

PDF, Open Documents, Collaboration and Critique


What happens when people add comments to text or re-use it? Is this 'critique' or can theory around 'critique' explain a connection with learning? Developments in Open Office and Open Documents will make it possible for this sort of function to be widely available for online documents.

There has been a project to look at how server software from Adobe could be used to extend the use of PDF. Reader Extensions adds functionality to the free version of Acrobat for particular documents, adding 'collaboration' tools such as notes and highlighting. See 'eTEN draft proposal' below.

The server software is still expensive and there are few examples of use in education. Bedford High School described at BETT last year how the notes feature in Acrobat is used in graphics projects.

Meanwhile Open Office has added an option to export PDF. Also the latest version uses the Open Document format for word processing. As it is free, Open Office could be used on every desktop. Notes export as part of a PDF.

At a recent Social Source conference in London there was discussion about future collaboration tools using Open Documents. What currently exists, other than Open Office?

What is happening when someone adds comments, highlighting etc. or copies text to another text editor? What theories are documented relating to forms of 'critique'? 

This discussion started as a possible eTEN proposal involving Exetreme web design, Acrobat Services, and Psand. Psand have delivered on demonstrating satellite broadband and wifi. They also promote open source software, for example Linux terminals with Bristol Wireless. Exetreme use open source sometimes but also software from Adobe and Macromedia. The developments with Open Office and Open Documents may change the balance on this. There is probably still a role for some copies of Acrobat but the Adobe server software may remain too expensive to be widely used.

Any comments or information on what is happening in other places would be welcome.

Will Pollard
Exetreme / Acrobat Services

will.pollard@gmail.com

eTen draft proposal
www.acrobat-services.com/eten

Psand
<http://psand.net>

Exetreme
www.exetreme.com

Social Source
www.socialsource.org

Bristol Wireless
www.bristolwireless.net

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