
Agreement number: 2018-1-NL01-KA202-038887
EKFI – Exchange Knowledge for Future Innovation

EKFI Barter system (version 1)

Conclusions of the expert meeting October 2019 in Ghent that have impact on the barter system:

- Quality beats quantity
- Start off with a closed or small community to get better quality
- The first course a new user downloads should be of good quality, otherwise we will lose this new user...
- According to the new European legislation the platform owner is responsible for all uploaded material that there is no copyright on parts of a course (images, graphs, text, ...)
- Possibility to download for free must be preserved

See full report in 'minutes of M4 meeting'.

1 Quality beats quantity

1.1 Fact #1: The project has no budget to run quality checks after upload

Solution: the community needs to do the quality check.

Motivate users to give a review + rating (1 – 5 stars) after downloading material. This should be possible via the interface.

If a user hasn't made a review an automatic email should be send after 2 - 4 days to ask for a review. When a user gives a review, reward this action with credits (see 4. Gamification)

When material gets a mediate score of less than 2.5 / 5 after 3 votes*, it should be 'hidden' if better scored material is available on the subject. But we can still show them (with a warning) when there are no other results for a certain subject / search query.

** It's possible that material doesn't get lots of reviews because material can be uploaded in many languages.*

1.2 Fact #2: Lots of different languages and what is 'quality' in the different countries

Also, the quality standard can be different in other countries / institutes.

Solution: Search only on material in the language(s) of the user and sort by the user's country. So, on registration the user needs to indicate the preferred languages.

1.3 Fact #3: Quality decreases over time

Because we work in a fast-changing domain, most material has a certain lifespan of 2 to 5 (?) years. This means that also the quality will decrease.

Solution: Automatically email the author

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Send the author an email 2 years after uploading the material and ask if the material is still relevant. If not, motivate the author, with credits, to update the material.

If the author doesn't respond, send a reminder after 1 month. If no respond after 2 months: put the material offline. The user can still find the material on his own profile page, where he can update the material and put it back online.

1.4 Quick win

- Show material by rating and upload date so that it appears that all material is recent and of high quality.

1.5 Other possibilities to gain quality

Start with a closed community of users that can upload high quality material. Each user gets a limited number of invites to give away. (Like Quora)

Extra bonus: This also creates an online buzz. *'Who can give me an invite for the platform.'*

2 The platform needs (lots of) material

When a user gets an invite/register, the first thing he will do is search for material in his own domain. (For example: Dieter will search for material on 'UI Design' and 'User experience')

If a user doesn't find any material after 2 – 3 search queries he will leave...

But there is a good chance that this user already has his own material, which he can upload.

Opportunity: Motivate the user to upload his own material.

*'Sorry we haven't found any material on xxxx. Please upload your own material to help other members. You will get **eternal fame** and **100 credits**.'*

What motivates users to upload material:

- Money (no go in EKFI project)
- Sharing is caring (Eternal fame)
- Get insights on your own material
- Download other material (see 4. Gamification)

2.1 Sharing is caring / Eternal fame

Some users like to share and help others. Online communities work with likes to give positive feedback to the author (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, ...).

Users are more likely to give a thumbs up rather than writing reviews / comments. Because it's a very fast and common action.

Solution: Add a like button and a 'like counter' to all material

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2.2 Get insights and feedback on your own material

Users might upload material to get insights on their own material with the purpose of updating and making the material better.

Solution: Add the possibility to comment on material.

3 Barter system and gamification

How can we motivate members to upload (qualitative) material, without getting money?

- A barter system is a way that people can exchange goods without money.
- Gamification is a way to motivate users to engage with the platform. There are lots of different types of gamification.

A good example of this is Klascement, a Flemish platform for sharing learning materials. They use a credits system to reward users and limit their possibilities when they run out of credits.

According to Klascement’s research on gamification, there isn’t a significant advantage of using this type of gamification. However, they see that, when users run out of credits, they are more likely to engage with the platform (upload, comment, like, ...) to gain credits. The quality of what they deliver at this point wasn’t investigated. But according to Tommy Opgenhaffen, a Klascement-user/expert, the quality is lower because the user just wants to gain credits in order to regain the possibility to download material.

However, adding a credits system in the early stage of development is ‘easier’ than having to add this afterwards. That’s why we need to count credits for users from the start of the community.

In this proposal we will make use of a credit system. Members can gain credits by adding value to the the platform. Members can download material in exchange of credits. These credits will go to the author of the material (barter).

3.1 Gaining credits

Action	Credits
Registration	+250
Upload material	+100 on upload and get +25 per download
Add material (without upload)	+50
Update existing material	+50
Review *	+50
Like	+5
Comment	+10

* To check the quality, we need lots of reviews (min. 3 to 5 per material). That’s why you get a lot of credits for this action.

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3.2 Losing credits

Action	Credits
Download material	-25
Own material is put offline (because of bad reviews)	-100
Own material is put offline (after x years)	-0

3.3 Limitations via credits

When a user has less than 25 points, he cannot download any material.

3.4 Notifications

A user needs to be reminded that he almost runs out of credits. This is a trigger to upload your own material. An automatic mail is sent when a user is below 100 points. And a second time below 50 points.

3.5 Conclusion

- A user can register and download 10 times without doing any other action.
- Uploading material of bad quality isn't rewarded
- The limitation / notification should be evaluated after 1 year.
'Do users engage more when getting this notification?'
- **Opportunity:** Exchange credits for goodies.
We need to think of goodies that users want, but that doesn't cost a lot for EGIN:
 - o Tickets to conferences
 - o Software licenses or discounts (through partners / sponsors)
 - o ...

4 Fear for upload

A big pitfall is the fear for upload. There is a (large) group of users that is afraid of sharing their own material.

Possible reasons are:

- The material is work-in-process and is not (yet) finalized;
- In higher education the competition between educational institutions is high;
- Fear for mistakes in your own material;
- Fear for copyright issues;

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4.1 Alternative for uploading

To motivate teachers or developers of teaching materials, we can work out a kind of platform similar to the original proposal, based on the idea of the Facebook groups (see expert meeting details).

The platform will be developed as described in the proposal. But instead of uploading the full course material, authors load, in addition to the metadata in the intake module, a table of contents and a number of pages of the course material, so that users get an idea of the material offered and its quality.

In addition to metadata of the course material, the contact details of the author are also available. If members are interested in a specific material. In exchange for credits, they can receive the contact information of the author.

This way the member can contact the author, outside of the platform (via email)

This alternative solution also solves the copyright issue and the quality screening.

4.2 Fear for sharing work-in-progress material

On upload, add the possibility to tag the material as Work-in-progress (WIP)