

ActionItem.com – Collaboration through Social Tasking and Workflow Reuse

As the workplace continues to evolve, we see changes that are fundamentally affecting how people work. For all sizes and levels of business, teams are becoming increasingly virtual with shorter project life cycles. There is an ongoing breakdown of corporate hierarchical structure caused by corporate downsizing, outsourcing, and restructuring that has led to an increase in cross-team collaboration and more work originated “from the ground up.” With the flattening of organizational structure and the need to work across the boundaries of authority, company, and geography, we also see an increase in the numbers of barriers to collaboration.

Web collaboration tools provide an answer to these problems, but existing services mostly rely on old project management methodologies. We believe that there is an opportunity to create a web-based service targeted toward small virtual teams that will encourage intense collaboration and promote reuse of project methodology and ideas.

In it's current form, ActionItem.com enables users to create a private, custom collaboration environment in seconds with any number of people. ActionItem.com relies on the concept of Social Tasking – the project workflow is open for input and change by anyone on the team and all assignments are commitment based. ActionItem.com includes document management with version control.

As we advance the ActionItem.com service, we will add the ability to capture workflow that comes out of a project and publish it for reuse. Workflows will be potentially classified using “folksonomy” as in popular sites that use tagging, or using ontologies such as OpenCyc. The workflows will be available for others to download, modify, and reuse.

This talk will discuss the changes that we see in business communication and collaboration and how ActionItem.com addresses those changes. We will include a demonstration of the current version of the ActionItem.com web service.