

openTA

A Web-Portal Requiring Commitment

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OPEN
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Session

E-Infrastructures for Technology Assessment

The starting point: Network TA (NTA)



- **Community building: About ten years ago Austrian, Swiss and German TA experts and institutions launched Network TA (NTA)**
- **The ICT-group of NTA established electronic means of communication, e.g. a mailing list, and a website **with almost no resources****

DFG funding enabled openTA

DFG Funding from (2012 to 2014) allowed NTA to build up the Web-Portal openTA (www.openTA.net)

- ❖ Prof. Dr. **Armin Grunwald** = leader of the project,
Ulrich Riehm = project coordinator



Three units of the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, constitute the task force bringing together three domains of expertise

- ❖ Technology Assessment → ITAS, member of NTA
- ❖ Computer Science → IAI
- ❖ Library & Information Services → KIT-BIB

ITAS, IAI, and KIT-BIB committed themselves to sustain openTA.

openTA = Web-Portal of NTA

There are essential institutional interconnections between openTA and NTA members and between openTA and NTA:

- Directors of the NTA member institutions **committed** themselves to support openTA.
- NTA member institutions designated contact persons for the daily technical co-operation with openTA.
- ICT Working Group of NTA acts as a kind of steering body.
- The co-ordination team of NTA, in a way the steering board of NTA, is informed about and involved in decisions of openTA.

Services openTA is delivering at present

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openTA ist das Fachportal des Netzwerks TA (NTA). Es aggregiert Nachrichten, Termine und Publikationen aus dem NTA, gibt einen Überblick über die Personen und Institutionen, die im Bereich der TA in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz tätig sind, und ermöglicht die Erstellung personalisierter Dienste (Feeds, Widgets etc.). openTA ist im Aufbau begriffen. Bitte teilen Sie uns Ihre Erfahrungen und Wünsche mit per Mail an info@openta.net.

- information about the project openTA
- information about NTA
- delivers information about personal (**ca. 300**) and institutional members (**ca. 50**) from Austria, Switzerland and Germany

Services openTA is delivering at present...

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- the openTA-News-Service → **700 News in 2014**
- the openTA-Calendar-Service → **100+ events**
- the openTA-Publication-Service → **18.000 records**
- the openTA-Blog → **a few high quality contributions**
- (the NTA-Mailing-List) → **ca. 500 subscribers**

Design Principles I

I Combination of aggregation and individualization

- Making use of the distributed resources in order to build common online services.
 - Aggregation and a one-stop- approach are easing access to the resources and increase the visibility of TA and the TA community for politicians, scholars of related disciplines, industries, interested public...
 - But at the same time a merely centralized approach won't work, because TA units want to remain distinguishable and they want to create traffic at their organizations' websites. No one wants to be an anonymous contributor to a network.

Design Principles I

I Combination of aggregation and individualization

- The principle of aggregation has to be complemented by tailoring and individualization
 - giving due credits to the institution providing the information at the web-portal for each and every item (e.g. news, publications),
 - allowing users to filter the aggregated information by institution,
 - making the services portable, that is to say, each service can be made available in the context of an NTA member's website (export functions, feeds, widgets).

Design Principles II

II The principle of **committed** co-operation

- The responsibility for the quality of the data provided lies with the member institution providing the information.
- Common standards have to be applied to allow for a smooth transfer of data and metadata in both directions between openTA and the member institutions (e.g. Atom/RSS, iCal, BibTex, RIS, DC, OAI-PMH, Marc21, etc.).
- Learning from each other by personal exchange about the particular demands, constraints and opportunities.

Committed co-operation is the second cornerstone for sustainability.

Design Principles III

III The principle of co-operation **beyond** the AT-CH-DE TA community

- TA is interdisciplinary and relates to various other fields of research like sustainability research, environmental research, innovation studies, sts studies, sociology and philosophy of technology, sciences... . Some of the them provide information services from which to select the TA-relevant parts on the basis of formal cooperation agreements:
 - Example. 1 - sociology: co-operation with sowiport (GESIS), a social sciences portal, jointly producing an open access TA bibliography
 - Example 2 - national library: co-operation with DNB for a continuous flow of TA-literature information into the openTA publication services.

More or less tricky points I

E-Infrastructure

- The Internet, search engines and the websites of TA-institutions and the services they deliver, constitute the basic E-Infrastructure also for TA. openTA as an e-infrastructure is a type of value added network. Its value depends on (additional) commitment and efforts. It is not easy to compete with the basic infrastructure and to achieve positive network effects (regarding users and TA-institutions).

Relevant Community

- Not all 50 members of NTA are actively co-operating. Should openTA do their share of work? Should the scope of contributing institutions be extended beyond NTA-members (more foresight, more innovation research...)?

More or less tricky points II

Internationalization

- Co-operation with information providers from other countries (e.g. the British Library and LOC) is on the agenda and regarded a good idea.
- Co-operation with international TA-projects and associations like PACITA and EPTA is ongoing.
- However, due to the design principle of committed co-operation, a transformation of openTA into a truly international TA-portal is unlikely.
- Nevertheless, it would be great if openTA could become a node of a future international TA-infrastructure and if openTA-technology and principles were taken into account for such an endeavor.

More or less tricky points III

Funding

Funding of openTA by DFG ends in March 2015. There are, however, possibilities to raise new funds from DFG, and a respective proposal is in the making.

Some ideas for discussion:

- an interactive quality online-journal hosted at openTA?
- TA-related research data hosted at openTA?
- co-operation with social media (like Wikipedia) and social networks like academia.edu, ResearchGate, RePec, aiming to foster TA and openTA?
- co-operation with further information providers, integrating new information sources, e.g. from the British Library, LoC ?
- provision of specific applications and tools for the TA community at openTA (e.g. an Online-Delphi tool or a dialogue platform for online deliberation?)

Thank you for your attention!

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