Virtual Communities

In the context of Technology Enhanced Learning, L3S already has a long tradition of inter-disciplinary cooperation in previous projects that will also be continued in the future. The new members in the subject area of Virtual Communities and Collaboration complement previous work done by L3S through, among other things, psychological and linguistic research work towards new forms of communication and cooperation, group behaviour and social relationships and on the web. All topics are strongly interdisciplinary, both in existing and planned third party projects as well as topics including potential new L3S members which complement existing computer science oriented research at L3S in important ways.

In this framework future research work deals with the evaluation of social influence and interaction processes in virtual networks from a psychological point of view, with trend setting and opinion leadership, as well as with diversity and acculturation in such networks. Here group theoretical and organisation theoretical approaches but also social network analysis can provide new insight into user behaviour in groups and help to improve the management of virtual teams. Important are synergies between computer science research (see also “Bias and Diversity” and “Living Analytics”) and psychological research. Related research questions are discussed for example in the psychological journal Personality and Social Psychology Review and in the computer science oriented World Wide Web Conference.