Report written by Rikard Edbertsson
Masterstudent in Applied Cultural Analysis
edbertsson@gmail.com

Peace in Web 2.0:

A Netnographic Study for the Creation of a Social Media Platform for TFF's ProPeace Vision

"Social media space is a crowded space, cutting edge work and a lot of trial and error."[1]

1. Introduction

After 10 weeks of intensive work, my project "Peace in web 2.0"[2] has come to an end. This report should be seen as an action plan for the creation of www.imagineabetterworld.org, future structure and instructions for how to create an online culture of ProPeace and collaboration. The first sections could be read as an introduction, while the last three sections, Results, Conclusion and Recommendations includes a collection of guidelines and recommendations in the upcoming work for TFF with the ProPeace Platform.

2. The ProPeace Platform Project and Peace in Web 2.0

My project Peace in Web 2.0 were a pre-study for, or concretion of various ideas stated in a number of internal documents about another, larger and future project about the creation of an internet platform with the working name The ProPeace Platform (and domain name: www.imagineabetterworld.org), which is going to replace TFF:s current homepage . The vision of the ProPeace Platform states that it is "a new type of platform" where the message and philosophy of "pro-peace is promoted". It also states that the platform should promote constructive thinking, ways of seeing, ideas, information and concrete proposals that highlights the pro-peace of our time. The central core to the idea is to"give peace a visibility", something that would be reflected in the content of the platform, in forms of eg: videos, photographs, arts etc. accompanied with reviews, debates and discussions. There would be academic studies with proposals, all kinds of peace courses, links to online learning and so forth. Another central aspect of the vision though, is that the platform bridges academia and cultural production, that it highlights culture in general and culture of peace activities in particular. The focus would be on "what was done, what can be don and how and who are the like-minded to link up with to move the world." Various groups and initiatives in society should meet on this platform, and together form a global movement for peace. The ProPeace Platform is a place that makes peace and peace-culture visible - for the concerned citizens, students, academics, artists and media people. It is a place "filled with "aha"-, "wonderful"-, I did not know

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[1] Quote froma WiserEarth crew member
[2] For mor info about the research process: http://netnografi.blogspot.com/

that"- experiences" and a a place where the user get a sense of "Yes, there is hope – people have done it". This should energize and appeal to people, especially the youth, around the globe an ignite the will to contribution. The basis for this could be a form of wiki or another form of social community, where people are devoting, with time and knowledge.

3. Themes, Questions and Research Focus

The themes and questions for my research at TFF were distilled from available visions around the ProPeace Platform. The main themes are very broad in order to cover as many aspects as possible; social media, platform technology/architecture, The community, diversity, open/private, outreach. The main question is focused on the mechanisms of social media and how the culture of peace could be amalgamated with the culture of Web 2.0; **How does the user use social media with a focus on people movements and how do these social media use the users?** Additional to the main question are the following three sub questions; 1. How can we understand mobilization online?, 2. What mechanisms makes users share their time, interests and engagement?, 3. What components is vital for an atmosphere of collaboration and positive change (and how is an architecture like that created)?

In discussions with TFF about the research focus we decided that the project would aim at reaching two main goals (both were to be researched parallel). The first goal was to find an appropriate platform technology, easy to use, with abilities to add features and foremost – nurture a growing community and enable collaboration and interaction. The second goal was to find out how a successful platform and community could be created and how TFF could reach out to people, which meant that my research would focus on finding examples on already existing platforms/communities and analyze their practices and strategies. In this case I would look at social media platforms similar to the ProPeace Platform and treat them as "social phenomenons", meaning that platforms like the one stated in the ProPeace vision could be seen as places for creation of a certain culture or sociality, in this case preferably an atmosphere of collaboration and social change. This kind of researchfocus could be called a practice-oriented approach, like the one Rokka describes:

> Thus, the central idea in this practice-oriented approach is that it treats practices as the site of the social and therefore a specific context where, and apart of which, marketplace cultures are produced and formed. In this way, the interpretive focus is aimed at identifying and analysing consumption/sociality via cultural practices such as those of ecological citizenship (Rokka and Moisander, 2009), collective innovation [...-...] co-creation of value [...-...] The advantages in analysing cultural practices lie in the fact that the focus is on culturally and socially instituted 'ways of doing and saying'compared with, for example, a focus on what one's identity or membership in a community means.[3]

This choice of perspective had to do with the whishes from TFF regarding the project and which meant that I had to find informants with technical competence, knowledge about peace questions and social media (and it´s mechanisms+relation to social change), preferably working within a context similar to the ideas in the vision of the ProPeace Platform.

4. Identifying Central Concepts

In order to contextualize the ProPeace vision, I tried to identify wishes and expectations from TFF, reading internal documents, discussing with the board and with Jan Öberg. In focus for this

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[3]   Joonas Rokka, *Netnographic inquiry and new translocal sites of the social*, International Journal of Consumer Studies 34, p. 384

discussions were wishes and demands stating that the platform must be able to last for years to come, meaning that its technology had to have some kind of in-built continuity. But also thoughts about involving non-traditional co-workers in the daily work of the Foundation, more specifically youth and students, but also people from other disciplines and backgrounds, such as art, music, photography, technology and so forth. Social media, wiki technology and online newspaper/blog and/or forums were concepts that kept coming up in discussions and I soon concluded or summed up that what they had in mind, correlated, in large with ideas about Web 2.0 and the "power" of social media. Since I have experience from informatics (which was my specialization in MACA), I saw the opportunity to use these concepts as a starting point and the following discussion tries to give a nuanced picture and potentiality of using these concepts when trying to realize the ProPeace vision for TFF.

The concept Web 2.0 was coined by Tim O´Reilly in 2004[4] and there are many bloggers, reporters, authors, theorists and other more or less prominent people out there speaking about a "revolution" and a speedy development on, and of, the Web, our use of it and the new technologies emerging. Much of this seem to be "buzz" and technological determinism – the thoughts about the new technologies ability to promote social change have been both promoted and contested, eg: On the 7th of June 2009, *The Telegraph* reported that Mark Pfeifle, a former US security adviser suggested that Twitter should get the Noble Prize for its role during the events in Iran. On the counter-part; Malcom Gladwell, discuss in his article *Why the future will not be tweeted* (published in The New Yorker 4th of October 2010) if social media really can create social change. To take it one step further; thoughts about concepts such as "transhumanism" and "the semantic web" where the border between technology and humans are blurred tends sometimes to lean towards mere science fiction. The facts, on the other hand, is that in less then a decade social networking sites such as Facebook and microblogging sites such as Twitter have mobilized millions and millions of people all around the world. Wikipedia have come to compete with traditional encyclopedia like Britannica about how knowledge is presented, "created" and transmitted, but also started a debate about trustworthiness and authority. The latest developments, with The Pirate Bay trials and publications from Wikileaks (and statements from its founder Julian Assange) have shaken the very foundation of the concepts surrounding property and privacy. Some people, companies and governments see these events as threats against The Democracy and The Economy while its supporters argue that information, hence culture, "wants to be free" and that file sharing, transparency and freedom of speech is essential in the progression towards the open society. In this view, the thoughts and visions about the modern democratic society and the philosophy surrounding Web 2.0 principles together with the visions around ProPeace (and its ambitions), goes hand in hand.

Social Media is a term strongly associated (sometimes synonymously) with Web 2.0. The very term "social media" seems to hint towards a built in sociality in the media and that a wiki, blog or a forum in itself may trigger people to become social with each other. This is a potentially dangerous misconception for any corporation or organization wanting to implement social media in order to reach out and mobilize, because these technologies don't solve the fundamental questions of actually reaching out to and gathering people. Social media is instead social in the sense that there is no clear border between writer and reader or between producer and consumer, instead we can talk about "prosumers". Compared with "traditional" media there are a greater degree of co-operation within social media since people comment, co-edit, discuss and "tag" or cross-reference each others blog/forum/twitter posts. In order for social media to be successful, a lot of strategy around working in networks is required, in combination with a strong brand and corporate culture and not the least –

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[4] Fuster Morell, Mayo, *THE USE OF THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES OF INFORMATION FOR DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION,* VIII Congreso Español de Ciencia Política y de la Administración 2009

humans and dedicated persons in order to become successful and "social". Even though new times are emerging it is still the same old rules in play, such as the gift economy's gifts and reciprocation and the rules of community (belonging, identity and sense of home) and social connection. It is in this era of Web 2.0 that the idea of The ProPeace Platform – www.imagineabetterworld.org have emerged and it is in and around social media my field work have taken place.

5. Fieldwork

Since www.imagineabetterworld.org still is in its idea phase I had to find another site to conduct my fieldwork (in traditional anthropology called ethnography and in its digital form; netnography).
In the search for the right community I followed the guidelines, outlined by by Robert V. Kozinets, who recommends

> that in the first stage of netnography the researcher has a set of potential consumption-related topics specified before the online research journey begins. Thereafter, various online search engines[...-...] can be used to sample related online communities with most traffic or specific subject areas. [...-...] Several main forums for online communities should be considered, including discussion forums, chat-rooms, blogs, micro-blogs, multi-user online dungeons and virtual worlds. For research into transnational cultural practices and dynamics, online communities with members from multiple countries, geographical regions, and socio-cultural backgrounds would naturally offer the most attractive opportunities.[5]

After some time of research I found a site, namely WiserEarth (www.wiserearth.org) which become my "field". It is social networking site with over 45 thousand registered users and hundreds of different groups and initiatives. WiserEarth (WE) is often compared to Facebook - WiserEarth have what Facebook is lacking, namely a common goal, not merely collecting as many friends as possible, but also a vision of social change and a sustainable future. Behind the building of this platform is the organization Natural Capital Institute (NCI), and its founder - the famous Paul Hawken (environmentalist and author of many books including *Blessed Unrest: How the largest Movement in the world Came into Being, and Why No One Saw It Coming.*) WiserEarth vision is to work as One, to unite people around a common goal, mobilize people and come up with solutions., but also to gather stories of success, collaborate, discuss and gather groups of like minded. I had found a site that in many aspects correlated to the ProPeace Platform, now I had to find informants and commence my fieldwork.

As a newbie to and researcher in WE one is overwhelmed with all the possibilities, all the activity going on. Which group should I join? How do I know that this is the right for me? How could I understand this massive community? Is it possible to perform research here? Who should I talk to and so on. My strategy initially was to select a few groups, join them and share my thoughts and hopes around my research. I chose 3-4 and joined them, introduced myself in different discussions/chat. I was also soon invited into a couple of new groups by people who found me and my profile (where I presented myself in pretty much the same style as in this blog) and soon I had a constant stream of updates coming into my inbox. As soon as I had become familiar with some of the groups I started to introduce myself to individuals I found interesting (especially persons with knowledge about technology, activism and peace but also sustainability, WE and social media). It only took about a week to get to know the friendly atmosphere that is significant for WE (at least for the groups I´m a member of), but my impression of the platform "culture" was that it was a bit messy. A lot of people were members in a variety of groups and a lot of groups had interesting discussions. Still, it seemed like a lot of groups had activities outside WE as well (and they only

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[5] _____Summary by Robert V. Kozinets guidelines by Joonas Rokka, *Netnographic inquiry and new translocal sites of the social*, International Journal of Consumer Studies 34, p. 384

used WE for contacts). I missed the coordination of action and thoughts (even though some groups inside WE most certainly try to solve some of the major problems in the world) in WE as a whole, that is, the vision of the platform and the members acting as a whole.

My first interviews via Skype and Facebook were planned and performed about two weeks after my first entry on WE and they took around 2 hours each. It was very interesting interviews ranging over a wide variety of different questions. I soon understood that my research focus was of great interest but also that my quest for the perfect online innovative collaboration platform could´nt be performed over a 10 week period (especially not since it took 2 weeks to find WE and expert informants). Many of my informants were experts in their area and gave me valuable insights and tips about building a community. It is by now very clear that a community in the style of the ProPeace Platform is (and must be) a long (and slow) process but *also* that many organizations and persons around the world are interested in the creation of this kind of platform. In a netnographic perspectives, one should choose a vibrant community with members focused around one topic/interest. WE is really a community of communities and could also be compared with a marketplace or a city square with different discussion groups (all interesting in their own ways). My informants gave me insights in their own professional lives, both online and offline, inside WE and outside. They have given me information about how one can think around community-building but also how one can think around peace and mobilization of people towards action. My netnographic material consists of 3 deep interviews (that is qualitative interviews ranging from 1-2 hours), 2 interviews via chat, contacts with various persons through e-mails, transcripts from various forum discussions and texts from and about WE.

6. Obstacles

In the latter part of my fieldwork I fell ill, which influenced my capacity to conduct fieldwork. Due to this I didn't manage to perform the number of qualitative interviews I intended to do. A greater number of interviews could have deepen my understandings even further and made it easier to see and find more concepts and thoughts. Despite this, I think that I have a rich material, the core of which is the 3 qualitative interviews and forum discussions. Even though I have a very rich material, I don´t think that I have "the key" to how to build the perfect ProPeace Platform. But I do think that I have many valuable tips and strategies, metaphors (which works as models in how to think about building and maintaining a community) but also what doesn't work and what one could avoid.

7. Ethics

The stakeholders in this research is not only myself and TFF but also members of WE and more specifically my informants, of whom many have said that they are very interested in my future results. I have also been invited to share my results and work with other organizations during their work. When it comes to social change, I think this is very doable, especially since the field in which TFF operates is not about a competition, but rather about cooperation. As a cultural analyst I also think that I could work as an "intermediary", connecting different organizations and people I come to know during the research process, to each other. An etichal concern when conducting netnography and getting to know people as I have done is that, as David Mosse wirtes in his article;

> Those interlocutors – neighbours, friends, colleagues, or co-professionals – who directly experience
> ethnographic objectifications now surround the anthropologist at her or his desk[6]

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[6]   Mosse, David *Anti-Social anthropology? Objectivity, objection, and the ethnography of public policy and professional communites* Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 2006 p. 937

In this case I think it is really important that informers have given consent and that the anthropologist give credits to people that have asked for it (as with one of my informants that gave me valuable insights and wanted to appear with his real name), but also that one doesn't try to ”objectify” persons and groups, and most important, give feedback and get back with te result when the research is over.

8. Results

In this section I will present my netnographic findings, including quotes from various forums and interview transcripts. Here is a transcription key, explaining how to read the interviews:

> [...-...] means that parts of the interview have been left out,
> [ ]means that it is my thoughts, questions etc.
> words in **bold** means that the informant puts emphasis on it
> … means a pause

8.1 Creating Community with the use of "The Human Interface"

> ”If you want to have a successful organization online then the key is having one or more persons looking after the community. This is very simple - one person saying hello to all new people coming.” (crewmember of WiserEarth)

In the quest for mobilizing people around Pro-Peace and collaboration around peaceful and constructive solutions it is necessary to create a community, either open for everyone or through some kind of membership. This section will discuss the initial path for creating a vibrant and lasting community. In a computer setting, an *interface* is commonly known as the interaction between components. The Human Interface is thus about components, vital for creating a vibrant community, namely two or more humans meeting. A lot of metaphors could be used to describe this relationship, one is the home. Here we have the concept of a **home**page and the **guest** or **visitor** to that particular homepage communicating with other guests or the **host** him/herself. As mentioned in the introduction, social media must therefore in itself be seen only as a tool and not a mean to mobilize and gather people. Just like before the emergence of the Internet society the most important factor for actually achieving something is dedicated people. All of my informants emphasized this fact;

> "[On a peace platform] You need to give me a mentor, you need to give me a real person who will help me, show me the ropes and get me involved. It has to be usable. [...-...] Have somebody to come and ask you if you need some help, a real person, to guide you, to help you through. And make it a limited thing because your mentor can´t possible be a friend for life for everybody. [...-...] But something where a real person helps bring the person to come into the community. Its a hard one, because where are you going to find those mentors?" (informant, technologist)

Here, the informant really focuses on *the social* in social media and the actual contact with other persons. As when visiting a club, organization or society for the first time in real life, the informant discusses what he expects from his visit to a peace platform in terms of mentorship, guidance and help. He points out the that the person has to be "real", meaning that the response from the community can´t be automated or only written text. In their article "Why Good Design Isn't Enough", the authors also stress the importance of a community manager or facilitator that "establish an ethos of community life" and his/her work in the back channel "encouraging, building trust, making introductions, and linking people, information and activities [...-...] the facilitator is a vehicle for community feedback"[7] This indicates the importance of having staff, not only producing

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[7]   Barab, Sasha & Stuckey, Bronwyn *Why Good Design Isn't Enough for WebSupported Communities* In R. Andrews and C. Haythornthwaite (Eds.), *Handbook of Elearning Research*. 2007, p. 21-23

content, but also focusing on the visitors and schooling the guests in the rules, procedures and culture of the platform. Robert V. Kozinets shows in the book Netnography (Sage, 2010) that a visitor to a certain community goes through different steps in a socialization process, going from "lurker" to "newbie" all the way to "insider".[8] Kozinets also writes that "we need alternatives to the rather essentializing clustering of all members of online communities into a single category of membership or non-membership"[9], which means that getting people to sign up for the community isn´t black or white. This is supported by another informant, Scott Akenhead, a professional website producer;

> "In the 90s and the 20s, people thought that you could build a portal and then "own" a chunk of the market. In 2011 it has changed dramatically, it is extremely difficult to get attention at all. The chances are very good that most people will look at your page and go away. A small fraction will look at it, sign up, post one entry and never come back. One person in a thousand who looks at will actually stick with it, come back a few times and try to get it to work and if it doesn't they will give up."

Even though this comment may seem rather pessimistic, it hints that a platform really have to stand out in order to attract future users. This includes factors such as how the visitor is greeted and treated and that visitors likelihood to interact and involve themselves increases if someone helps them to get involved and introduces them in how things works. Scott Akenhead more specifically describes the social processes behind the building of an online community:

> "Somebody has to to spend a lot of time to cultivate that community. We call them a web gardener, they have to garden the web. They are the ones that build the community. [...-...] The more people that are there to respond, the better."

He uses gardening metaphors, which indicates that he sees a community as something alive and growing. This is important to remember, especially since it is easy to get blown away by all the possibilities in Web 2.0 and throw in a bunch of social media tools instead of focusing on enabling "social interaction and the first steps in collaboration and put energies into building the social capital [...-...] We do not believe that one can simply design a community, but rather that one design for a community – establishing a system, not producing a tool".[10]

8.2 Establishing Community, thinking about Gift and Reciprocation

> "The next step is that the platform most be easy to use, meaning that users can easily share content. Once people share they must be engaged and see the effect of what they are doing, which means they must see that their knowledge being used. This is very human – people are social creatures, they love to be appreciated for what they are doing. For people that are posting knowledge in a social network, responses can be a "thank you", a question, a ranking and so on. The "like-button" on Facebook supports this assumption." (crew member on WiserEarth)

The members that will collaborate and share their time, knowledge and engagement are not likely to be visitors that just happens to find your platform. They are more likely to be people that have browsed on matters such as peace, positive peace, peace resources, constructive solutions, innovative thinking and so forth. It is likely that their visit is about "very specific goals or challenges and people sought to locate a specific instrument, information, solution or advice"[11]. Once they reach your platform step number one occurs, as described in the section 7.1, and they are likely to lurk around, check the website and eventually sign up. In this case it is more likely that it is the content and the resources that is the driving factor for the new member. As stated in the quote

8   Kozinets, Robert V. (2010) Netnography Doing Ethnographic Research Online, London:SAGE, p. 33
9   Kozinets, Robert V. (2010) Netnography Doing Ethnographic Research Online, London:SAGE, p. 32
10 Kozinets, Robert V. (2010) Netnography Doing Ethnographic Research Online, London:SAGE, p.
11 Kozinets, Robert V. (2010) Netnography Doing Ethnographic Research Online, London:SAGE, p.

above, the next step towards a more active membership, is the sharing of content or the "process of moving from resource-based use to dialogue and collaboration"[12]. This means that members start to invest their time, because they liked what the site has to offer. If members invest, they have to be rewarded. Here it could be wise to think in terms of a gift-economy, following on the gift theory of the sociologist Marcel Mauss. He wrote that the gift is characterized by the reciprocation principle:

1. The obligation to give
2. The obligation to accept the gift
3. The obligation to reciprocate[13]

To sum up, Scott Akenhead describes the step of becoming an active community member:

"They got rewarded, there is a transaction here, there is a social exchange, someone has given you a favor by looking at the website at all and you need to reward them by having good content. And then if they actually log in, it is a mayor token of investment and friendship and trust and at that point they should get something pretty substantial back, they should certainly get an email saying "Thank you so much for logging in and looking forward to see you contributing. You can call me or mail me if you need any help.." And then if they actually contribute with content, they need to hear it back, people commenting and so on. If they are posting there must be someone thanking for that post or giving feedback, good or bad."

Having a community and/or a platform built upon the principles of social media and Web 2.0 means developing a social relationship with your user.

8.3 Content vs. Design

"The Design of the Platform is crucial, because, this is where the psychology and the culture comes in. If a page is not beautiful, or cluttered with info, your visitors will not stay. If you are a peaceful person it shows on everything you do. If you are developing a social media platform that would reflect peace it may look like a newspage but it needs to reflect what you do. [...-...] You need to present your info in a clear and engaging way. [...-...], **it´s not all about info**, even though some persons would dump everything they know on a page"
(crewmember of WiserEarth)

Since it is crucial to attract first-time visitors within matters of seconds, it is crucial that the design of the platform and its content, interact with each other. It must be very clear what the page has to offer, without reflecting a messy impression. The concept of peace is for this informant in itself something that could be built into the design. Peace in this case is connoted with harmony and balance but also with engagement and clarity which could be done by keeping it simple and not overdoing it;

"[Scotts reflections over the technological concerns] Why is this not just a blogging site that allows you to upload rich media and then have Skype icons built into it? [I tell Scott that I will recommend TFF to do something simple rather than something complex] You have the choice of putting tons of tools, which will just confuse everyone (and sacrificing the graphics, the design and the usability) or spending a lot of money on usability studies.[...-...] Getting three or four most important features that works incredible well will do you much better then having the other twelve features that all the technical people wanted to put in." " (Scott Akenhead)

For Scott and the crew-member from WiserEarth, that focus and a selection of features is crucial for how the platform is (going to be) conceived. The actual design and content is said to reflect

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[12]   Barab, Sasha & Stuckey, Bronwyn *Why Good Design Isn't Enough for WebSupported Communities* In R. Andrews and C. Haythornthwaite (Eds.), *Handbook of Elearning Research*. 2007, p.
[13]   Wikipedia, "gåva"

what is done and offered upon the platform. In the mission of promoting constructing thinking and inspiring people to collaborate this is very important to have in mind. As Scott is emphasizing, one should not offer all kind of social media tools just because one can, but instead choose the ones that invites engaging responses (as blogs, and inspiring/provocative news articles) and active collaboration (like Skype and/or chat). These thoughts can also be found in forum discussions about WiserEarths mission and design, were it also become clear that "reflection" is necessary in terms of "other" platforms out there:

> WiserEarth doesn't need to serve all the social networking needs of people who are already overwhelmed by networks to which they already belong. People with only a   128 character attention spam can stick to Twitter or Facebook. Facebook is a for-profit site created to harvest marketing data, not to nurture cooperation to change the world. (Member 1 of WiserEarth)

For many people, the raw model of a successful social networking platform is Facebook or Twitter (and it is often the mental schemata for what interaction between peers means in a social media context). It could therefore be wise to choosing a design and encouraging content that differ from these. Anne Macclard and Ken Anderson writes in Anthropology News (March, 2008) that:

> Many Facebook applications are lightweight — some even considered inane. Take, for example, the "Vampire"/"Zombie" applications and various "poke" and "giftgiving" applications that are ubiquitous on Facebook. With these applications, amongst other things, one may interact with friends by virtually "biting," "poking," "hugging," "kissing" or sending a "gift" or "drinks" to them. Most people are time-pressed, with few extra minutes to spare during the day for relationship maintenance, and Facebook offers a lightweight way to keep in touch with people. One can spend seconds on Facebook interactions, or hours.[14]

If the ProPeace Platform is not be yet another social-networking site, "with only 128 characters attention" as one member put it and without the impetus towards social change it is important to be cautious in not creating a Facebook of peace. Here it could instead be vital to show, both in the design and content, that any participation on and with this platform will mean time and commitment. And also that this commitment is not just about social ties between people sharing a common interest – ProPeace, but rather about working together towards goals – constructive thinking and ultimately, a better world for us all. Another member of WiserEarth discussed this in a forum :

> instead of looking inward like the 500 million using Facebook and focus on idiosyncrasies, look outward and focus on the needs of the many. It is a fundamental cultural, moral and religious imperative to help one's fellow men, something that should reflect itself in social networking, yet is completely lost in the Facebook fad." (Member 2 of WiserEarth)

The social networking model is here seen as a good model, as long as it is not invert. Instead the member focus on the outward activity and in the long run – the connection to the world and social action. As such, Facebook is not the ideal medium:

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[14]   Anderson, Ken & McClard, Anne *Focus on Facebook, Who Are We anyway?* Anthropology News March 2008, p.10

On Facebook life is a game. Although participants can open chat windows or belong to special interest groups of a more serious nature, the daily drivers of Facebook exchanges are games and quizzes. As technology mediates more and more of our daily social exchanges, the forms of our interaction change. Gaming—light, breezy and fun interactions with friends near and far—keeps ties alive withoutbeing burdensome.[15]

As an example of a successful peace-organization online, Scott Akenhead talks about Avaaz:

Probably the most effective peace-movements on the go is avaaz.org. Avaaz is so called petition website and it has had an amazing impact. [Scott tell me about one of their campaigns where they raised 180 000 dollars in one day]. It is an interesting case-study [...-...] They are very aggressive in soliciting petitions, because they care passionately and you get swept up in this passion and you sing the petitions whether it is save the world or save our sons or about Sakineh. So they do what Amnesty International did, which was exposure, showing the wrongs. In sustainability and in the ProPeace movement, and in the civil rights movement or the human rights movement they have been concentrating on the negative, whats bad, here is the bad guys and all kinds of "thou shalt not:s" which made it kind of "churchy", it had this sort of puritanical religious aspect to it. And I think that the whole movement needs a lot more positive spin."

The key to the success is said to be the use of petitions, which means a quick and effective way in showing your opinion and mobilizing people. It is also about "passion" and exposure, were the "wrongs" are highlighted. Even though Avaaz is successful, Scott is still critical towards the focus on the negative aspects and hints that something positive is needed, quite like the ProPeace vision.

8.4 Openness and Crowdsourcing-
Two possible ways to sustainable collaborations and contributions

"There are alot of ways of getting people involved. Stay open (anyone can contribute, that is what social media is about), control comes in (There is no platform without control), you want control but you don't want the place to be sterile. You want the place to have an inclusive vision [...-...] Peace in a positive way, spreading the practice means that you would also have to open up to the negative people, alow them to express such opinions beacuse they are a part of you. For old people, they have a lot of experince of negative peace (younger people are born in a different era) Contrasts the truths." (CrewMember of WiserEarth)

Openness, as the informant mentions, is in a web context closely related to thoughts about openness as opposed to secrecy and closed entities, but also openness as in transparent and inviting. The informant also mentions this and discusses users abilities to contribute, which draws ones thoughts to phenomenons such as Wikipedia. One also thinks about Open Source Code and the hacker culture, which underlying principle is that the programming code is let loose, and open for anyone to read, copy, modify and spread. This in order to get feedback and help to improve and develop the code[16]. This model of openness is sometimes referred to as the "Bazaarmodel" [17], a concept coined by Eric S. Raymond, when describing how the operating system Linux was developed.
Since Linux is open for every programmer who wants to contribute, a large community have been created, which in turn resembles a Bazaar in which a variety (and diversity) of voices, debates and discussions is heard. The models counterpart is the "Cathedral model", which resembles the old corporate structure with a board and internal control. The Bazaar model can now bee seen on the

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[15] Anderson, Ken & McClard, Anne *Focus on Facebook, Who Are We anyway?* Anthropology News March 2008, p. 12

[16] Remneland, Björn (2010) *Öppen innovation*, Malmö:Liber, p. 35 (my translation from swedish)

[17] **See** Raymond, Eric S. *The Cathedral and the Bazaar:Musings on Linux and Open Source by an Accidental Revolutionary,* (Pragma, 2001)

Web, since more and more companies uses the knowledge of their costumers, eg. Amazon and their review sections.

As the informant implies, the level of control is important to have in mind, a portal can become sterile if there is to much control and no openness, because the agenda of the portal tends to be a top-down process forcing users to conform. In an open environment it is easier to mobilize people because the users forms the agenda to a much higher degree and therefore is more likely to identify with it. Innovative thinking sometimes occurs when the level of control is lowered, eg. in letting contrastive visions or opposed thinkers speaking their minds:

> "Sometimes it may be good to listen to what the users *actually* wants rather then deliver what is allready in stock. Sometimes it can even be good to listen to some totally unexpected actor that see the world with other creative eyes and surprises consumers with totally new visions" [18]

It is not my intention to propose an ever ongoing debate on the platform, where discussing in itself is the main core, but rather to find models based on engaging people, inspiring them to think in new and innovative ways. In this context, openness could be used when developing the platform, using users as drivers for change when it comes to articles and information:

> And on the information-listing side actually, WiserEarth is one step ahead in that almost all information is editable by members of the community (not too unlike Wikipedia... again, think collaboration.). However, we are still lacking in recommending relevant information to people, which would be remedied in the future, and also in making the site super-easy to use. (Crew member of WiserEarth in forum discussions)

Here, the user is not only encouraged to contribute with his/her own material, in terms of articles, movie-clips, images, audio and so on, but also to co-edit the entire structure of the platform, actually developing the community, much in the same way as maintaining a common garden or any other social space. This kind of collaboration is sometimes referred to as crowdsourcing (meaning that the "crowds", a number of people is used to drive innovation), crowdcasting, ideaagoras (as in the Agora of the ancient Athens) or user-driven innovation [19]. The principle crowdcasting is more often used in a commercial setting, but the similarities to non-profit organizations and initiatives such as Wikipedia are striking and sometimes a concept called "the wisdom of crowds" is used. This means that the crowd is used, as in the Wikipedia case, for editing, maintaining and observing a huge collection of knowledge. Roy Rosenzweig and Barbara Fried discuss this in their article; *Can History be open source? Wikipedia and the future of the past*:

> "Wikipedia can be a bewildering and annoying place for newcomers. One familiar complaint is that "'fanatic,' even 'kooky' contributors with idiosyncratic, out-of-mainstream, non-scientific belief systems can easily push their point of view, because nobody has the time and energy to fight them, and because they may be highly-placed in the Wikipedian bureaucracy." Yet somehow thousands of dispersed volunteers who do not know each other have organized a massive enterprise."[20]

A Wiki can therefore be a good tool to use, in order to create a common agenda and/or culture/belief system, since it engages your users, the crowd, to work together in democratic and

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[18] Remneland, Björn (2010) *Öppen innovation*, Malmö:Liber, p. 110-111
[19] Remneland, Björn (2010) *Öppen innovation*, Malmö:Liber, p. 36-41
[20] Rosenzweig, Roy *Can History Be Open Source? Wikipedia and the Future of the Past* The Journal of American History (2006) 93(1): p. 125

transparent ways. But it also requires dedicated users, passionate about both their interest and the welfare of the platform.

The concept of openness has yet another dimension. Being open means that TFF could have an open platform in the sense that one doesn't need to register in order to get access to material, such as publications and articles. This could be called "Open Science", or "Open Access", meaning that scientific materials are being made available for the public, either for downloading and/or readable online. Björn Remneland discusses this in his book *Öppen Innovation* (eng. *Open innovation*) and identifies that one obstacle may be questions of ownership since publications may be owned by others. He suggest a solution to this, namely a Creative Commons License (a license developed by Lawrence Lessig, juridical professor and author of *Free Culture*), which enables both protection of the author and spread of the material.[21]

In order to get access to forum discussions, chat functions, being able to post blog entries, comment and so forth, it could be wise to demand openness from the visitors asking them to identify themselves and sign up. To have both a private members area and a public area on the platform could therefore be a strategy to please a variety of users;

"That's extremely true and you do have to make a site that is rich for anonymous users and access to all of the features that members have. In order to post something you need to have an identity, so if you are hateful or a spammer you can be banned from the site. [...-...]Most of the valuable content is going to be produced by contributors to the site, not by the owners ." (Scott Akenhead)

8.5 Reach out and Connect to the World

"If you would like to show peace in proactive manner, you would deliver it to people who would like to have it. Social media can be an extension of the webpage (that is – you can have a very well designed webpage and use Twitter, Facebook and WiserEarth as spaces to reach out. You could also integrate this, eg. build in Twitter on your webpage, ask how people spread the message of peace, discussion forums"

"The important work is not in creating the platform but in forming alliances. Do not focus to much on the tools, focus on the purpose, maybe the answer is not to create another platform, but connecting to other platforms or combine platforms."

(Crewmember of WiserEarth)

Creating a platform and a vibrant community is not all about getting people *to come to* your site but more importantly about TFF *reaching out* to these people and their communities. In our modern society, communities are no longer as bound as they been before and "[i]ndividuals belong to many communities, bounded to different extents and in varying ways."[22] Instead of viewing imagineabetterworld.org as a smorgosbord of information, one can instead see it as a central core with connections (links), forwarding information out into the world and bringing back responses and social interaction. If your site is the *place* for TFF, then Twitter, Facebook and WiserEarth are most certainly *spaces* to reach out as the informant suggest. It is also important to consider, as the authors to *The Anthropology of online communities* states, that people belongs to many communites, which means that imagineabetterworld.org will probably not be the only community

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[21] Remneland, Björn (2010) *Öppen innovation*, Malmö:Liber, p. 92

[22]   Wilson, Samuel M & Peterson, Leighton C.*THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF ONLINE COMMUNITIES* Annual Review of Anthropology 2002. 31, p. 455

in the users life. Instead of trying to form a community that tries to meet all of the needs and whishes among activists and followers of ProPeace, it could be smart to "form alliances" with other platforms with similar and/or additional agendas. Scott Akenhead developed similar ideas in his following quote;

> "Linkedin and Facebook have just gone through 100 millions of users [...-...] If you don´t play with Facebook and Twitter and Linkedin, you are missing all the power and all the energy. But people do need something...you need to distinguish yourself, What is totally and radically different from Linkedin? [...-...] You have to do something that Facebook are **not** doing, that Twitter is **not** doing. [...-...] In 2011 the concept is - "You do what you do well and you dont try to beat everybody else." What you got to do is to add value to what everybody else are using [...-...] You don't try to build the worlds best newsletter, you just get other world-class services, like newspapers and integrate them into ProPeace. So what you do are to build a little gem in the middle and connect it to other great services"

This quote shows that a ProPeace platform doesn't necessarily (and shouldn't) need to offer all social media tools available, but rather aim at adding valueto the user experience that the whole of the web is offering. It also indicates that it is not a good idea to replicate the mayor players in the field, but instead try to form something unique. And as mentioned before, Scott emphasize the importance of connections. A picture from Björn Alberts[23] (a social media expert) will round up this last section:

Alberts picture visualize "the sphere" of a certain brand, meaning the connections from a central website and/or blog to various social media on the web. It also shows search engines and RSS-feed (a type of subscription service for blogreaders). Since Alberts discuss the brand in the article related to this picture he focus on how marketing could be done using social relations (this method is called "viral marketing", or "word-of mouth" meaning that we form and transmit stories about our brand). Even though this touches upon PR there is still a lesson to be learned here, namely that TFF and its brand needs connections back to imagineabetterworld, no matter where it appears (private blogg, twitter casts, posts, comments and so forth.)

9. Conclusion and recommendations

9.1 Conclusion
Web 2.0 is a concept with many dimensions. It could be viewed as a buzzword, since people in what is called Web 1.0 also communicated, shared information, collaborated and so on in similar manners. The Internet is one example and was one of the first global and virtual networks used by a large number of people around the world (mainly for academics). What has changed in our era

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23   Björn Alberts Blog, http://bjornalberts.com/2010/02/18/varumarket-behover-en-sfar-%E2%80%93-inte-en-webbplats/

(where the Internet is just one among a variety of networks) is that the technologies have become more available and easier to use, which have opened up the possibilities for the broader public to use the web. More and more people become "connected" through the web as a whole and through different communities in cyberspace, including e.g. social networks, university communities, organizations, discussion forums and so forth.

However, it is still the old social rules that are in play. Community is based on genuine human responses, appreciation, feedback and so on, people still form new social relationships (and maintain old ones). We live in a time of hyper-motion, where people are used to browse and find the info they need in a very short time, and even though people spend a lot of time online, it takes seconds to win their attention, people are more likely to press the "Like" button on Facebook or sign a petition, eg. on Avaaz. But still we see examples of hundreds and thousands of persons, investing their time in Wikipedia, writing long reviews on Amazon, maintain Blogs, discussing Star wars, stamps, ecology, human rights and peace in various forums and spending considerable time on sites promoting social change, such as WiserEarth. Political questions, movie-clips, articles, opinions etc. seems to travel faster then the light through Twitter casts and through various social media channels.

It is in this sense, Web 2.0 seems to be a concept describing something bigger and faster then its predecessor. Social media is not a means for, but rather a tool, among others, for collaboration and organization around a common goal. The movements that historically have mobilized people can more easily do so by using social media, since it lowers the barriers, especially for international organizations. Community in itself is a strong base for achieving this kind of movement and it is the mechanisms of friendship, identification and engagement that make people act. Vital components are therefore an open atmosphere, with real, dedicated people in the "backroom", nurturing the community, maintaining the tools and observing the discussions.

9.2 Recommendations – the Pro-Peace Platform

Make it simple (focus on quality before quantity) – this applies both to technology and content. Start out with a few features and make them really qualitative and don´t overload the platform with info, be open for contributions already from the start so that members feel belonging and ownership.

Let the development take time – Do not make this a speedy process, create a development process where the users are in focus (user-driven), where you ask people what they want and do regularly usability tests of the platform.

Add value to the user-experience – connect to other services (as Facebook and Twitter) instead of trying to beat them. Create a sphere for the TFF brand, with the platform as the central core, and connections in the form of hyperlinks out to other communities and services.

Focus on *engaged* rather than social networking – set the standard high for membership. Demand a long presentation and let new members discuss ProPeace in the initial stages. In this case you get rid of people that only sign up to show support (or show themselves) and then go away forever.

Avoid "Like" buttons – In order to inspire constructive thinking, avoid "easy" and quick applications. Focus instead on commentaries, reviews, ratings with motivations and so forth.

Show Appreciation: Reward the members by involving them in TFF. Highlight ideas, discussions and single members by publishing the most commented post to the front page. Have competitions and/or crowdsourcing around specific peace-related questions and problems.

Involve "real" persons – maintainance of the platform means involving a crew of dedicated people. Focus on identifying the need for various roles on the ProPeace Platform, e.g: *community manager, outreach manager, community leader*

Do something that other platforms are NOT doing: Do not replicate Facebook or Twitter, create something new. Form a manifest stating the ProPeace Platforms uniqueness, e.g. its focus on constructive aspects and solutions, bridging between social groups and activity and on making peace more visible to all.

Rikard Edbertsson, Helsingborg 8th February 2011

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