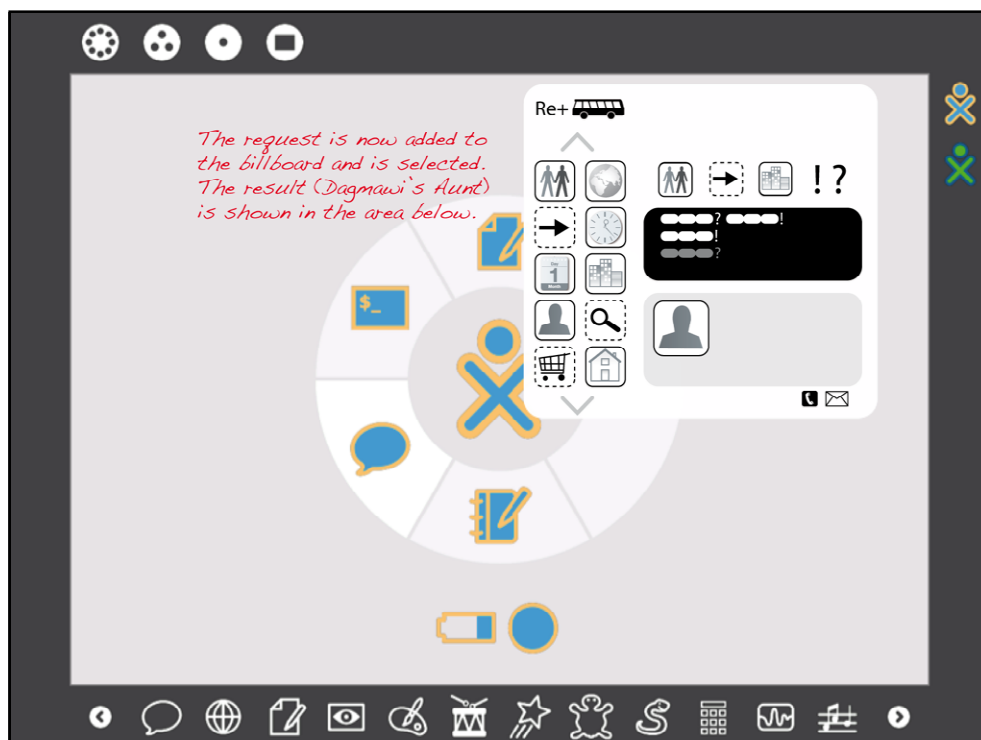
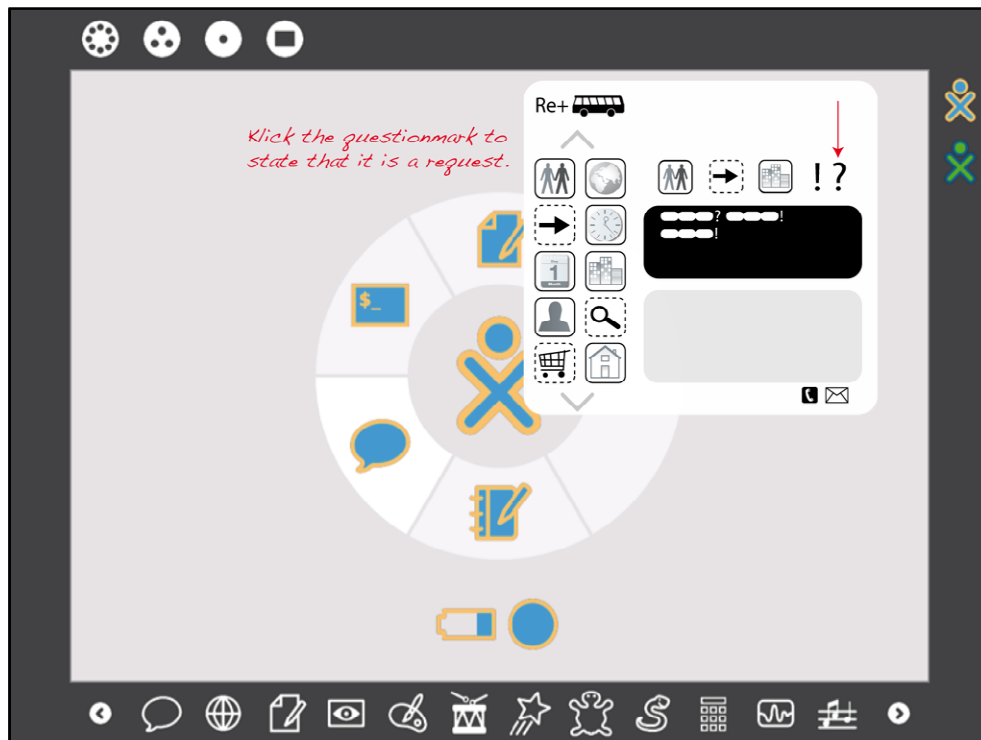
Marie and Dagmawi use his OLPC¹ laptop to find help. Maybe there is someone nearby who can offer a lift.

In fact, Dagmawis' aunt Nema, at the other side of the village, looks for someone to share the costs for today's trip to Kigali.

Later on, Nema picks up Marie and they head for the city.







Conclusion

- Software has the potential to solve **social and global problems**
- Experimentation with methodologies must be done in the **classroom**.
- The challenge in building social software is to understand **people**.
- We need an **evaluation framework** to evaluate the **socialness** of software.