

Conception and Design of the Business Creation Platform for the Project tte@40

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General

The tte@40-platform is aimed to be an individually fitted e-learning-script, which tries to give an answer to any open question or to questions which turn up in the course of reading. This aim will be achieved through multidimensional explanations¹, exercises and examples.

Fundamental Idea

The tte@40-platform will be a Database-Centred Application. All information, content as well as dynamic data, which is accumulated during the learning process, will be saved within the database and be dynamically generated via PHP as HTML.

Description of Pages

Within each description paragraph contained on the pages, the functionality of each page is described and the concepts explained. After reading the descriptions, the reader or “learner” should have a good understanding of the didactic concept of the platform.

Homepage

The homepage is the initial page, and as it is the normally the first page encountered by the learner it will be graphically designed in a way that it will not only capture the interest of the visitor and be highly recognizable.

The homepage offers the possibility for individual approaches: direct access to generating profiles and to the overview of the “learning atoms”. The menu items “statistics” and “portfolio” will be generated only after the user has generated a profile.

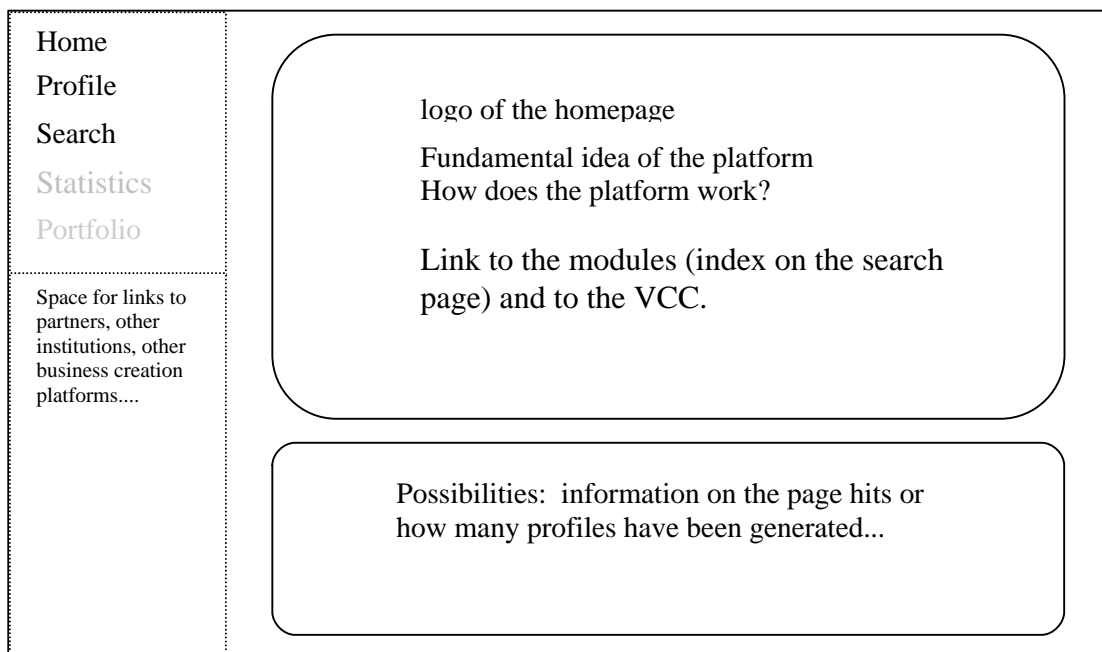


Figure 1: Start page

¹The learning matters are aggregated from the view of different groups and summarized.

Course Templates

The course templates are the most important pages. From this point the learner begins to navigate through the content. A menu for navigating through the platform is situated on the top left-hand corner of the page.

Navigation area

In this area the user can navigate through the main parts of the business-creation platform:

- Profile
 - Back to generating/editing of the profile
- Statistics
 - Display of the progress statistics
- Search
 - Go to the search mask to directly browse the content
- Portfolio
 - Go to the portfolio containing the personalised examples

Topic Thread

The Topic Thread defines everything to the learner about the relevant chapters. All relevant “learning atoms” (all subchapters of the database) are displayed on the Topic Thread. These learning atoms are a projection of the “learning atoms” which are available. These other learning atoms, which are not available on the Topic Thread, can be accessed as well (see “Navigation through the chapters”) and are displayed to the right of the Topic Thread.

By clicking, the learner can work his way through the Topic. After a learning atom has been visited, it changes its appearance in the Thread.

Navigation through the chapters

Each “learning atom” (subchapter of the database) has its own subordinated and superordinated subchapters and is directly related to a main chapter. Using the links in the area on the top and on the bottom of the page, the learner can navigate through the chapters.

Hence, when a learner strays from his or her Topic Thread - because she or he is interested in one of the related topics – the additionally visited learning atoms are then included in the Topic Thread. They are not displayed in the direct line of the Thread but to the left and to the right of it.

Learning Atoms

The “learning atoms” (subchapters of the database) contain the intrinsic content. These cells of content are saved in the database, with references to entries within the glossary. This would constitute a breach between the business-logic of the database and the logic of the text (the glossary is saved as HTML in a directory of the web server).

Another option would be to save the glossary also in the database. If a learning atom is retrieved, every word could be compared to the entries of the glossary and being marked as existing in the glossary. By use of a link, a new page would be opened and the glossary entry of the database would be displayed.

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This would of course be the more generic approach, but it could cause problems if the glossary were very big or if the texts were very long. An advantage is that the authors of the learning atoms would not forget to link words.

Dimensions of Knowledge

This means that there might be different views on the learning atom:

- the technical view
- the financial view
- the social view

The aim is to provide for the learner more than one opinion regarding the same issue. The learning atom would present the learning matter in a pragmatic way – by adding the other dimensions, the content of the learning atom would be summarized in different, maybe also in more simple, words.

After all dimensions have been worked through, even a total newcomer to the topic should have a basic understanding of what the learning atom is all about.

Online Help

For each learning atom online help is available, comparable to Microsoft's help, but not so “intelligent”. It offers – depending on the particular situation – further possibilities and describes what to do next and why (“for dummies”).

Topic-specific Forum

For every learning atom there is a related thread within the forum where learners can ask questions, e.g. how can this be applied in practice or what problems might occur, although these questions should already be covered by the different views on the topic (“dimensions of knowledge”). The forum would also act in this way like a FAQ.

Exercises

This link leads to a new page, which offers topic-specific exercises. The result is a document, specific to this topic, containing individual data: e.g. “My Business Plan”. These documents are saved in the database and can be compiled in a portfolio. The documents can be printed and used e.g. in a counselling interview.

Examples

This link leads to examples covering the content of the learning atom. The examples should be seen as guidance for the learner to be able to properly carry out the necessary exercises.

Notes

For each learning atom the learner can take notes, e.g. relevant questions and considerations. These notes are visible only to the learner themselves.

Case-Studies

Case-Studies are longer texts in Modules which refer to atoms.

Country specific Info

Country specific Info is an additional content for “learn atoms” especially for a specific country. There are four different kind of country specific info:

- FAQ

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- Links
- Book
- Article

These should be displayed as a symbol. The symbol for e.g. book should be displayed in country specific colours.

Printing

The printing function offers the ability to print whole modules, displayed atoms or complete portfolios. When you click on the print symbol, a new window with these printing options is displayed.

Detail Info

Is a link to more detailed info, which the information in the atom belong to.

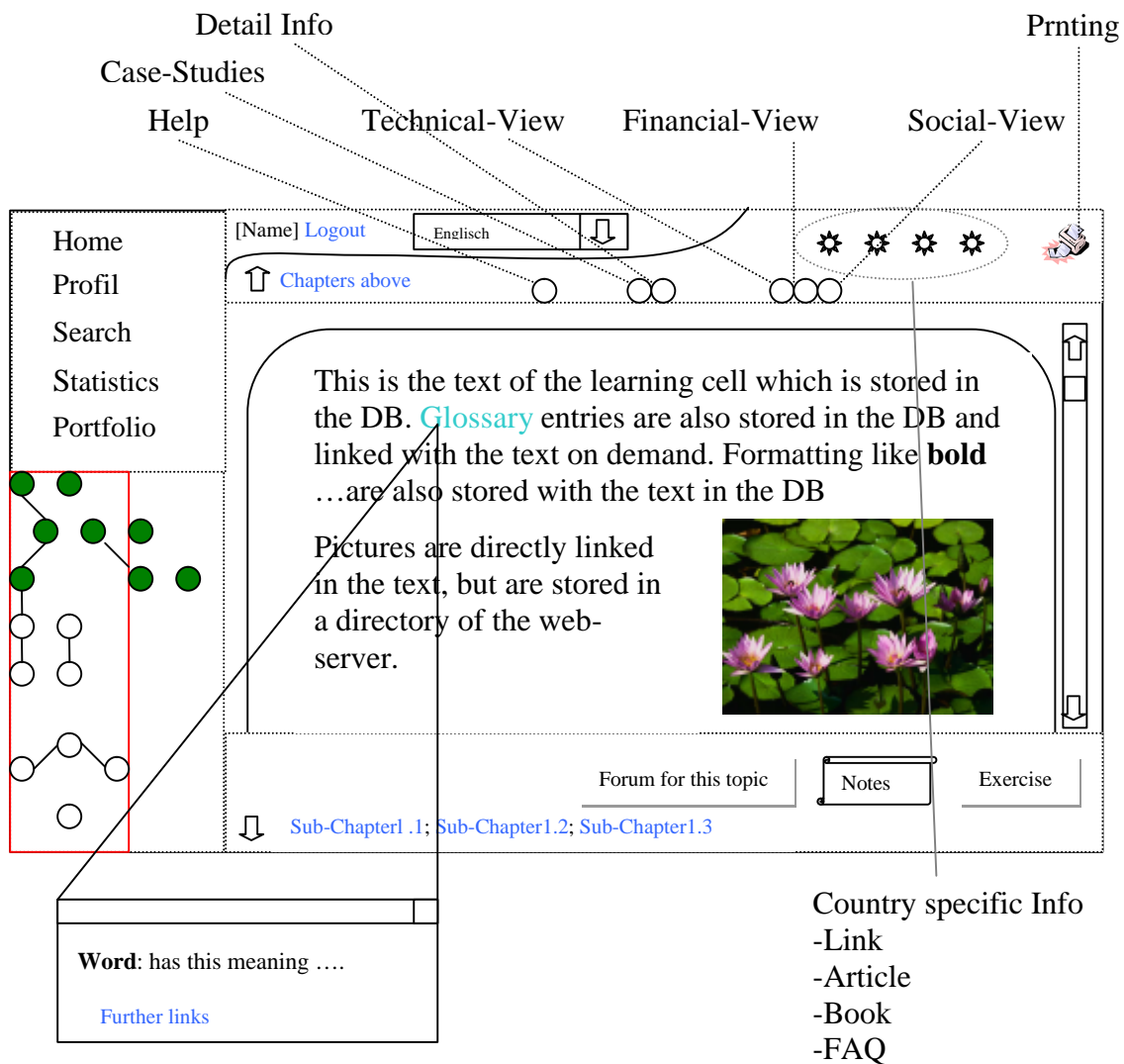


Figure 2: Study Templates

Navigation Area (the read thread)

The structure of the learning cells is similar to a tree (see Figure 3). There is a root node for each nodule. Each nodule would be like the trunk of a tree. Each descendant of the root node acts like the branches. Each node represents a learning cell where the branches break away from the trunk of the tree and continually give way to smaller branches. With the link “Chapter above” and “Sub-Chapter...” you can leave (branch away from) the read thread and browse the entire content.

The nodes in the read area of the navigation are the relevant learning cells which are derived from the Virtual Competence Centre (VCC) (see Figure 4). A line between two nodes means that these nodes are direct descendants (seedlings) from the learning cell tree.

When you have worked with a learning cell, the colour of the node is then changed to green. With the ability of the study page to browse the entire leaning cell, you can leave the read thread. When you work with a learning cell which is not on your read thread, it will appear in the white area to the right of the read thread as a green node. It would not be marked as a white node, because white nodes exist only when the VCC select them for you. If you chose a learning cell which is not on your read thread and you have already worked with it will be marked as a green node.

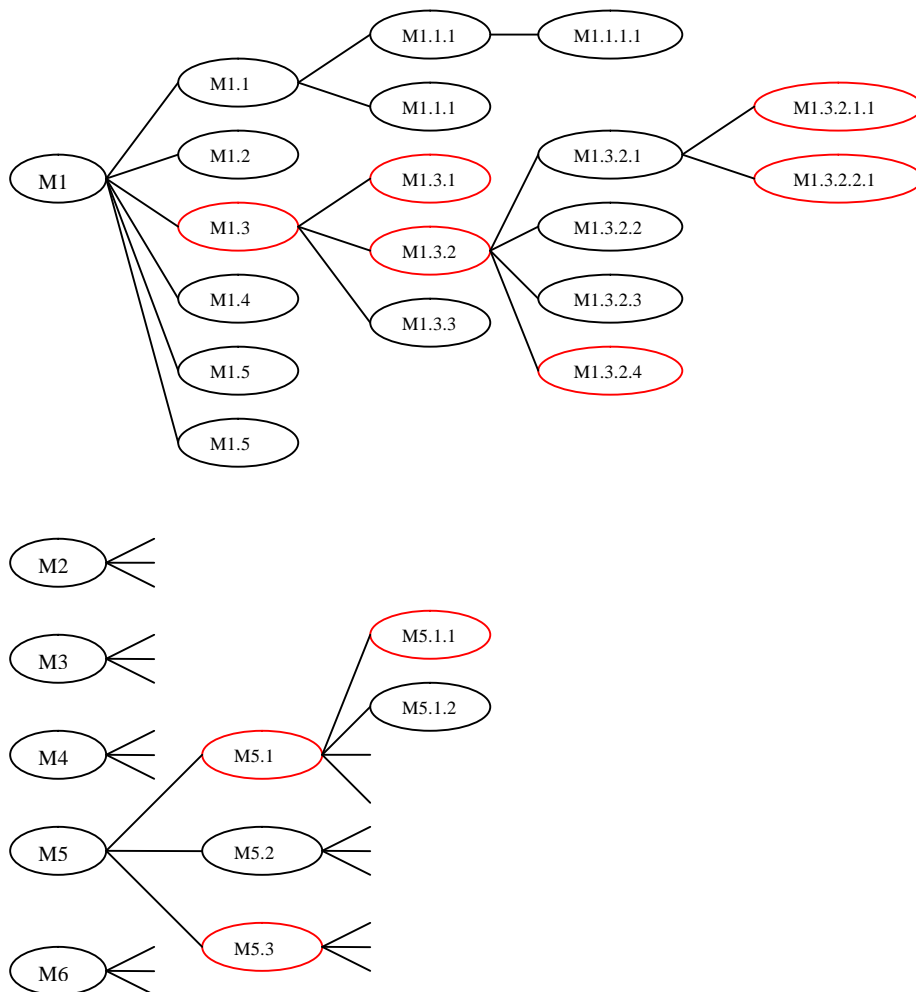


Figure 3: Structure of the learning cells

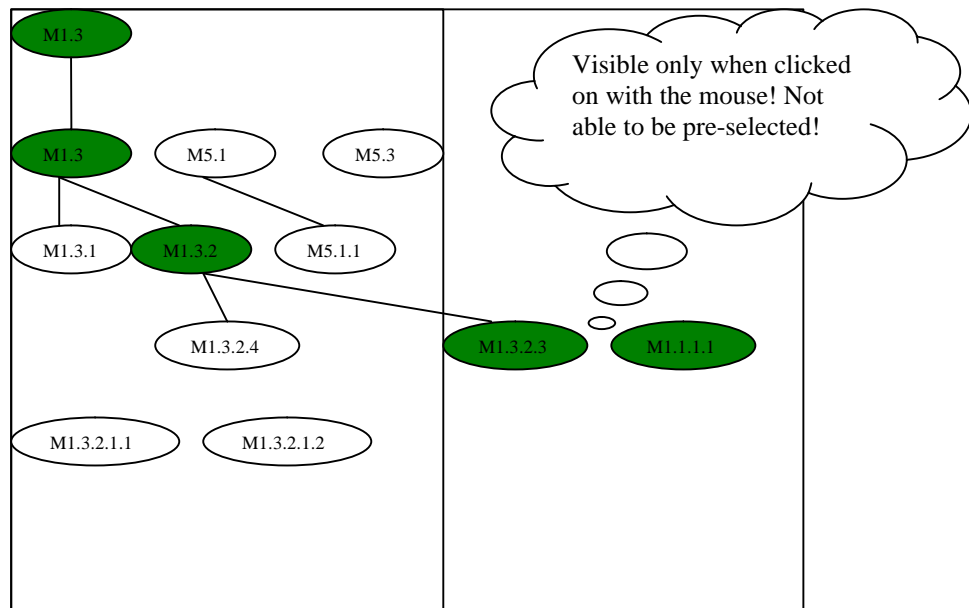


Figure 4: Structure of the read thread in the navigation list

Statistic Page

The statistic page gives an overview about the learning cell which has already been processed. On the left side of the page is the read thread with the personalised learning cells and above the menu of the page and on the main page there is an overview in the form of a pie-chart. The circle describes all available learning cells. The white learning cells within the red area are relevant for the learner and those which are green are already processed. The learning cells which are on the right of the read thread are not relevant for the learner, but he/she can also select other learning cells and they will appear as a green point on the right side of the read thread. Learning cells which have a direct relation to the topic are labelled with a line (see: Navigation Area (the read thread) on page: 6).

Below this diagram the specific data, when and how long a learning cell was selected, are shown.

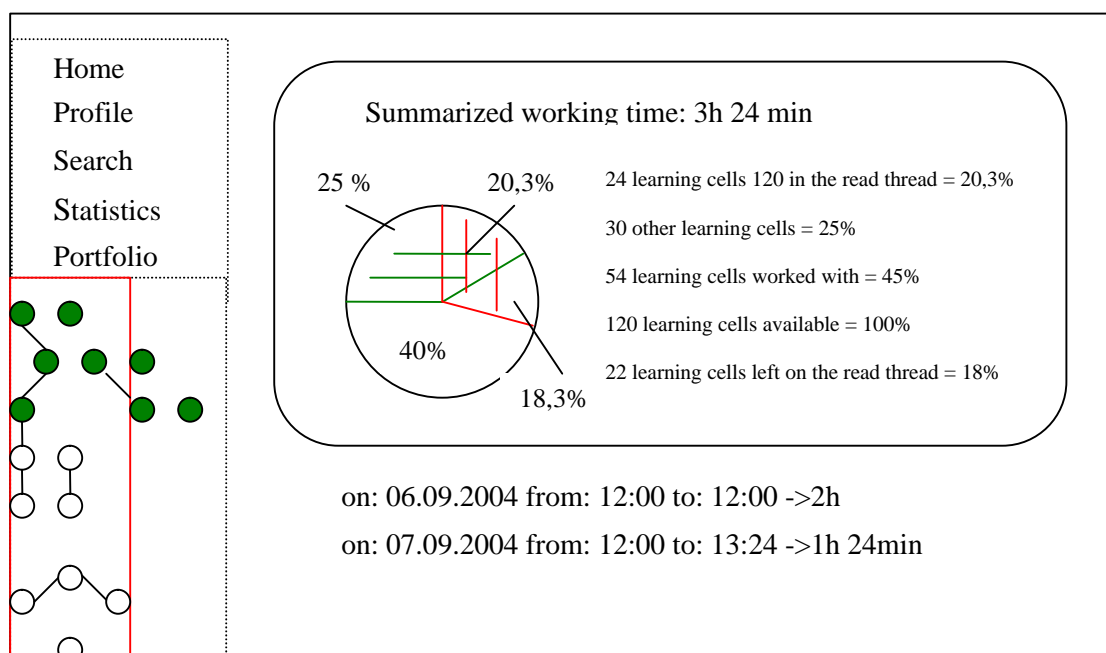


Figure 5: Statistics Page

Search Page

On the search page the index of all learning cells are displayed (like a book index). Furthermore the learning cells can be searched via full text search, the result is a list of all learning cells which include the searched word.

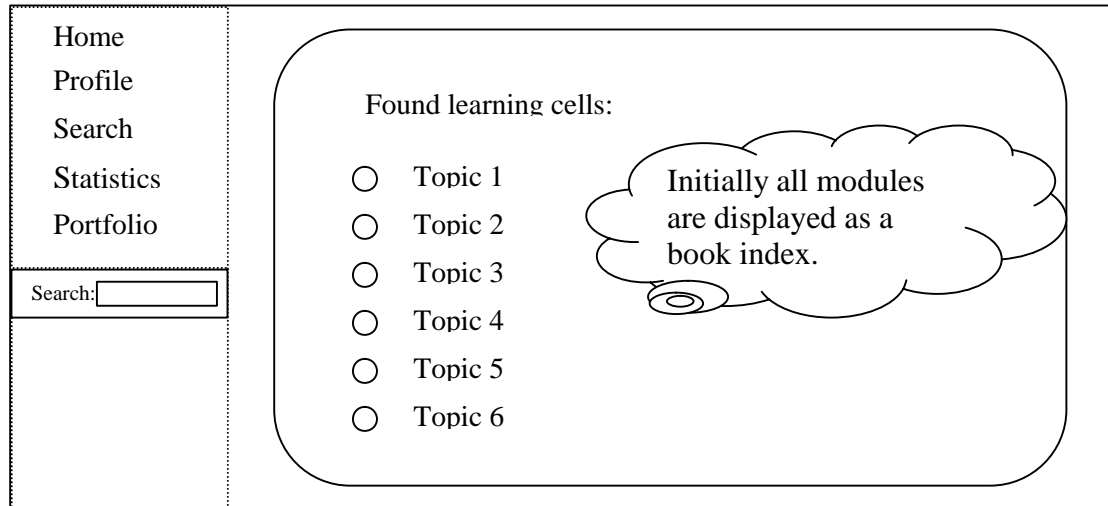


Figure 6: Search Page

Portfolio

The Portfolio includes all of the personalised information which is gathered during working with the learning cells, especially with the exercises. This information is available in printer friendly format. The printed information can be used for continuative talks with specialists in the area of business creation.

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