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Collaborative OpenCourseWare Authoring: The SlideWiki Platform

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Abstract: The open-source and open-access SlideWiki platform employs crowdsourcing methods in order to support the authoring, sharing, reusing and remixing of open courseware. The SlideWiki project is introducing the SlideWiki platform to different communities of educators and learners by performing a wide range of trials covering different levels of education (i.e. from secondary to higher education) and different types of learning (i.e. formal learning, informal learning, vocational learning). Each of these large-scale trials is carried out with hundreds of educators and thousands of learners in different countries across Europe.

Introduction

The SlideWiki project¹ is a European initiative, creating a platform that facilitates large-scale collaboration around educational content. Since its launch (Auer *et al.*, 2013), the SlideWiki platform² has grown its user base to hundreds of educators and thousands of learners and has won the OpenCourseWare Consortium's Excellence Award. Several hundred comprehensive open learning materials are currently available on the SlideWiki platform in different languages.

SlideWiki is fostering open education by supporting the authoring and sharing of Open Educational Resources (OERs). OERs can be described as “teaching, learning and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use or repurposing by others depending on which Creative Commons license is used” (Atkins *et al.*, 2007). The emergence of OERs has greatly facilitated online education through the use and sharing of open and reusable learning resources on the Web. Learners and educators can now access, download, remix, and republish a wide variety of quality learning materials (Lane *et al.*, 2010, Wilson *et al.*, 2010).

The SlideWiki large-scale trial project is further maturing the SlideWiki platform and performing four large-scale trials, targeting different levels of education and different types of learning. More specifically, the SlideWiki trials are carried out within:

- secondary education,
- vocational and professional training,
- higher education and
- community-driven open education.

Each of these large-scale trials is performed with hundreds of educators and thousands of learners in countries all over Europe. A particular focus of the technology development and testing in the trials is the suitability for academics, teachers and learners with disabilities.

The SlideWiki platform

The SlideWiki platform allows the creation of educational content either by individual authors or collaboratively by groups of authors. Additionally, learners can interact with the offered content in various ways, such as via commenting, answering quizzes, as well as by reusing and adapting the content according to their needs.

¹ <https://slidewiki.eu>

² <https://slidewiki.org>

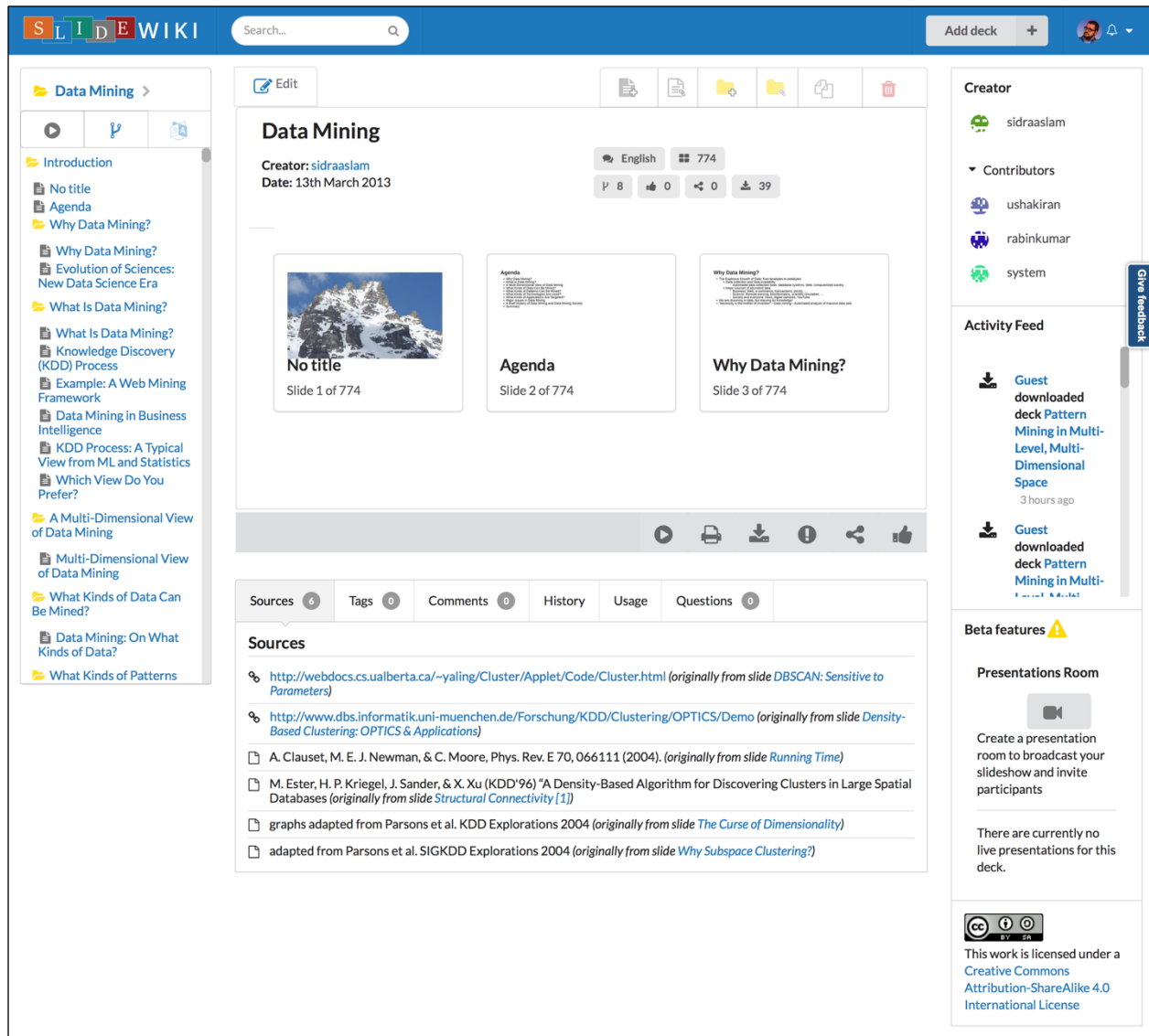


Figure 1: The SlideWiki platform.

Figure 1 shows a screenshot from educational content presented as a slide deck within the SlideWiki platform. Slides in SlideWiki are organised into decks and subdecks, thus forming the tree structure shown on the left-hand side of Figure 1. On the right-hand side of the slide deck, the creator and contributors of the content are displayed, together with the activity feed of the content. The activity feed shows the most recent changes to the content, as well as how this content is being used by other users in their decks. Finally, the pane below the slide deck displays different types of detailed information about the educational content. This information is organised into a series of tabs and includes the sources of content, tags associated with the content, comments from users, history of the content, as well as where else the content is being used within the platform. Authors may also create quizzes for their slides, consisting of multiple-choice questions. Additionally, authors can create live broadcasts of their presentations (shown as ‘presentation rooms’ in Figure 1) and invite participants to join these live broadcasts.

Authors can either upload existing content to the platform in the form of a PowerPoint or OpenOffice presentation, or start creating a slide deck from scratch. They can assign editing permissions to co-authors, who can then start editing their content using a WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) HTML editor, or by editing the HTML code directly. The editing features available in SlideWiki include the ability to embed images, video, tables,

mathematical equations, as well as code snippets. The export options available for content in SlideWiki include common formats and standard specifications, such as HTML, PDF, ePUB and SCORM.

All content on the platform is published under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License,³ which allows it to be reused, repurposed and republished. In order to reuse a deck or a sub-deck, one can ‘fork’ it thus creating a copy of the content that can be further adapted by the user that forked it. All changes made to content are tracked by the platform and displayed in the history tab of the content. Authors can track how their content is being reused and repurposed within the platform via the activity feed and the usage tab of their content.

Conclusions

The SlideWiki platform builds on the wisdom, creativity and productivity of the crowd for the co-creation of educational content. SlideWiki empowers communities of educators to author, share and re-use educational content in a collaborative way. With SlideWiki, we aim to make educational content more accessible, interactive, engaging and qualitative. The SlideWiki project is improving the platform and conducting a number of trials and evaluations of the platform, targeting different levels of education and different types of learning.

Acknowledgements

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³ <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>