

All copyrights of this article are held by the author/s

To cite this publication

we suggest to use the APA (American Psychological Association) standard:

[Author's Last Name, Initials, (year), Title of work. Retrieved month, day, year, from source.]

You downloaded this document for free
from the



The NetAcademy is an internet research platform organizing the accumulation, dissemination and review of scientific research and publications world wide.

For any use of this document which is not strictly private, scholarly work, please contact the NetAcademy editors respectively the MCM institute at the below address.

The NetAcademy ®
www.netacademy.org
NA.editors@netacademy.org

The NetAcademy project has been developed at the
Institute for Media and Communications Management MCM
University of St. Gallen
Blumenbergplatz 9
CH-9000 St. Gallen, Switzerland
www.mcm.unisg.ch

The Unique Selling Propositions of the NetAcademy Universe

<i>The Unique Selling Propositions of the NetAcademy Universe</i>	1
What is the NetAcademy?	2
How can you benefit from the NetAcademy?	3
How is the NetAcademy organized, what are goals and state of the art?	4
What is the technology the NetAcademy uses?	6
License conditions of the NetAcademy	6
Benchmarking: The USP's of the NetAcademy	7

What is the NetAcademy?

The NetAcademy is an internet based global research network.

INTERNET PLATFORM. The NetAcademy is an internet platform which fosters and reviews scientific activities worldwide, building a global research network. It publishes academic papers, organizes online journals, enables e-learning, and a lot more.

ORIGIN. The NetAcademy concept is developed by Prof. Beat Schmid of the Institute for Media and Communications Management of the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland. The NetAcademy [www.netacademy.org] went online in March 1997 and underwent a complete redesign in August 2002.

A FEDERATED SYSTEM. The NetAcademy is, on the large scale, a federated system. Different research communities can each request and establish an own NetAcademy (we call this a NetAcademy Instance) and manage it independently. All NetAcademy Instances are connected with the NetAcademy exchange server (we call this the NetAcademy Universe) which aligns all – for open access authorized – knowledge from all the NetAcademy Instances in a common logic. Thus, the knowledge of different scientific communities can be viewed in the frame of the particular community itself, as well as in the frame of a general encyclopaedia about academic knowledge.

A MODULAR STRUCTURE. The NetAcademy is, on a smaller scale, a modular structure. Each Netacademy Instance crystallizes around a basic module, the classic module. It provides for the organization of content (e.g. a library), with the necessary logic coherence between the author, document, and keyword databases, adding further general services and extension possibilities. Besides the classic module, other modules can be assorted to a NetAcademy Instance. Thus, each research community can build up its own world.

For questions and comments, please contact the NetAcademy project manager [salome.schmid-isler@unisg.ch]

How can you benefit from the NetAcademy?

Free information and contact services for passing-by visitors, for researchers, for authors of academic papers, for research organizations, for managerial issues.

- For visitors: Free download of academic information. The NetAcademy and its instances can be accessed by any interested individual, and most of its content is downloadable for free. To download pdf-files, a password, i.e. online registering, is requested. Registering entails no obligations.
- For researchers: Retrieval, review and reliability of coherent data. The NetAcademy furnishes day-by-day new content about the on-goings in different research fields. Be it working papers by academicians and practitioners, be it term definitions by experts, book reviews or upcoming conferences and call for papers for international journals, be it reports about the goals and state of the art of research projects and teaching programs, be it international experts' research resumes and contact data – it's all retrievable and displayed for free. The data are interrelated, thus e.g. author, publication, keyword and research instance are edited in semantic coherence.
- For authors: Reviewed publishing and audience rating for free. The NetAcademy invites researchers to submit papers, either to be published in the online libraries (contact the respective editor; evidence of double peer review must be provided), or to be published with the academic online journals which also appear quarterly in print (contact the respective submission pages; the journals install their own double blind peer review procedure). Has a document passed the quality test installed by the appointed editor, it is being published and accessible across the entire NetAcademy universe. Subsequently, the author automatically appears on a personal homepage which he may edit and update himself, with direct browser access. The homepage may show the author's portrait, his curriculum, research field, special interest, his contacts and all his papers he is publishing with the NetAcademy. A special service indicates daily how many times each of his publications was viewed respectively downloaded. For larger publications, the NetAcademy also offers a print publishing service with the NetAcademy Press, including marketing and online sale with amazon, etc. The NetAcademy Press is affiliated with the University of St. Gallen.
- For research organizations: The NetAcademy offers any scientific oriented organization to edit its own NetAcademy instance. Every NetAcademy instance accumulates, disseminates and reviews content and activities of a particular field of interest, according individual organizational principles and quality standards. It is possible to install a NetAcademy instance as an independent platform or intranet. But the developer's goal is to establish an interconnected handbook of knowledge, thus to avoid stand alone solutions. (Compare with the 'license conditions' section).
- For managers: The NetAcademy hosts a vast stock of experts, ranging from international leading top researchers (see the editorial boards) to professors, assistant professors, project managers down to young authors, doctoral assistants and students. All of them edit their profile and contact address, indicating if they are interested in cooperation with external research projects.

How is the NetAcademy organized, what are goals and state of the art?

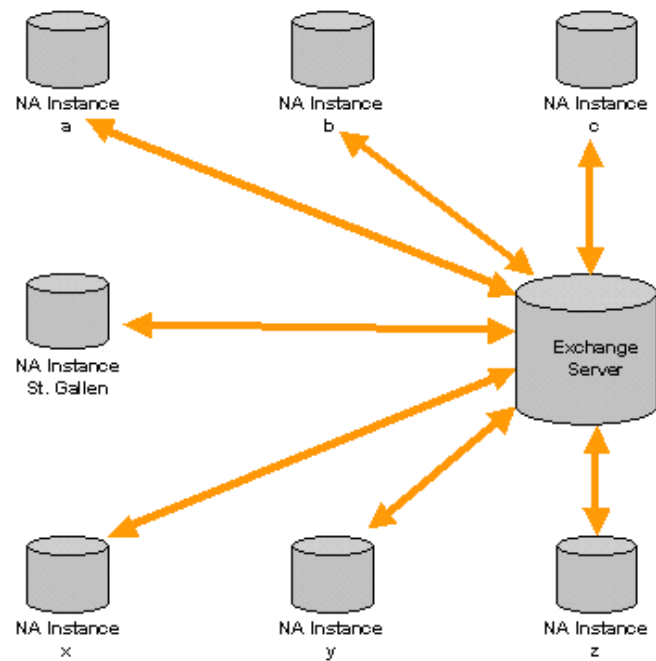
The goal is to establish an online encyclopaedia for scientific knowledge. The NetAcademy universe has a federated structure and is organized by modules. The technology is open standard.

GOALS: The NetAcademy realizes the concept of an international, encompassing and living scientific encyclopaedia, as it has been developed since antiquity – from the visions of Plato (“academy means to reason with open standards, as in mathematics”) and Leibniz (“academy means theory combined with practice”) and the encyclopaedists as Diderot and d’Alembert (“academy means to organize knowledge as a handbook, and to involve different experts”) to modern researchers as Ted Nelson with his project Xanadu (“knowledge must be available as deep hypertext”), which was, some 20 years later, quite realized with the world wide web by Tim Berners-Lee, and Beat Schmid who pursues a semantic web where not only the computers align their protocol logic for processing (as the W3C puts it) but where the very meaning of a text can be captured and matched with other documents – eventually without manual editing.

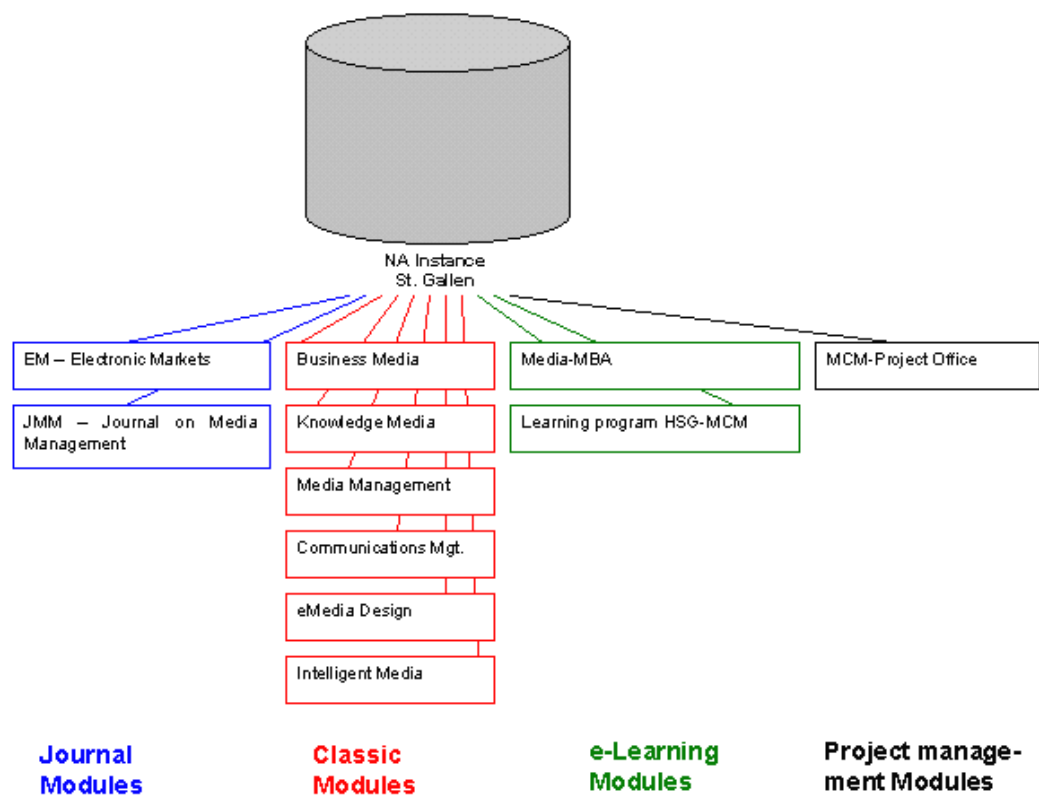
At the beginning, the NetAcademy archived and published research developed at the institute and university of Schmid, linking in additional documents from external partners. By and by, independent units with international focus used the NetAcademy, as e.g. academic journals. With the open source technology the NetAcademy is equipped with since August 2002, everything is open for new communities to benefit from the NetAcademy Universe, provided the academic aim of research.

ORGANIZATION: The NetAcademy is a federation of autonomous NetAcademy instances, each of which pursues an own field of research interest. Each NetAcademy instance can be built out of a range of modules, each with a particular service profile.

- *The NetAcademy’s federated structure* guarantees each NA instance an autonomy but offers to combine it (as entity or in parts) with other NetAcademies which makes it part of a vast knowledge landscape. Each NA instance establishes its content according to its own organizational principles. Each NA instance manages its proper quality standards, in full transparency, thereby enabling a proper quality alignment of content across all NetAcademy instances.
- *The NetAcademy’s modular architecture* enables any interested scientific organization to establish its own NetAcademy by assorting its profile out of a wide range of ready made components.
 - Each NetAcademy instance starts with a **classic module** which is based around the interrelated triangle (1) publication database, (2) author database, (3) research field / keyword database. The classic module adds conference calendar and various other services such as contact, search, submit, and discuss sections. Upon request, further modules may be added, also in combination. The choice is, currently:
 - The **journal module**: It manages all necessary processes to enable the online publication of an international academic journal.
 - The **e-learning module**: It offers exchange, archiving and processing teaching activities and documents with individuals and with groups.
 - The **project management module**: It provides the necessary processing and administration for project work in remote, distributed teams.
 - The **conference module**: It enables the planning and organization of congresses.



The NetAcademy is a federated system.

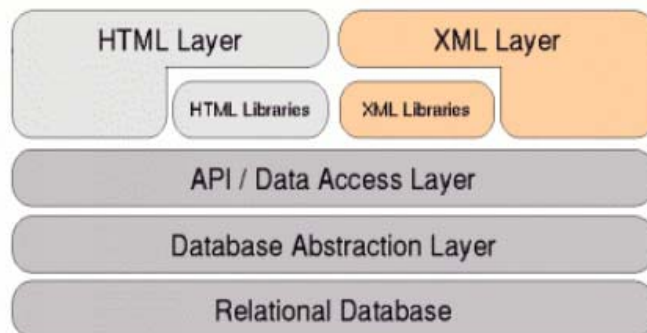


The NetAcademy has a modular structure.

What is the technology the NetAcademy uses?

The NetAcademy Universe and all its instances rely on open source technology.

The NetAcademy uses open technologies as PHP4, SML, Java and open standards to exchange data (ODI). This, as well as the entirely modular structure of the software, provides for a high security standard and allows for easy adjustment and extension of the software according to the different requirements of customers. The 100% browser based handling of the entire platform responds to effective usability standards.



The NetAcademy uses open technologies.

License conditions of the NetAcademy

A NetAcademy instance can be obtained in license agreement.

Any scientific oriented organization may open its own NetAcademy instance. Contracting partner is the Institute for Media and Communications Management [contact: salome.schmid-isler@unisg.ch], software partner is Informationobjects AG in St. Gallen [contact: wolfgang.maass@informationobjects.com].

There are different pricing models, the contract agreements follow individual negotiations. Within 3 days, a new NetAcademy instance can be online and fully connected with the other NetAcademy instances.

Benchmarking: The USP's of the NetAcademy

It is the coaction of the entities, the sum of qualities which make the NetAcademy an outstanding service platform.

When comparing isolated features of the NetAcademy with competing services on the internet, it might look as if the NetAcademy was exceeded here and there. When setting the benchmark in a more encompassing manner, nothing compares with the NetAcademy's perfect profile for academic research. The following lists a few assertions and the according disproofs.

Subject no. 1: Publishing online – who guarantees for quality? For scholars and scientists it is important that their research is visible to their community, that they are published. *Hitherto*, they were at the mercy of publishers and their marketing performance. *With the new ICT* everyone can publish online, dealing on one's own behalf.

Assertion:

"I maintain my own internet based service where I display my documents. Therefore, I do not need the online publishing service of the NetAcademy, because internet search engines as e.g. Google will find my documents for anybody who is searching with the appropriate keyword."

Disproof:

An information seeker's main problem about the internet search engines is that he does not know about the quality (genuineness, acceptance, persistence) of the retrieved data. Is the information found authentic – or is it a plagiarism, an accumulation of somebody else's writings, does it violate intellectual property? Can it be cited or will the source disappear or be changed after a short while? Are the pretensions made in the document legitimate, can they be trusted? Etc.

The NetAcademy publishes research documents which are backed by universities respectively by academic organizations. The endorsement and authentication of published material is not only legitimated by the lawfully used university and organization logos appearing on top of the respective internet pages, but also backed by the academic double peer reviews / double blind peer reviews installed and declared on each NetAcademy instance, including names, background and contact of the responsible editors. The NetAcademy platform is a research project initiated by the Institute for Media and Communications Management of the University of St. Gallen which accounts for responsibility in its 'legal issues' declaration (see homepage). – Therefore, publishing with the NetAcademy signifies the same as publishing with a high standard university press. It guarantees for high academic quality.

Subject no. 2: Personal homepage – what's your company, and: can you be found?

For advertisement and promotion reasons, a scientist needs an internet accessible page which displays his/her curriculum, his/her research background and activities, his/her publications (titles or downloadable documents) and contact information.

Assertion:

"There are internet addresses where I can install my homepage for free. Therefore, I do not need the expert homepage service of the NetAcademy, because who is looking for me will find me with the usual search engines."

Disproof:

A homepage is of ambivalent advertisement value. If the provider is noncritical, as most "homepage-for-free" suppliers are, the homepages installed there may look like anything, most likely they are rather hip lifestyle than academic. Company influences reputation – the community makes the image, not the individual. What serious researcher launches his (official) homepage with a non specific, popular provider?

The NetAcademy has all the academic reputation which is needed to be taken seriously.

Assertion:

"My university provides for homepages of its staff. Therefore, I do not need the expert homepage service of the NetAcademy, because who is looking for me will find me with the university homepage or with the usual search engines."

Disproof:

Indeed, each university should provide individual homepages about its researchers. But as a rule, such homepages are installed by a web master and cannot be accessed and edited by the person in question himself. – The NetAcademy offers password protected direct editing access for the person who is subject of the homepage.

Homepages of (academic) organizations usually subsume researchers according to the ABC and/or as "staff" or "members of the institute of...". Therefore, as a rule, you must know either an expert's name and go search for it, or the exact name of his or her organization to subsequently go search in the staff list. – The NetAcademy offers on the entry page different research fields which bring you quickly in contact with exactly the experts you were looking for – even if you did not know their name or the organization they belong to. When entering the NetAcademy, you can search via research communities and there for the experts (which is a finite action), or you search via keyword for publications respectively for experts. Expert homepages, the respective publications and keywords are all semantically connected.

Subject No. 3: Community building means and popularity check

Since ancient times, congregations of the knowing have been of great importance. Teaching and learning, discussion of hypotheses among experts, and new acquaintanceship across borderlines (interdisciplinary as well as intercontinental) have been fruitful and indispensable. It is essential to upgrade one's circles, i.e. not only to admit but even to seek for new associates. The problem is: How to find matching counterparts? How to make sure that the person you address has the same "world", lives in the same realm wrt. logic, reasoning, and understanding? If this is not granted, successful communication is not possible.

Assertion:

"I am being well networked by my employer and by my own contacts. With all my e-mail and newsgroups I do not need the community building service of the NetAcademy."

Disproof:

Since ancient times, the best way to find out is addressing your counterpart respectively listening/reading how he or she is defining the world. And, since logical deduction was born, formulating a definition for a notion belongs to the most concentrated and revealing (self-) declarations a researcher can undertake. A glossary is the initiation and revelation of research.

– Therefore, the NetAcademy has installed glossaries for each research field, where members of the belonging research community strive for most candid and genuine definitions in their field of interest. The glossary term database of the NetAcademy indicates the author of each definition, the belonging sources and publications, his community, and the closely related terms and their community. In opening a discussion about a term definition, any researcher can enter and update a community *in medias res*.

The echo on research publications is important. Is a paper relevant, or is it a misfit?

– The NetAcademy displays the popularity of documents, as e.g. in the feature „top ten downloads“, and similar (also compare with section 'How can I benefit from the NA; for authors'). Each publication (downloadable document) discloses its popularity: it indicates how many times it has been viewed, and how many times an interested party did in fact register to obtain, i.d. download, the entire document which is equivalent to a sale.

– Furthermore, the NetAcademy secures with a firm privacy policy, with a corporate design for logic and appearance, and with its non-profit oriented management a choice of serious academic communities.