

Case Study: Youth and Migration online service and application

Partner 24: University of Stavanger

Summary

The idea behind the case, Youth and Migration online service and application (YAM), is to have young people (16 – 19) learn more about themselves and their own background. The intention is to have young people become aware of who they are, learn about their own attitudes toward people of other cultures and make them think about themselves as members of society. The ultimate goal of the project is to prevent and fight xenophobia.

The most feasible way to reach the goal of the project is by the use of broadband technology – as an efficient means of communication with members of the local communities and particularly schools across Europe. Even more important, is it that the unique features of the broadband technology is a basis for new types of content and learning methodology, which in particular appeals to the youth of the target group.

The YAM-project is developed by the BRB partner, University of Stavanger, in collaboration with the Stavanger Centre of Migration. The online service will be part of the official programme of the Stavanger 2008 European Cultural Capital and available to the public from 2008 on.

Background

The Youth and Migration project (YAM) is part of the official Stavanger 2008 European Cultural Capital programme. The YAM project was originally initiated by the Centre of Migration in Stavanger. The centre is a non-profit organization with no experience of the development of online learning applications or financial capacity to acquire such development services. The centre is however cooperating with the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Stavanger (UiS), through which the university's development unit, NettOp, was asked to do the design and development of an online service and learning application for the project.

It is an official strategy of UiS to join or support relevant projects for the Stavanger 2008 European Cultural Capital. On the basis of this strategy and relevance of the project to interests of the Faculty of Humanities, NettOp offered to contribute the development expertise and necessary IT-resources.

The project was initiated the fall of 2005, but the final development and implementation has been completed in 2007.

The general idea of YAM is to fight xenophobia in particular among European youths. The online service and learning application is a central tool to support such a goal, utilizing broadband technology to reach the local communities across Europe. The web solution is both an efficient means of communication and allows for content and a learning methodology not available by any other means of communication, based on the unique features of the broadband technology. In particular in the communication with youths this is essential.

The structure of the YAM learning application helps the students to investigate their own family history in projection to the world history of migration between year 1500 and 2010. The data may also be compared to the research of other students or shared in the classroom. The students will see that migration is both a thing going on today and has been going on through human history. Consequently xenophobia and racism are not modern inventions, and hopefully the students through the work with the application will get to the understanding that these kinds of attitudes are restraining to development and should be fought.

Working with the YAM-application it is the intention that youths will increase their understanding of the reasons and consequences of migration, challenge their own attitudes on these matters and encourage them to think through whom they want to *be* and what kind of society they would like to be part of in the future.

Based on both the needs and goals of the YAM project, the project is a classic case of how broadband technology both may be used to reach and eventually affect the local communities on a social issue of concern to European development. For this reason UiS found the project particularly relevant as a demonstration case of interest to the Baltic Rural Broad project (BRB). The intention has been to offer a permanent web service available to the public from 2008 on.

The online service and learning application is highly interactive and self sustained, yet with a high potential for use in classroom courses. A teacher's guide is developed with ideas on how

the program may be used in the classroom. Teachers will also be the most important group the service is presented to, with the intention that the program should be adopted by schools across Europe.

These are some of the reasons the teachers are given to take the online service and application in use in their classroom courses:

1. It is interactive.
2. It is independent of time and place
3. It can be adapted to most contexts and most schools subjects concerned with human relations.
4. It is flexible in terms of how much time to spend on it and flexible in terms of academic level.
5. It can easily be developed and changed.
6. It is self-instructive.
7. It is fun to use for young people.
8. It can be used individually or in the class-room
9. It can be used by anyone, also people outside schools
10. It is free of any charges.

How decisions are taken?

The YAM project was initiated by the Centre of Migration in Stavanger on request by the comity of the Stavanger 2008 European Cultural Capital. The centre cooperates with the Faculty of Humanities at UiS. It is a strategy of the university to support Stavanger 2008 projects. On this basis the development unit, NettOp, at UiS decided to support the YAM-project.

NettOp is a central unit at UiS, organized directly under the Director of the university, supporting the faculty in projects and with tasks concerning network technology and applications for learning. NettOp's engagement is prioritized by strategic needs of the university and the unit's capacity.

NettOp was at the time already supporting the Faculty of Social Sciences' participation in the BRB project. The synergy between the YAM project and the BRB project was eventually the reason for NettOp to get involved.

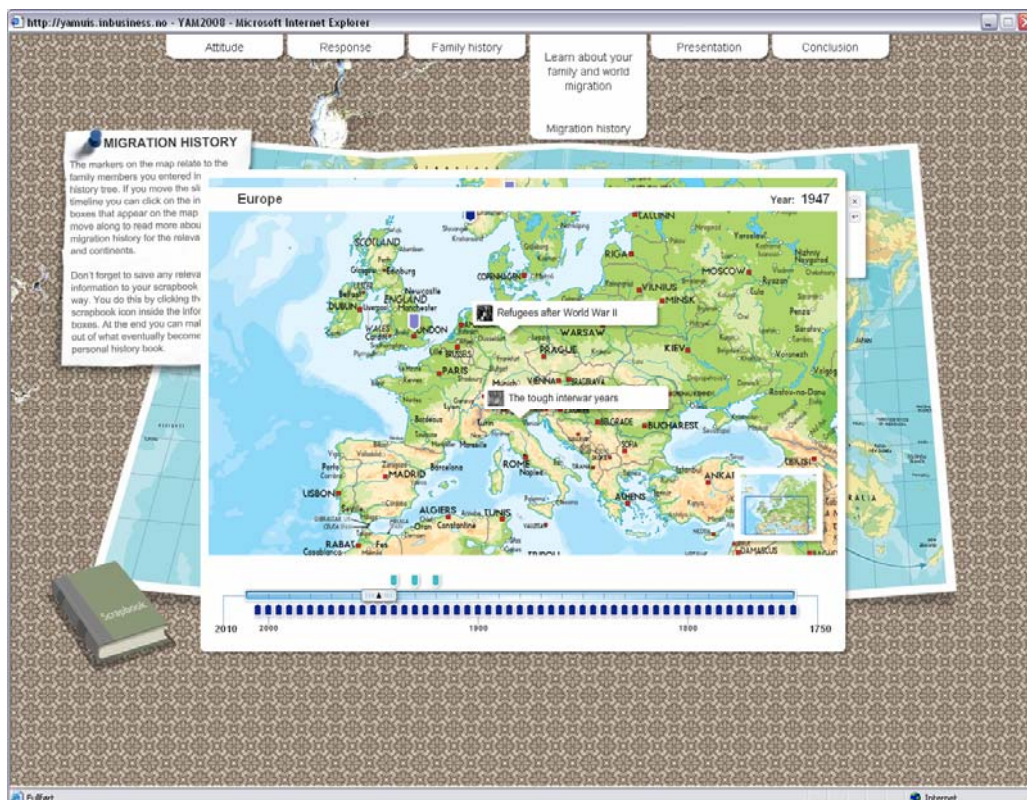
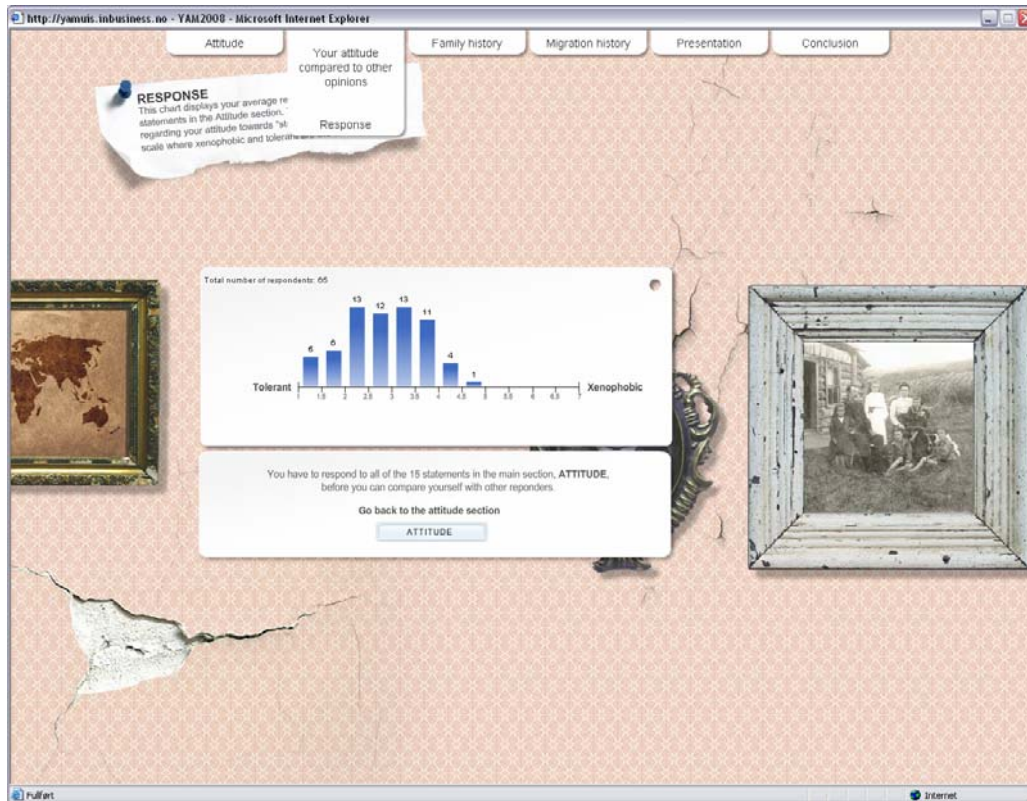
The screenshot below illustrates a section of the layout and some features of the methodology of the online service.

The YAM online application is organised under 6 headings:

1. Attitude
2. Response
3. Family history
4. Migration history
5. Presentation
6. Conclusions

The application is available through the project web site:

<http://www.yam2008.com/>



Model of financing

UiS's participation in the development of the YAM project has initially been financed solely by UiS. External subject matter experts were financed partly by the Stavanger Centre of Migration and partly by funds of the Stavanger 2008 European Cultural Capital. In 2007, UiS's effort in the project has been co funded by BRB by 30%.

Work process (implementation)

The process of development of the YAM project has been substantially longer than the design and technical implementation of the online service and learning application. The main reason for this is that there was no initial specification of the solution and that it simply found its form in an ongoing dialogue between the subject matter experts at the Centre of Migration and NettOp. For commercial reasons, few development companies will accept such processes, and the project probably would not have been possible to realise with out the participation of the University of Stavanger. A development process like this, however also allowed for solutions beyond NettOp's former experience, which is a unique way for the developers at NettOp to gain new knowledge.

Concepts, design and technical implementation has been done by NettOp. Most content is researched, written and implemented by subject matter experts at the Centre of Migration.

The solution will be maintained and developed further by NettOp throughout 2008. It is the intention that the maintenance in the future will be managed by the Stavanger Centre of Migration as a permanent web service free to the public.

Recommendations

Development of online services and applications requires special knowledge of several disciplines. It is advisable to engage expert development teams to be able to develop such applications successfully.