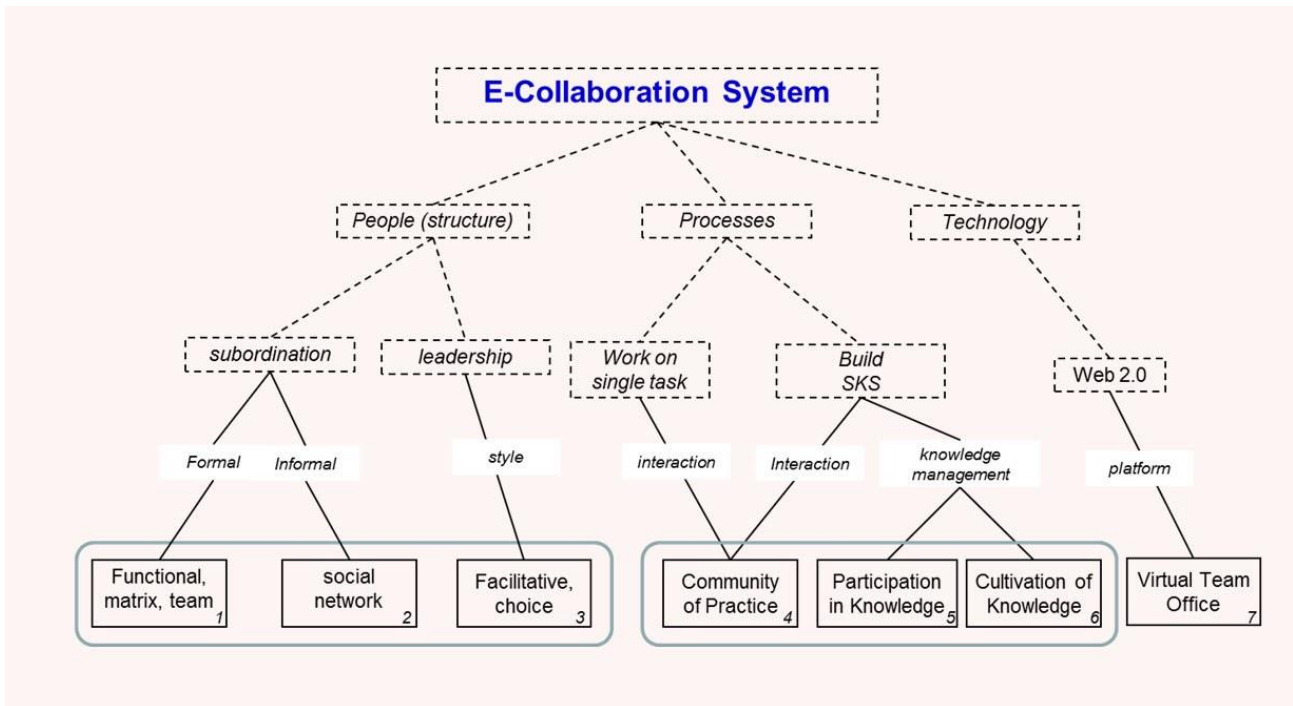


# eSF – Our E-Collaboration System



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## 1. WHAT:

eSF is our team's knowledge-oriented e-collaboration system, composed by 3 elements: people, processes and technology. **People:** we have to comply with some formal regulations (office presence times, etc.), but from the viewpoint of how we actually do our job and work together (informal setting) we are a *social network* with participation of all team members in decision-making. Team leadership is *facilitative*, inspired by the insight that "*Choice leads to motivation and innovation*" (Gossamer Albatross Principle). **Processes:** there are 3 main interaction processes, "Discuss" (examining issues according to argument, comment, suggestions, etc.), "Describe" (representing with words, numbers and/or pictures the outcomes of a discussion;) and "Document" (saving what has been described or collected from external sources to an organised repository). **Technology:** is considered as an enabler supporting the other two elements and follows a Web 2.0 approach (interaction).

## 2. WHY:

Knowledge processes play an essential, relevant role in E-Collaboration. What matters in E-Collaboration is the construction of shared knowledge. Collaboration does not just happen because individuals interact: individuals must make “a conscious, continued effort ... with respect to shared knowledge.” (Roschelle & Teasley, 1995, p. 94). In this perspective we understand and define E-Collaboration as consisting of two concurrent activities, one being to work on a single task and the other being construction of a shared knowledge structure. From this follows that the organisational structure (people) and collaboration processes (task, knowledge and social processes) play an important role in making E-Collaboration successful and should be designed accordingly. The motivation for developing, implementing and applying an E-Collaboration system is based on the one hand on the mission of our team, which consists of promoting E-Collaboration as a competence within FFHS by seeing it as complementary to E-Learning, the core business of FFHS as a distance-learning university. On the other hand, we as a team share the conviction that to solving 21st century problems, we need 21st century organisation and want to organise our team accordingly in an innovative way.



## 3. WHO:

We are four people, two senior researchers (Willi Bernhard & Marco Bettoni) and two young research associates (Nicole Bittel & Victoria Mirata), each with multifaceted competencies of different types.

## 4. HOW:

Our E-Collaboration system is implemented by means of an architecture conceived as a tree with three branches: a people branch, a process branch and a technology branch. Our Web 2.0 approach is implemented by means of Moodle; here we have defined a Virtual Team Office (a shared space for enabling the construction of a shared knowledge structure). Its layout is in the so-called “topics format” with 7 sections: 1. Forums; 2. Wikis; 3. Folders; 4. Google Docs; 5. Internet links; 6. Individual tools; 7. Archive. A forum discussion (section 1) supports asynchronous “discuss” interactions, a wikipedia or a GoogleDocs document (section 2 & 4) are used for “describe” interactions and a file folder (section 3) for “document” interactions.

