

NICE

NEXT INTERACTIVE COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT

To respond to the demands involved in managing corporate work and information flows, CSP has developed NICE – Next Interactive Collaborative Environment - which integrates various collaborative web tools in a highly configurable system to facilitate document and knowledge sharing in companies.

On the strength of the experience gained in the European project SVEA – www.svea-project.eu – which developed a web-based architecture for distance learning and continuing education using the OS software Open Atrium, CSP customised the platform to suit corporate needs. The system is based on the concept of “work groups”, namely teams working on different projects which can share some of their results using tools like blogs, wikis, to do lists, calendars and instant messaging.

The traceability of each stage, the collaborative approach encouraged and the rational organisation of the shared contents and results leads to the creation of an authentic repository of resources that remains accessible and usable over time.

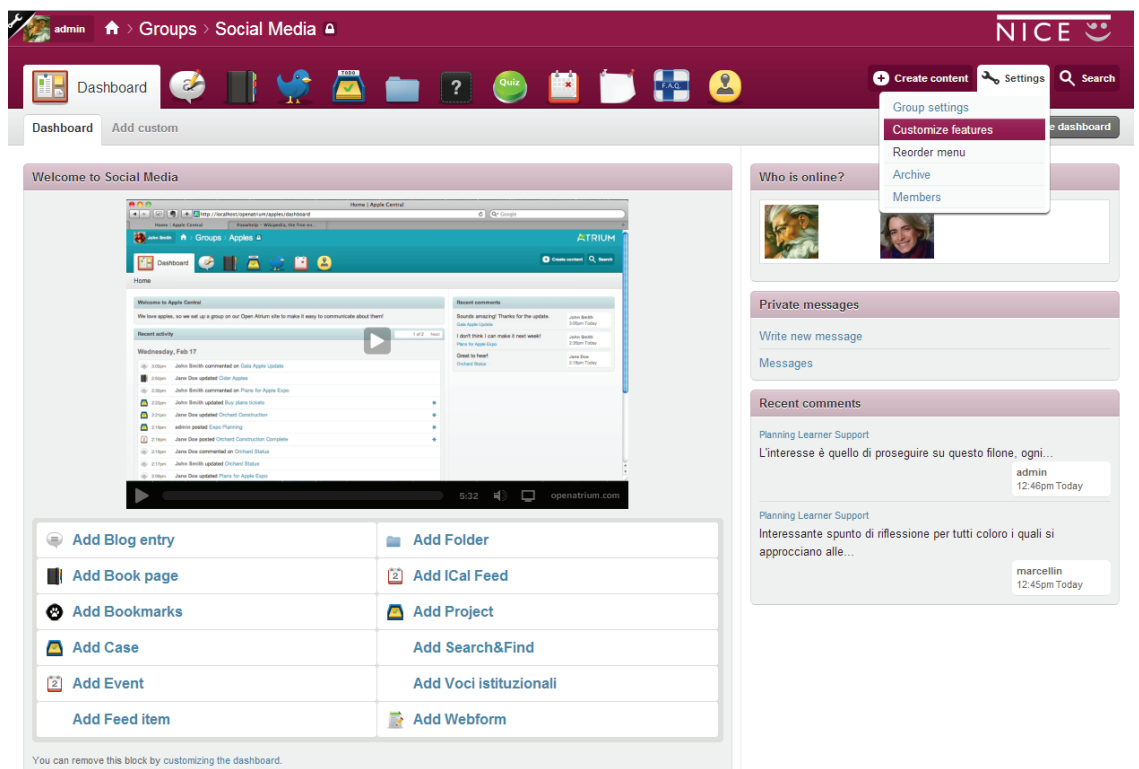


Fig. 1 Work group dashboard



HOW IT WORKS

NICE is a working environment based on an innovative model of collaboration and sharing which gives work groups involved in a project new ways of foregrounding and capitalising on tacit knowledge in the corporate setting. Users have personal profiles and can share information by using a series of tools which can be activated on an ad hoc basis, in line with the modular approach of the system architecture:

- **Dashboard:** this acts as the “wall” for each user or group and can be customised according to the contents to be visualised;
- **Blog:** gathers discussions and comments on the various issues relating to the group's activities;
- **Wiki:** a collaborative tool for creating, managing and sharing texts, multimedia materials and presentations in a group;
- **Tasks:** this tool assigns “to do” lists to one or more users and creates projects for the group, assigning and managing levels of priority;
- **Shoutbox:** a microblogging system for sharing short messages and links within the group;
- **User profiling:** access to webcams is tailored to user group.
- **Calendar:** enables users to share events and appointments.

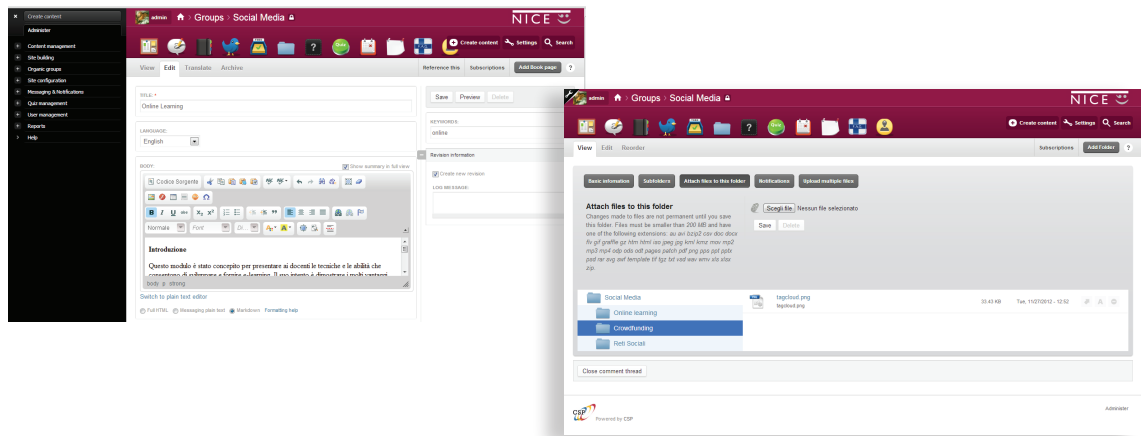


Fig. 2 WYSIWYG editing tool for the wiki, administrator menu and content management form

The customised version of Open Atrium used to develop the NICE platform also enables the following optional features to be added:

- **Bookmarks:** for gathering and sharing external links;
- **File archive:** a repository of files which enables documents in different formats to be saved and accessed;
- **To-Do Lists:** this simple to do list manager enables users to define their priorities. The documents are managed using a drag&drop interface;
- **Private Messages:** this enables users to message each other. This function is present on the user's wall, which can also be configured to receive the desired notifications;
- **Questionnaire:** this feature enables the administrator to create questionnaires and surveys ad hoc. The data can be exported in excel format, or visualised using the administrator interface;
- **Multilingual system:** more than one language can be activated on the platform;
- **Quiz:** the administrator can create quizzes for the users of the platform;
- **Social Network:** users can create their own social networks within the platform, sharing information via classic web 2.0 tools;
- **FAQ and Search Engine:** these facilitate usability and help users rapidly locate the contents they require.

