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A Case Study of Cooperation between Teachers and EdTech Companies: LeWebPédagogique

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Abstract

This article aims at exploring the strategies developed by LeWebPédagogique, an actor in the educational technology sector, when describing itself as a “community of teachers”. Using data collected during participant observation and semi-structured interviews with contributors of the firm, we show that this expression lies at the heart of LeWebPédagogique’s marketing strategy and economical model. It also epitomizes its capacity to address teachers and to mobilize them to produce school-proof content displayed on various platforms, playing on the appeal that “author” status exerts on teachers.

On the other hand, we try to reveal the motivations of teachers who chose to collaborate with LeWebPédagogique while developing “proto-communities” (Baron & Zablot, 2017). Could teachers build specific “strategies” (de Certeau, 1980) in order to stage themselves as innovative or “teaching stars”? Based on the analysis of semi-structured interviews with teachers occupying the roles of beta-testers, content producers or target audience, we also tried to understand if these collaborations could throw light upon a feeling of deprofessionalization in an institutional context that would lead teachers to work with the private actor.

Keywords: community, proto-community, edtech industry, teachers, authorship

Teachers, collectives and firms

The variety of teacher collectives and their modes of operation are documented by an abundant but fragmented literature, according to the types of communities. Wenger’s (1998) work on communities of practice is regularly cited to describe the collective work of teachers, although the creation of a community of

practice requires specific conditions, which do not allow for a generic description of how teachers work in groups (Gueudet, Pepin, & Trouche, 2013) or even within communities.

Indeed, communities of practice may be characterized by the existence of a shared objective, a shared commitment and an inventory of common resources. Yet, according to Quentin (2012), several tensions will shape teachers' collectives and draw different levels of engagement on the part of participants:

- the recognition provided by the network, whether personal or collective
- the freedom of action or rules that bind members
- equality between members, as opposed to the over-representation of some participants.

Quentin (2012) identified two types of teacher networks: the "sandbox" type and the "hive" type. "Sandbox" networks are characterized by flexible and implicit rules and are less favorable to the collective creation of resources than to the aggregation of individual resources. They value the work of individual producers. On the contrary, networks that operate more along the lines of the "hive" model have strict rules, with planned and controlled activity that allows for the collective production of resources.

Baron and Zablot (2017), on the other hand, identified three types of teacher communities: business-oriented, committed and captive. Their analysis offers a renewed look at the evolution of teaching communities, taking into account personal initiatives as possible starting points for community building. They note that some teaching communities can be described as "captive" and sometimes switch to the commercial sphere:

A community can be considered as captive when it is controlled by a certain pedagogical hierarchy (ministry, inspection, university, etc.), and when the teachers' activities are conditioned by the existence of this mode of control. These are often ephemeral: when a project comes to an end, the community disappears [...]. However, members of these captive communities may maintain contact with each other or with others and register in other communities. (p. 32-33)

They also propose the term "proto-community" to refer to a community in which the production of resources is based on personal initiatives and is not shared within a production group. However, these products are published, consulted and, ultimately, shared on the Internet (for example, on personal websites or through social networks). They are in fact serving a community or peer audience.

Our proposal aims to explore a particular type of teacher collective, created by a company that describes itself as “the largest French-speaking educational community since 2005”.¹ However, the terms “captive” and “commercial” are not precise enough to define the nature of the relationship that this company built with the participating teachers.

Field of our research and research questions

From October 2015 to October 2018, during our CIFRE (Industrial Agreement for Training through Research) contract, we were able to conduct a participant observation within the “pedagogical agency” LeWebPédagogique (hereafter, LWP) of the relationships between certain team members and the teachers linked to the structure. In this article, we wish to shed light upon the company’s motivations for describing itself as “the first community of French-speaking educational bloggers”², and the conditions under which teachers put themselves at the service of such a company.

We also noticed that within the “community”, some of the teachers associated with the LWP also created personal websites on which they publish and share their own resources – what Baron and Zablot (2017) propose to refer to as “proto-communities”. We sought to reveal what motivated these teachers to associate with a company in the field of the educational technology industry.

It seems to us that these issues have not often been addressed considering both the views of teachers and those of members of a company in the educational technology industry on their own activity. Indeed, research in the field of educational sciences often deals with institutional platforms, with a focus on organizations rather than on actors, trying to describe how the resources they display are produced, for instance Puimatto’s study on the evolutions of Correlyce³ (Open Regional Catalogue for High-School Editorial Resources) (2014).

Other authors have explored devices similar to Virtual Learning Environments but adapted to the French school context.⁴ Bruillard (2011) tries to deconstruct the usage models as well as injunctions coming

¹From the home page of the WebPédagogique website, see <https://lewebpedagogique.com/>, <https://lewebpedagogique.com/blog-gratuit-publicite-classe/>, visited 31-10-18.

²Expression found in the “My blog” section on the website, see <http://web.archive.org/web/20181115055504/https://lewebpedagogique.com/> > visited on 10-11-18.

³See <https://correlyce.atrrium-sud.fr/catalogue/public.html> visited on 15-09-19.

⁴We’re referring here to ENT, see <https://eduscol.education.fr/cid55726/qu-est-ent.html>, visited on 16-09-19.

from academical, industrial or institutional actors that would build a simplistic approach of teachers' work in general and more specifically with such a tool.

Voulgre (2010) focuses on teachers training about ENTs (Digital Workspaces) but also on the contradictions between actors' representations and actual use in the field, underlining the institution's technicist approach. We wanted to focus on a different working environment for teachers, which was seldom explored and seems in contradiction with their status as civil servants: that is to say, a platform designed by an industrial actor from the educational technology sector.

Other works are dedicated to analyzing "The 'platforming' of learning," focusing on higher education and especially MOOCs (Bullich, 2018). The object around which we built our study is different here as it consists of a platform designed by a private firm but addressing primary and secondary school teachers (and, in the end, their students) as both users and content producers. Therefore, it differs from the model proposed by Bullich (2018, p. 4):

These platforms' activity does not consist of purchasing or selling goods (or broadcasting rights) to final consumers, but rather in the articulation of several markets, offering different goods or services to each category of platform users ("two-sided markets" principle). The absence of upstream transaction from the part of the platform leader who (usually) does not pay to obtain the contents/products/services he's offering is thus a key feature.

Indeed, as we shall see later, LWP sells its editorialization services to external clients who buy pedagogical kits, and the same structure pays author-teachers to conceive the pedagogical content and scenarios.

Our perspective is also different in that we wanted to make clear the motivations of teachers engaged in work processes that could reveal a deeper movement of industrialization and merchandization of education, as described by Bullich (2018, p. 6, inspired by Moeglin, 1998):

We will [consider] industrialization as the conjunction of a process of "technicization" (increasing incorporation of tools/machines as a factor of production), of "rationalization" (definition of operational knowledge and implementation of recognition and valuation procedures) and "ideologization" (as production of a set of social representations accompanying this process and individuals' adherence to them). The "process" of "merchandization" can, for its part, be defined as the transformation of a "value in use" specific to a content, in this case educational, into a "value of exchange" by making it available on a market with a purpose of enrichment or obtaining a profit.

Theoretical framework

We have conducted our field actions in a comprehensive perspective, as defined by Kaufmann (2016, p. 24). This approach aims to “reconstruct by interpretation the meaning intended by actors in situations[;] it is a question of identifying the meanings of a situation or an action, in order to later explain its causes and effects.”

In addition, two concepts drawn from the work of de Certeau (1980) allow us to qualify practices described by the respondents themselves in their speech, but also the power dynamics embedded in the relationships between teachers and team members:

- tactics that “rely on time” to “seize profit opportunities”, as opposed to
- strategy: “the calculation of power relations, which becomes possible from the moment a subject of power and will is isolated from an ‘environment’” (p. XLVI).

Although we are keen on preserving the comprehensive aspect of our research, we also wish to document closely the dynamics in which teachers engaged, and how private firms may take advantage of institutional deficiencies in terms of teachers’ training but also recognition. Furthermore, this theoretical model echoes our own situation as a CIFRE PhD student, as we were sometimes drawn to adopt a “complete membership”⁵ (Adler, 1987, p. 68) status during our participant observation.

In order to better understand the terms “teaching star” and “innovative teachers”, which are used by some members of the company to describe the “most active members of the community”, we will focus in particular on two characteristics of the exposure processes regarding the “good practices” identified by Levoine and Oger in different contexts. We believe these are comparable to those associated with the LWP: it is the particular tone and angle that engages “[the selection of] innovative pedagogical experiences whose optimistic description is nurtured by the enthusiasm of the teachers themselves” (2012, p. 123), and the emphasis put on a teaching style that would be at odds with a sclerotic institution: “it is all the teaching that is regenerated, facilitated and as if it were refreshed to have drawn from less constraining sources than traditional teaching” (2012, p. 123).

We chose to lead semi-structured interviews in order to capture “social representations” (Jodelet, 2003, p. 53) within the respondents’ speeches, defined as “[a] form of socially elaborated and shared knowledge, with a practical aim and contributing to the construction of a reality common to a social whole.” As

⁵Patricia and Peter Adler (1987, p. 68) define complete membership role as follows: The complete membership role entails the greatest commitment on the part of the researcher. Rather than experiencing mere participatory involvement, complete-member-researchers (CMRs) immerse themselves fully in the group as ‘natives.’

Jodelet (2003, p. 48) indicates, these representations “circulate in speeches, are carried by words, conveyed in media messages and images, crystallized in spatial conduct and arrangement.” Therefore, semi-structured interviews appeared to be an accurate tool to collect and analyze teachers “social representations” (Jodelet 2003) of the notion of “community” associated with the private actor.

Methodology

As part of our PhD research we conducted about twenty semi-structured interviews with teachers linked to LWP through different types of professional connections and roles:

- authors of columns on this media
- creators of IPPs (Interdisciplinary Practical Projects, EPI in French)⁶
- readers and/or subscribers of the Petit Journal des Profs⁷ (PJP in the following), dedicated to teachers
- authors of educational kits distributed on webpedago.com (hereafter, WP)
- users registered with a private account on WP
- bloggers on LWP

Some teachers have accumulated these different types of activities or connections to the company and have followed its evolution since its creation; others over a few months.

We extracted from this corpus four particular cases of teachers who have created personal websites that are similar to proto-communities and have carried out projects with LWP: educational kits, Interdisciplinary Practical Projects (IPPs) or columns for the company’s media, the PJP, and, sometimes, a combination of these different types of products.

Also included in our corpus are interviews with these teachers about their personal websites and their partnerships with other private actors. We add an informal discussion with a teacher, as part of a participant observation in her classroom (French teacher, see below). Finally, an exchange took place by email with a respondent around his personal website.

Our goal in interviewing these teachers was to understand how they perceived both their role as teachers within an institution, which the doxa describes as having difficulties with innovation, and at the same time how they considered the firm they chose to work with, that is to say LeWebPédagogique. Therefore, we

⁶See <<https://eduscol.education.fr/cid116621/the-development-cycle-cycle-4.html#lien13>> page visited on 15-11-19.

⁷Teacher’s Little Newspaper [Editor’s translation]

built the interview canvas by integrating questions about the teachers' representations or way of describing the firm, which we gathered during our observation at LeWebPédagogique.

These testimonies, the details of which are given in the table below, constitute the "teacher" corpus on which we rely for this contribution:

	French 9 years experience, secondary school (public) [Teach.French]	Arts 19 years experience, high school (public) [Teach.arts]	Natural sciences 20 years experience, secondary school (private) [Teach.NS]	History-geography 29 years experience, secondary school (public) [Teach.Hist.Geo]
Connections with LWP and other companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Created 3 IPPs published on WP - Apple Distinguished Educator - Consultant for Sophiae 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Created 2 educational kits under the form of IPPs for LWP - Microsoft Innovative Education Expert since 2015 (training activities) - Created pedagogical sequences for the firm Éducation et Numérique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Among first teachers to have opened a blog on LWP - Created or evaluated pedagogical kits (2) transformed into IPPs or client projects (8) on WP - Wrote chapters for ebooks launched by LWP - Consultant on WP platform - Created video clips for Ushuaïa TV, France 5 but also content for textbooks or digital clips for publishers such as Belin, Bordas, Delagrave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contributed to 2 pedagogical kits designed for LWP - Writes columns for PJ
Personal website features	Blog that describes her teaching practices within the classroom, tutorials about iPad and tablet use in class	Classroom blog, sharing resources as part academic trainings Exposure of professional practices other than teaching (résumé)	Website for uploading and sharing personal pedagogical resources, exposure of professional activities other than teaching	"Showcase" website about his knowledge in terms of curation, web culture, ICT tools 1 section inspired from his class practices, 1 dedicated to students work, and 1 to columns written for the PJP

Table 1: Summary of teachers' experience selected for this contribution

We also included in our corpus six semi-structured interviews of one to one and a half hours with members of the company who had direct professional connections with teachers within the editorial and management department, as well as informal exchanges obtained with members of the company during rest periods (lunches, breaks) as part of our participant observation.

Before presenting our results, it is important to review the history of the LWP, which has built profiles of contributing teachers within the company as well as real ties with some of them.

LeWebPédagogique's historical background

Established as a start-up in the early 2000s, LWP is today an SME (Small and Medium-size Enterprise) in the educational technology sector, a hybrid company that describes itself as a community of blogger teachers, a media company and an “educational agency”. Its activities are carried out on different websites and platforms, the main characteristics of which are described in the following sections.

From educational resource search engine to teachers' blog platform

LWP was created in 2005 by Vincent Olivier, the current Chief Executive Officer, whose initial project was to launch a search engine dedicated exclusively to educational resources and websites in order to be “pedagogically more relevant than generalist engines”⁸. The search engine was funded through a media-inspired business model: for example, through sponsored links to publishing houses' textbooks or company websites specializing in tutoring, “skills” or career guidance.

In April 2006, to launch the search engine, Olivier created a blog dedicated to study sessions for the French *baccalauréat* exam (equivalent to British A levels), which offered a selection of relevant daily links to prepare for the exam, the links being derived from a search on the engine.

While initially the blog format was seen more as a way of communicating around the search engine, it has since become central and LWP has gradually evolved into a platform of teachers' blogs. Since May 2006, teachers have appropriated the platform by spontaneously creating their own blogs. This process has forged the conviction by Olivier that the most relevant interfaces are first adopted spontaneously by the “community”.

In July 2006, the creation of blogs was proposed as a service to teachers and, from September 2006, the hosting of “free and paid” teacher blogs (without advertising since 2007) became the company's core activity.

This ambiguous formula, which expresses the difference between the image the firm presents to its audience and its business model, also evokes the tactics of some users, particularly the “star bloggers” with high visibility, to monetize their activity of resources curation. One tactic that was mentioned during discussions

⁸Quote from the “about us” section on the company's original website

<<https://web.archive.org/web/20051204022321/http://www.lewebpedagogique.com:80/qui.php>> visited on 31-10-18.

between the company's staff and some of these teachers, was using Amazon's partners system: adding links redirecting to Amazon's marketplace in articles about books. Teachers would then earn a commission when selling a book owing to a click originating from their blog. Thanks to this system, some teachers declared they would earn several hundred euros per month and would consider this amount as an additional salary.

The blogs published on the platform are highlighted on the home page. The company's slogan is transformed from "the engine of success" into an enthusiastic injunction: "Share knowledge". During our interviews with teachers linked to the LWP (authors of kits or columns, PJP readers, blog creators), we were able to observe that this historical identity remained very present in the minds of the respondents.

Development of a corporate media

In parallel with the activity of hosting teachers' blogs, LWP started publishing, from November 2006, a newsletter that aimed to highlight teachers' blogging on the platform: each week, three blogs are selected, depending on their novelty, audience (measured using WordPress and Google Analytics) or topics covered.

This newsletter is the "ancestor" of the PJP, the company's media, which went through several versions before stabilizing.⁹ Indeed, a second version, launched in 2012 and entitled *LePetitJournalPédagogique*, consisted of a weekly newsletter aimed at highlighting the content of blogs hosted on the platform, but in this version, the themes of the publications were associated with events linked to the school calendar (back-to-school, election of delegates, class councils, school trips, etc.).

Finally, in 2015, the PJP was created, available in two forms of subscription – daily or weekly. The daily version contained a column written by a teacher and two briefs, "relaying what is important for teachers (but also for parents and students) to know before going to class"¹⁰. The second brief often referred to a partnership with one of the company's clients, a publishing strategy that made it possible to finance this version.

The PJP is inspired by the *TimetoSignOff*¹¹ newsletter and functions as a medium in its own right: the content is written by columnists paid for in copyright fees¹² according to a pre-determined number of

⁹ The PJP's formula has changed since September 2019 but for conciseness we will not detail the changes in this article.

¹⁰ Informal discussion with a former member of the editorial team on 25-10-18.

¹¹ <https://timetosignoff.fr/>. This daily newsletter, launched in 2011 by Romain Dessal and described as the "smart email of the evening", aims to summarize the essential information of the day needed to shine in society.

“educational articles” or taken from the blogs hosted on LWP. The selected content must allow the teacher to both broaden his or her horizons and use it in his or her profession.

Sustainability of the economic model through the creation of a “pedagogical agency”

The agency model brings together consulting, editorial services and communication and has existed since the company was founded (more precisely, since December 2006), based on the creation of blogs on specific themes for clients: for example, a blog on macroeconomics for a French bank, another on ICT for a computer manufacturer, and another on career guidance for an insurance company, etc.

This principle is used for the publication of “educational kits” ordered by customers, professional federations or companies wishing to enhance their image (for example, in the automobile, energy, agri-food and banking sectors). These kits aim to promote skills specific to these structures, to enhance their image among students or contribute to their communications strategy, described as “a message to be conveyed” or the fact of “addressing the school world” while offering pedagogical activities that can be used in class.

The educational kits are written by paid author-teachers. They are designed on the basis of mock-ups¹³ and resources imposed by the client company, which finances the production of the kits. These are present on the LWP website, but also distributed as IPP “models” on the WP platform, and available as links or in advertising inserts on the PJP. These partnerships were the main source of revenue for the LWP at the time of our field research and are similar to the “flow” model described by Moeglin (2005, p. 223):

This is the case, among others, of educational kits on water sponsored by companies in the sector. It consists in indirect and upstream funding, through the sale of the audience to advertisers, according to the flow model that applies to radio and television.

Webpédago.com, from an IPP management platform to a space for sharing lessons with students

Launched in 2015 under the name of EPI-college.fr, the Webpedago.com platform is independent of the LWP website. Its initial aim was to support teachers to carry out one of the most controversial aspects¹⁴ of

¹² Remuneration in the form of copyright fees allows teachers to combine writing and teaching activities. See <<http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid58052/vie-professionnelle-et-situation-personnelle-cumul-d-activites.html>, retrieved > consulted on 20-12-18.

¹³ Document presenting the process (content, organization and associated resources) of a project in order to plan its production. It is a working tool in publishing and the press.

¹⁴ The majority of teachers we were able to interview about IPPs as part of our thesis mentioned in particular the institutionalization of practices that have long been carried out independently in the field, or even denounced the mandatory nature of the system. Teachers who are skeptical or reluctant to accept strong organizational and professional constraints also mention the organizational vagueness surrounding these IPPs, the design of which is left to the discretion of school heads, often without specific time slots being allocated to the preparation of projects within the timetable. Some teachers who are often reluctant to accept this measure regret the extra work that the implementation of these projects represents, without any additional remuneration. The most virulent criticisms are of an educational nature, in particular by

the secondary school reform that came into force at the beginning of the 2016 academic year: Interdisciplinary Practical Projects (EPI in French, which we have translated to IPP.)

Based on a first IPP designed for a client company, the platform's objective was redefined to allow teachers to manage these interdisciplinary projects. This raised many concerns, particularly organizational ones.

Throughout 2016, it became clear that the participants were primarily looking for didactic sources of inspiration to carry out these projects. "Star teachers"¹⁵ as well as teachers wishing to engage in the implementation of IPPs were then recruited, in particular through informal recommendations among teachers who had participated in previous projects or campaigns on social networks to create and then disseminate their IPPs in the form of "models".

All WP members can view and appropriate these resources by saving the project structure in their personal space, while being invited to "customize" the content. The objective is to get as many teachers as possible to register, in order to increase the size of the audience. The models also present the educational kits produced for LWP clients, which we have already mentioned above.

In November 2017, the company's founder observed a form of hijacking of the platform: some teachers who had registered their classes were using the platform as a tool for depositing courses or resources but also as a space for students to complete work. This was followed by a major overhaul of the WP platform, notably around an exercise module that allowed teachers to have their students perform a task (focused on submitting a written product) on the platform, then retrieve and download the copies in the same space. The variety of spaces in which LWP's activity takes place can give the impression that the identity of this structure is fragmented, while it presents itself as an educational "community". By focusing on the testimonies of the company's contributors, we sought to understand what this term meant within the team.

teachers of special subjects such as German or ancient languages. The latter denounce the sacrifice of their disciplines in favor of a project pedagogy that they reject. This skepticism towards project pedagogy appeared as transdisciplinary in our corpus, among teachers questioning the relevance of IPPs. They stress the importance — too great according to them — given to skills and "education to" in these projects, to the detriment of disciplinary knowledge and skills, which would redefine the school's mission in favor of education associated above all with the entry of pupils into the labor market.

¹⁵This expression is first used within the company to refer to influential bloggers registered on lewebpédagogique.com, who are either among the first registered or recently registered, particularly from the eklablog.fr platform, which many bloggers have left due to the addition of adverts in the interface after the structure was bought by the Webedia company. By extension, it refers to teachers with high media exposure who stage themselves, particularly via social networks.

“The community” – A central concept in the company’s marketing strategy?

Our analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted with the company’s contributors showed that the notion of “community” was at the heart of the business model and the company’s history, as a justification of its school-proof identity, rather than an expression of actual practices.

First, as we mentioned earlier, the idea of a “blogger community” is linked to the foundation of the company. It is considered a “founding myth” within the team and seems to have forged representations of online teaching practices that are still prevalent today.¹⁶

According to the founder of LWP, since 2006, blogs have been opened “exponentially”. The vision of the company as a platform hosting a community of bloggers, who act as content producers for their classes, also corresponds to a desire to compete with educational publishing and to occupy a position in the field of educational digital resource production,¹⁷:

I think the platform logic and the logic of content creation by teachers themselves is a real lever to quickly cover an important field at low cost. We’re already doing it, by the way. We have hosted 50,000 teacher blogs for the past ten years or so. Every day, 500 pages of content are produced on them, the equivalent of two books. That’s 10,000 school authors who work for me for free all over the world.

It should be noted that this verbatim is extracted from a course given in the form of a testimony and that the tone adopted was deliberately provocative. We find here a vision of innovation inspired by Schumpeter’s theories, in particular the idea that innovation can only be achieved by a break with the previous production system:

The entrepreneur does not intervene in the new products he launches. Its main activity is to select the new technical systems that it will bring to market. The “Schumpeterian” entrepreneur is therefore the one who mediates between two hermetic worlds. (Flichy, 2013, p. 20)

The perceived value of the “community” is also, indirectly, economic. Indeed, according to the members of the management team who collaborate with the company’s clients, the perceived existence of a community of teachers would be considered as a major asset of the structure by private companies that order “educational kits” from it:

¹⁶ “Teachers are able to blog, that is, create a space in which they will publish things that are specific to their practices for their students”. Interview conducted on 02-10-17, founder of the company

¹⁷ This emphasis on a publisher’s identity capable of competing with traditional education publishing also corresponded to a phase of launching a collection of digital “textbooks” for iPad “published” by the company (between October 2015 and April 2016). This is no longer the main feature highlighted in October 2018 (the date our participant observation was stopped).

[...] we sell man-days hours to make educational resources that are then distributed free of charge to the widest possible audience, which is composed of teachers, [...] that's what makes us live. [...] it's the existence of the community and it's the credibility we have to represent, work with, and then disseminate to teachers that makes us win; if the client doesn't want that, we lose.¹⁸

One of the members of the commercial department, when asked how she perceived teachers, described an articulation of complex relationships, where teachers are considered as content producers, beta-testers¹⁹ and the target audience to whom customer messages are delivered:

[as] we have managed to have a community of teachers that is quite large, [...] we can go one step further, that is, already measure its actual use [...]. So, therefore, measuring this pedagogical and academic interest is also a return on investment for the client. He has invested money, he does not sell it to teachers, so he gives it away for free, it is just money coming out; on the other hand, what they expect in terms of return on investment is that it's actually used. It's the number of students who have been exposed to this resource, the number of teachers who have taken it.²⁰

Two models identified by Moeglin in his study of the changes in the cultural and creative industries, followed by educational tools and media, make it possible to explain the LWP's economic model. Indeed, we can draw a parallel between the contracts concluded with client companies and LWP and the "flow" model (Moeglin, 2005) mentioned above, but also with "information brokerage" (Moeglin, 2005, p. 225):

As an intermediary mandated by the user or his representative, the information broker does not produce anything; he searches for ad hoc information and provides it on request and on demand, as this happens when the information provided is deemed relevant and used by the person to whom it has been sent. The service that the broker provides is therefore personalized, but this does not prevent it from being mediatized and industrialized.

The latter modeling would be more closely linked to the WP platform and the PJP, with one major difference, however, that distinguishes LWP from its competitors: the company manages to mobilize teachers throughout the production and distribution chain of its content. It therefore plays the role of an "information broker" who produces or editorializes the resources offered to a particular audience of user-readers, that is to say teachers.

Despite the advantage that this "community" of teachers seems to represent, its definition and especially its outlines seem vague and shifting. Indeed, several members of the team pointed out the lack of exchange between teachers involved in the company's various projects.

¹⁸ Interview conducted on 02-10-17 with the founder of the company.

¹⁹ "End-users, who are the teachers, are asked what they think about the subject and what is the right angle of attack to deal with it from a pedagogical perspective". Excerpt from the interview conducted on 21-12-17 with a member of the commercial department.

²⁰ Interview conducted on 21-12-17 with a member of the commercial department.

A non-consensual notion within LWP

The very existence of an effective “community” of teachers contributing to the company does not lead to a consensus within the team: the reactions of various members of the editorial department, the division of the company that has the most links with teachers, are revealing in this respect. One of the editors described her vision of a “community” as follows: “For me, a community is, there is a sense of belonging [...]. And finally, the links between people who speak to each other, not just to the founder of the community”²¹ This same person expressed regret that they could not benefit from a more solid recognition as a community because “people are mobilizing for a community, for their community; surely they would do more, they would help us more [...], it would be enriching for us, but I think we have to work on our brand for that. [...]”²²

Another member of this department defined the specificities of the community relationship that could exist between LWP and teachers as follows: a privileged link created mainly by two members of the editorial department who solicit teachers through email exchanges and on the accounts and pages dedicated to LWP on Facebook and Twitter, characterized by a certain degree of familiarity (“to know a little about their lives”) and the professional nature of the exchanges (“discuss and seek advice”).

While “community” appears to be a vague notion within the LWP team, because it does not allow the links to be defined between its members and their common mode of action, it is not a simple “brand community”, which Coutant (2009) defines as: “a specialized, non-geographically marked community based on a structured set of relationships between brand fans”²³(p. 4). While the image and tone of the company are very important for winning the support and participation of teachers, those involved occupy a variety of roles, both before and after the release of the company’s products. One of the teachers we were able to interview summarized his vision of the LWP’s activity as follows:

[...] what LWP is doing is quite different now; that is, they have teachers who will create resources in partnership with companies, who will directly stick to the curriculum.... This means that we produce resources that will be directly usable by teachers. (Teach.NS)

²¹Interview conducted on 24-11-17 with a member of the editorial team.

²²*Ibid.* Interview conducted on 24-11-17 with a member of the editorial team.

²³Coutant, A. (2009, June). The ordinary activity of consumption: questioning what individuals do with the brands offered to them. [L’activité ordinaire de consommation: questionner ce que font les individus des marques qui leur sont proposées.] Communication presented to Org&Co. Organizational communication under discussion in the ICS: which objects, fields, and theories? Young researchers and new researchers, Rennes, France.

In order to better understand how the identity of the LWP is expressed in different types of web interfaces and platforms, we will detail the different resources produced and distributed in these spaces, and the links with the teachers that result from them.

Understanding relationships within the “community” by analyzing different types of product

Two elements emerged as essential in order to understand the organization of relations between LWP and teachers: according to the different digital spaces created by LWP around which teachers revolve, the latter occupy various roles of target audience, specialized readership, beta-testers and content producers. We also discovered that the type of resources produced, the spaces in which they will be distributed, and the target audience will influence the relationships and contracts established with the company.

Three types of content will be discussed in this section: columns written by teachers for the PJP; educational kits, which are the result of negotiations between a client company, one or more “author(s)” and the editorial team²⁴; and, finally, the IPP disseminated on the WP platform.

The PJP as a “community tool”

The PJP is distributed to 51,678 subscribers (2018 figure) in the form of a weekly newsletter fed by teachers’ columns, blog posts, news briefs or inserts and links highlighting the resources and kits produced by the company. According to one member of the editorial department, it is “the most accomplished expression of who we are[...]”. The various members of the team in contact with teachers consider this medium as a central node of the “star shaped” network of teachers that revolve around LWP:

[...] even if people don’t talk to each other or very little... there’s an editorial line, and you adhere to it or you don’t adhere to it, there’s humour, there’s this aspect of “go to class in a good mood”, it’s apolitical, you see: there are lots of things like that, in my opinion, make you in or out of it.²⁵

Beyond the tone²⁶, the editor-in-chief mentions the importance of a “qualified database” of readers:

From our point of view, it is what allows us to have a base of loyalized teachers who know us, with whom we have a relationship, etc. It is a dissemination tool because, when we make news, when we establish partnerships, etc. and when we advertise, it is also because

²⁴ The teachers in our corpus have more specifically worked on the kits transformed into IPPs.

²⁵ Interview conducted on 24-11-17 with a member of the editorial team.

²⁶ “What creates the feeling of belonging to a community is all the readers of the PetitJournal who receive something that speaks to them, with one of their peers who writes to them, more news selected for them, to make them laugh etc. It is really the promise: ‘Go to class in a good mood’. It’s the tool that allows us to exchange with them and let them know that we’re there, we’re listening to them, etc. It gives the feeling of community, it’s the idea that the teacher is not alone and feels pampered.”

it is a way to reach teachers... It's also what we sell to customers, it's access to a certain number of teachers [...] even if it's something that doesn't generate money directly, we sell to the customer, here's what we say: "we can write to this many teachers". We have a big database of teachers [...], a qualified database because we know more or less who is in primary, middle school, high school [...]²⁷

If the PJP seems to be the most representative space of the company's vision of teaching and teachers, and if its tone unites a significant number of subscribers, making the term "community" more credible to customers, another type of content lies at the heart of the structure's economic model while mobilizing author-teachers and sometimes beta-testers: that is, educational kits.

Educational kits

The pedagogical kits are created in a standardized way: from a "client brief"²⁸ which aims to understand "what is taboo, not taboo, what the client means, what is the objective, what is the target"²⁹. The editorial team in charge of the project then formulates an "expression of need" that is transmitted to the author. Negotiations follow with the latter regarding the thematic content and deadlines. This is followed by a "documentation" phase where the author must review the resources provided by the client and his "universe" in order to write a "note of intent", which is reworked with the editorial team to ensure that the client's needs and "message" are properly taken into account. The latter then approve the mock-ups, which can be reworked with the author and the editorial team. Then comes a writing phase and a first draft phase. After the teacher has approved the final version of his product, the client company has the final say on the content.

These kits are presented on the original LWP website, published on the WP platform and highlighted in inserts or in special editions of the PJP. Some of them have been adapted into IPP to enrich the WP platform library of models. Indeed, one of the business models envisaged to finance the development of this platform was the subscription of customers to premium accounts, which would have offered them statistics detailing the use of the kits by users of the platform. This project has since been abandoned because the accounts offered have not proved attractive to customers.

In this context, teachers sign a copyright contract in the form of a lump sum, divided into "teaching tasks". The resources, produced by several authors who most often work independently, are then edited,

²⁷Interview conducted on 14-12-17 with a member of the editorial team.

²⁸Interview conducted on 24-11-17 with a member of the editorial team.

²⁹Ibid. All the quotes in this paragraph are from the same interview.

approved by the clients and anonymized: “[...] I still give up all rights and including my name, eh, it seems to me, the resource is anonymous” (Teach.Hist.Geo). This could be a sign of a “weakening [of] the principle of responsibility” mentioned by A. Beauné (2018). It can also be considered as a product that would epitomize the “merchandization” (Moeglin, 1998, quoted in Bullich, 2018, p. 6) of teachers’ “documentary work” (Gueudet et al., 2013), on which LWP partially relies.

When we asked teachers about the link between their products and possible lobbying strategies by LWP clients through these kits, they claimed a form of pragmatism and their ability to put into perspective the documents used to legitimize the use of this content in the classroom:

So, when I can have access to private resources, work with private partners, companies, see what they offer, and see how to turn their resources into educational scenarios, I tell myself that in my classes there will finally be something practical (Teach.NS). I check the information anyway, that is, I don’t take it for granted, I know it’s lobbying. So I’m going to check it, it’s sources that I’m going to check more. Well, X the electric vehicle, there is not too much danger [...] cereals, plant protection products, I pay attention to this type of resource and, let’s say, to who produces them (Teach.Hist.Geo).

A final form of product, IPPs, illustrates well the search for a massive audience of teachers who would be registered in a space created by the company (but different from the original website), a description that reflects one understanding of the notion of community within LWP. On the other hand, the massive publication of IPP models between 2015 and 2016 clearly shows how the company is trying to adapt its products, economic model and teachers’ representations to institutional reforms.

Products associated with Interdisciplinary Practical Projects

In the context of the production of IPPs, although the authors assign their rights to the company, the names of the teachers and, sometimes, their discipline are mentioned on the platform. Remuneration is also more important than for educational kits³⁰: from 400 euros for an individually written project to 600 euros for a project written by two authors.

A teacher who created one of these models mentioned the importance of making this work visible (particularly through intense self-promotion on social networks), and the links between remuneration and author status:

Yes, there is a certain pride in that position, because we create, we spend time [...], very quickly, we tweet it, with our names of course, and very quickly, this project, it really went viral: there we have 15 000 views, it’s still quite huge. So we considered that the project

³⁰ This is based on the same principle: a copyright contract in the form of a fixed price, with transfer of rights to the non-exclusive publisher in the case of IPPs, unlike columns and educational kits for which authors exclusively transfer their rights to the company.

was really interesting. We were called right away by the publishers, traditional ones, who immediately said: “We’re going to buy this from you”. We thought: “Ah, so that means we created something.” Our status as a teacher has changed to that of an author. When you are asked to sell your work, it is because you are an author (Teach.French)

We have discussed different types of LWP products that are created by teachers qualified as authors. How do teachers adapt to the production methods of the LWP? What tactics do they use? Are these being transformed into strategies?

From tactics to strategies of teachers creating personal websites and associated with LWP?

We have chosen to use the term “tactics” used by Michel de Certeau (1990) to refer to “[ways] to “seize opportunities” (p. LIX), referring to the activities of teachers in relation to LWP. Indeed, although the analogy between teachers and consumers is not complete and LWP is not in a monopoly position in the digital education sector, it seemed to us that teachers who worked with the company while creating their own websites “seized” both financial and symbolic profit opportunities, limited in time, and which did not necessarily allow them to build a “claim” on the content produced for LWP.

Concerning the creation of personal websites, the position of teachers is more ambiguous and deserves a more in-depth cross-analysis of the various testimonies collected: if the teachers we were able to interview do not directly mention the implementation of “strategies” to present themselves as innovative teachers or prescribers, or do not even defend themselves from it, the practices they describe nevertheless seem close to those of influencers and prove to be more or less effective according to the respondents.

Peer-to-peer exchange: an objective that can be achieved by building personal websites?

When we asked the teachers in our corpus about the reasons that led them to create their website, the fact that they could exchange with colleagues seemed to be a strong but unfulfilled desire, even in personal spaces, particularly because of peer practices, associated with “poaching” or “looting”:

[...] Three-quarters of the teachers, their work consists in [...] creating a dummy volume, i.e. looting the publishers’ resources to make the best possible document [...]: that’s poaching, i.e [...] I compare three school publishers and take the best of what they have produced to make my record [...] by not citing the sources and [...] that’s it, I poach. (Teach.Hist.Geo).

I’m reworking the SEO on Google, but right now there are [on my website] only 1,000 to 1,300 people a day, and in the good years there were 5,000 to 6,000. So it means accepting that there are 1,000 people a day who can access your resources, without you having any feedback. (Teach.NS)

All the teachers we met reported the difficulty of having exchanges with their colleagues, for a variety of reasons – for example, the different level of expertise and anonymity that favours consumer activities:

Let's say that I move forward quickly in my self-training and as a result, as my knowledge, let's say, increases, I become more and more, let's say, efficient and I have fewer and fewer people who can help me. Because I know how to do a lot of things. So I learn a little less from others. Because I realize that not many of us are into permanent monitoring, into permanent research, there are many more people on my twittlist [the teacher relays the contents of her blog on her Twitter feed] who come to read than there are people who come to me with resources or advice. At first when I started it wasn't the same, because I was about the same as the others so we shared. Now, people don't come to me anymore. (Teach.French)

One teacher explains that she had created her own website to compensate for the limited functionalities offered by the ENT (Digital Work Environment, our translation) of her successive schools, in particular the impossibility of exchanging with colleagues from other disciplines and the lack of resources adapted to her subject and level (high school). She also underlined the lack of support from the institution to create spaces conducive to these exchanges, whereas they can be more easily done around short projects, which are here proposed by a private actor (LWP):

For example, with an ENT, we know that we can write to all the students in a class to talk about something. ...] I, for example, on LWP, have never met the colleagues I have worked with, and yet we have done interdisciplinary things that are very well tied up, that would work super well, and well I have never been able to do the same thing in my institution, when I met people in flesh and blood in my school every day. (Teach.Arts.)

The teachers interviewed also mentioned a professional culture that would not support individual ambition and would therefore be grinding them to a halt or, in any case, would create a feeling of loneliness among some teachers, especially those who are considered as "innovative" teachers or "star" teachers:

For example, I know that I must be seen, by some people, as a super pretentious person because I dare to make books, to produce, when that is not the idea at all. There you go. And so finding a sharing atmosphere like that in an official mailing list is very complicated, especially if it is academic, because if it is academic, it is under the cover of an IPR, an inspector. (Teach.NS).

We hypothesized, after analyzing the interviews we were able to conduct, that one of the objectives of building personal websites would be to build a space for teachers' practices to be visible, allowing them to move beyond an institutional framework perceived as a straitjacket:

National Education is still ten years behind on everything. We know that (laughs). The problem is that digital technology goes very fast so, necessarily, after ten years, or more than ten years, it's almost a century... And then there's also some caution on the part of the institution, you see. When I was doing an academic website in Fine Arts, wow, but to put a page online I had to wait for 500 authorizations. And then, as you always have one that doesn't answer you, you're stuck, you can't put it online, so that's why I created my

website and said to myself: “That’s it, I’m done”. To put on some simple extra stuff that never gets controversial at all. (Teach.Arts)

We sought to understand the reasons that motivated teachers to accept a partnership with a private actor. It seemed to us that teachers came to collaborate with companies because they were looking for ways to interact with their peers, a goal they could not always achieve through their institutional or personal spaces. The analysis of the interviews also showed different links that may seem paradoxical between the creation of structured websites such as proto-communities and partnerships between teachers and private actors. It appeared that the need for recognition associated with the figure of the author constitutes one of the drivers that can push teachers to share their experiences and resources in the context of proto-communities.

Be recognized as authors?

This need for recognition, clearly or implicitly mentioned by all respondents, can be expressed in different ways. It can be about showing colleagues what you are doing:

What I publish on my blog and announce on Twitter is a bit like the result. I announce the project, I tell them: “Here I will do this”, and then I show them what it has given them, what the children have produced. On the blog, it’s people who come once again because the blog has become a source of inspiration for them, and I see it, there are people who subscribe to the newsletter, there are more and more of them: they come to learn, to take and learn, so the comments are often very kind, and often they ask to go a little further, that is, they ask me a question about the article I posted. They ask me, “Aah but how did you do that? And this application, how is it?” (Teach.French)

This blog by the teacher, who is also an academic trainer and Apple Distinguished Educator at Apple, seems to offer her the opportunity to adopt a training position for a wide audience and also to promote her practices as a prescriber, especially with regard to the flipped classroom.

The financial dimension of the contract seems to endorse the recognition of teachers’ author status, particularly, paradoxically, their “moral rights”, although it is unsatisfactory in itself:

When X asks me to work on 4–5 educational leads with all the work behind, I would have to read the contracts again, but I think it’s... gross, it’s 200 euros. So, if there are 5–6 days of work behind all this thinking, at 200 euros, we cannot consider that we could make a living from it. (Teach.NS)

One of the respondents went so far as to mention a “symbolic” remuneration, which nevertheless allowed him to “show the LWP[that] I am capable” (Teach.Hist.Geo). Another respondent, who describes himself as a “concept designer” (Teach.NS) on his Facebook page, links his course preparation work to that of an author, a

role he holds with the LWP, but also with school publishers who have launched digital textbook collections (Belin, Bordas, Delagrave).

Teachers' authorship status is perceived differently by team members. According to one of the members of the editorial department, teachers are authors, sensitive to the perceived quality of their work:

It's not the same ego as novelists, it's not great literature, all that. But otherwise it's pretty much the same relationships, that is, you have to find them, you really have to create a bond so that they want to work with you. [...].³¹. [...].

Another member of the department admitted that she used the strong symbolism of the author–publisher relationship to talk to teachers about LWP's activity, while she presented LWP as an agency to clients.³²

While these contracts seem to make the author–publisher relationship concrete, particularly the need for editorial validation and recognition, they sometimes mask this identity or reduce it to its symbolic dimension and to a more moral than patrimonial right. Indeed, we were able to observe, among the arguments put forward by the four teachers interviewed to justify their work as authors for a private actor, that acquiring author status would testify to a recognition, a form of validation of the “intellectual work” accomplished that was lacking within the institution:

[...] while participating in the LWP, I realized that we were considered as real authors with copyright, with remuneration, except that it is private platforms that consider us like that. From the National Education [...] we don't have any recognition, we don't even have any extra salary, we can dream. And then anyone can use one of our resources, we are never considered as authors. (Teach.Arts)

We have shown that the status of author, which seems precious for teachers who associate themselves with a private actor such as LWP, is ambiguous, because it covers both a need for remuneration – considered insufficient by teachers and constituting a mode of production qualified as “low cost” by the members of the company themselves – and for recognition.

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Interview conducted on 24-11-17 with a member of the editorial team.

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“According to the interlocutor, you do not introduce yourself in exactly the same way and, in the French imagination, there are many people who dream of publishing a book. It must be that desire to leave a trace or something. And so, to say that you're a publisher, in a way, it makes you more attractive. It is more rewarding to have this handover side etc., that the notion of author gives, than the commercial side conveyed by the idea of a communication agency” (extract from the interview conducted on 01-08-18 with a member of the editorial team).

The case of “star teachers”

Behind the interest in “sharing” resources with their community, teachers who seek to “make their classroom practices visible” to a broad audience who are calling for it may correspond to another significant representation within the LWP, that of “star teachers”.

The criteria often used in the speeches of the company’s contributors to qualify “star teachers” are that these teachers are recognized by their peers, and that their blogs and products are widely followed and sometimes even have a prescription value, despite the little attention that the creators of these spaces pay to the design of their website/blog and to the editorialization of their resources. Finally, these contents collect a large number of views and/or comments.

From the creation of the LWP blog platform, the media coverage of the content produced by blogger teachers, the exposure process, is in line with the notion of “star bloggers”:

Where there was a potential form of relationship, was when we were going to put some of their products forward in a newsletter, on the front page of our website or stuff like that and, to follow them, it was quite homemade because basically, we were looking at WordPress, the last blogs created, or those that made the most views, according to Google Analytics. So it was very handmade and we were going to see [...] we looked at those who had the most audience and we contacted them to tell them: “Great, well done, we put you forward even more, you will increase your visibility even more”, which they really appreciate.³³.

The star or future teachers were therefore selected according to a quantitative logic of “web analytics” (Cardon, 2015) and the feedback from shared experiences on their websites is considered exemplary.

Another motivation that would encourage teachers to accept partnerships with LWP could be to make visible, in particular through the editorialization and then the distribution of educational kits, a range of professional practices resulting from their work in schools but going beyond this framework: “[it was] to show the WebPédagogique the know-how I developed because [...] if you want, my worksheets [...], this is the type of work I present to students.” (Teach.Hist.Geo)

On the other hand, some respondents staged their professional identity on their personal website as a tactic to promote their work outside the classroom, to show a richer and more complex professional identity than that put forward by the institution. A teacher who creates educational kits but also writes columns for the PJP thus explains the link between his website, his profession as a teacher and LWP:

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Interview conducted on 24-11-17 with a member of the editorial team.

As my activity as a columnist grew, I wanted to share some of my columns again, which seemed more “sound” and more timeless. So I created this page [on his website]. For students’ works, they were disseminated on other blogs, or even confined to creative applications. So I decided to gather what I thought was very good, always with the idea of a showcase in mind. (Teach.Hist.Geo)

Another teacher, the creator of an educational kit for LWP but also a former Microsoft ambassador and author of educational sequences for another SME in the educational technology sector, *Éducation et Numérique*, explains why she puts her résumé on her personal website:

And then, little by little, I diversified a little bit, I did things like graphic design. So, in the end, it’s true that I also put things that serve me but next to my job. [...] My résumé, I put it online because sometimes I send my résumé around for stuff. So it’s true that I use it [...] really as a record of what I do and it’s not necessarily related only to National Education. (Teach.Arts)

It seems that these teachers claim a plurality of professional identities, which can eventually enrich each other. The visibility offered by proto-communities also allows some teachers to be spotted by private actors who offer them, in exchange for tests and legitimization of their products, a remuneration, a network and a recognition.

One respondent reported that she became a Microsoft ambassador, according to her, after participating in the Innovative Teachers’ Forum organized each year by *Le Café Pédagogique* and because of content related to Microsoft products on her website, for example a tutorial on an application. This teacher explained to us that the production of content featuring a possible use of Microsoft products, distributed on her website but also on the *education.microsoft.com* platform, could earn her “points” and then badges (described as “medals”) indicating titles – for example, “Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert”, a title she mentions on her résumé, which is posted online on her personal website. (Teach.Arts)

Another respondent explained that he was contacted by the founder of the LWP to “[be] one of the first beta test teachers” after the latter found his personal website, which the teacher said was designed so that students could keep track of the courses over the years.³⁴ The teacher specifies that he modifies the content posted online according to the students’ reactions, if he realizes that a session did not work, for example.

Finally, a teacher who created a website that had become a proto-community considered to be prescriptive, particularly with regard to the flipped classroom, described the advantages offered by her partnership with Apple, as an Apple Distinguished Educator:

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“There are all my online courses, the photos, videos, experiences we do, and the idea is that young people find everything we did in class in their homes. And that they can find, from one year to the next, what they had done in previous years.” (Teach.NS)

An expertise that I would never have had with the National Education, in terms of training, bootcamps, having a network, private institutions that do not work at all like us with digital tools, expands my skills as much as possible. The expertise I have with the iPad, I could never have had it with the National Education. (Teach.French)

These practices could be more about strategies than tactics, since they would allow teachers, through a specific “place” that would be their website here, to gain and then occupy a particular position within the teaching staff. As mentioned above, this hypothesis deserves to be explored, in particular by a cross-analysis of all the testimonies we collected during our field research.

In any case, it can be hypothesized here that, in the context of professional relations with private companies, LWP teams working with teachers would play a mediating role between those involved in the different projects. We have noticed that the teachers in our corpus seem to be satisfied with this mediation, which allows them to establish links with colleagues with similar conceptions of their profession over a short period of time, where collaboration is organized around the realization of a concrete project with clearly defined production deadlines. We would now like to figure out if LWP has succeeded in bringing together a community of authors.

Weak ties between teachers working in the different areas of the LWP

We would like to show that power relations exist between the company and teachers, which crystallize around the status of “author” used to qualify both resource-producing teachers under a contract with the company, as well as the creators of blogs or personal websites.³⁵ These power relations also exist, implicitly, between teachers and create a hierarchy among the teachers who revolve around the LWP. Do these authors or content producers interact with each other when they are not gathered around a well-defined project?

Our observations showed that there were above all weak ties between teachers participating in the different products that feed the LWP platforms, ties that were expressed through comments about the resources or requests from the editorial team, in the form of messages posted on social networks, surveys or focus group interviews around specific projects.

The teachers we were able to interview and who created educational kits for the company often described individual work or ties limited to the project:

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For example, as of January 2006, teachers who consulted the search engine (the company’s original interface) are encouraged to “[publish] a document!” In June 2006, the teachers who produce content for the bac revision blog mentioned in the first part are listed and identified in the “Blog authors” tab.

It was LWP who put me in touch with colleagues who were willing to do this IPP, so that's good because when you look for colleagues to work with you, it's not always easy; within my institution, I didn't have any so I said to myself, "yeah, it can be interesting", so I accepted [...]. [...] we've never actually met, it's just by email, [...] not even Skype or anything like that. (Teach.Arts)

It therefore seems that LWP rather brings teachers together in networks or collectives for editorial projects.

These collectives are defined by Metzger (2007, quoted in Beauné, 2018, p. 12) as:

collectives where interactions are repeated, have a certain duration, while maintaining a flexibility of constitution (one enters and leaves the network easily), an absence (or weakness) of hierarchy and, because the commitment of the members is limited to the objects of the exchange, without much emotional commitment.

We could also bring this mode of operation closer to that of "captive communities" (Baron and Zablot, 2017): the hierarchy governing the authors' activities, indirectly linked to commercial objectives, would be expressed through the editorial line associated with the various LWP products, but also through the imposition of a mock-up by the company's customers.

However, it is striking to note that this captive character may seem less constraining to the teachers of our corpus than the institutional hierarchy, which they seek to bypass by creating their own websites or by participating in opportunities that arise, in order to "seize" profit opportunities" (de Certeau, 1990, p. LIX).

Discussion and perspectives

When we tried to understand the company's motivations for using the term "community" to describe itself, it became clear that this term was linked to the history of LWP's creation, but also to a marketing and economic strategy that would differentiate it from its competitors. From this perspective, the interest of being recognized as a structure capable of uniting a community of teachers is to have a more or less captive target audience (in particular students) to whom to publish products that are certainly designed by teachers for use in a pedagogical context, but whose underlying objective is also to enhance the activities, know-how and identity of the client. For the same reasons, this community status is questioned by several LWP members.

In addition, we have shown that there are hierarchical relationships between content-producing teachers and LWP, around the different spaces and products through which the company's identity is expressed. These differences seem to crystallize around the status of "author". Thus, closer social ties seem to exist between the company's members and the PJP columnists. The authenticity of their publications and testimonies would be an essential element of the company's "tone" and identity. Teachers who produce IPPs

are more remunerated and considered as authors than creators of educational kits, whose resources are anonymized, even though their products are central to the company's economic model.

We noticed that partnerships with teachers described as “stars” and “innovative” were sought and particularly highlighted in these different products. We have also shown that there is no real community of authors around the LWP, since the ties between teachers working with this company are weak and driven mainly by the implementation of specific and focused projects, which could be compared to the “reticular collectives” described by Metzger (2007, quoted in Beauné, 2018, p. 12).

We also tried to analyze the reasons why teachers who created websites or blogs close to the “proto-communities” described by Baron and Zablot (2017) agreed to partner with a company from the field of the educational technology industry. Our results highlight different links that may seem paradoxical between the creation of structured websites such as proto-communities and partnerships between teachers and private actors. The need for sharing and exchanging with peers would be very difficult to establish within an institutional framework, but also within personal online spaces. The practices of colleagues, combined with the consumption of online resources and a professional culture that places little value on personal ambition, are among the obstacles identified.

In addition, the need to be identified and portrayed as “authors” seems to be a strong motivation, covering several elements: a need to recognize the work done in the classroom, the possibility for teachers to assume multiple professional identities and a need for remuneration. In our opinion, these practices and goals lie at the border between tactics – “making do” with a restrictive framework that leaves little room for individual recognition – and visibility “strategies” that aim in particular to bring together products accumulated over time and partnerships in a specific “place”, in this case teachers' personal websites. However, the analyses carried out did not allow us to know whether these typologies of practices and partnerships covered specific discourses on a teaching identity that would evolve with the links between proto-communities and private actors.

We were therefore interested in taking into account and analyzing the representations of actors belonging to the digital education industry sector, because they shed new light on the possible integration of the notion of community into a marketing and economic strategy – between the flow, brokerage and provision of editorial services – in exchange for teachers' symbolic recognition, financial remuneration and professional

development opportunities obtained through professional, symbolic and social links that are nevertheless part of power relations. We refer here to the definition by Évelyne Charlier and Jean Donnay (2006) – quoted in Daele (2016, p. 91) – of a process “oriented towards a goal, a project, a progress”, which is personal or linked to a broader project and nourished by educational values towards students, and which will be fed by interactions with other actors during exchanges, discussions or debates (for example, colleagues, parents, school psychologists). We believe that interactions with commercial stakeholders feed into this process and are poorly documented. Professional development would also be “partially plannable”, “dynamic and continuous” since the teacher reinvests his or her learning in daily practices, sometimes in an unexpected way. Finally, it is a process “anchored in the personal development” of teachers, who will develop at their own pace, according to their personal project, their experience and their own values. This moment is “linked to the process of identity building”, i.e. to the way in which the teacher represents his or her role and his or her relations with other educational actors.

In our contribution, we wanted to stress the fact that some teachers choose, for tactical reasons, to participate in collectives that are more or less captive and indirectly market-oriented in order to respond to a feeling of deprofessionalization within the institution itself. A thorough analysis of all the testimonies and documents collected should allow us to explore further the possible link between LWP’s relations with teachers and a deeper movement of “merchandization” and “industrialization” (Moeglin, 1998, quoted in Bullich, 2018, p. 6) of education, to which teachers, at some point, would contribute.

Nevertheless, we wish to specify that, in the case of LWP, there are different degrees of “captivity” and “commodification” of reticular collectives gathered around the different products of the LWP.

For example, if the value associated with certain content such as teacher columns is based on their supposed authenticity, they must fit into the editorial line of the PJP. The IPPs, on the other hand, must integrate into the school curricula and also be structured to respect the model of the WP platform (a step that should lead to a task to be carried out for the students). As for educational kits, their creation is governed by compliance with specifications negotiated between the company’s customers and the editorial team, but over which teachers have minimal control and which is often limited to thematic proposals. These partnerships consolidate and legitimize the economic and marketing strategies of digital educational actors – for example,

by being recognized as an “educational community” that is capable of mobilizing teachers who produce low-cost content.

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