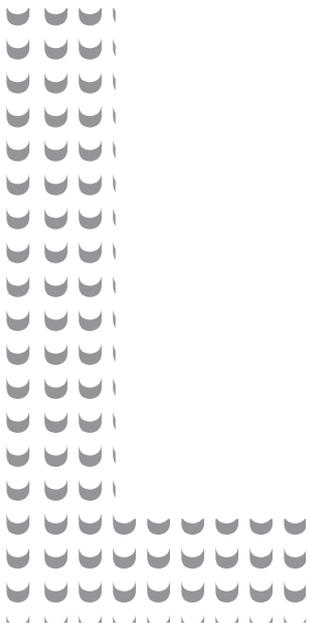
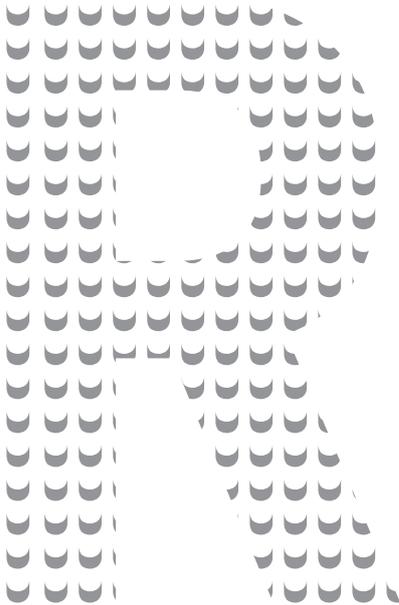


# USER REQUIREMENTS WITH LEGO

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## URL - User Requirements with Lego

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v 1.0

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# LICENSE

This work outlines the basic principles of URL (User Requirements with Lego), an application of Lego Serious Play (as stated in the *Open-source / <Introduction to Lego Serious Play>* available on [www.seriousplay.com/19483/HOW TO GET IT](http://www.seriousplay.com/19483/HOW_TO_GET_IT)) devoted to the design of online communication strategies and applications. URL, formerly known as Real Time Web (RTW), has been released by the laboratories NewMinE and webatelier.net, Università della Svizzera italiana (University of Lugano, Switzerland) under a Creative Commons license Attribution Share Alike: see [creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/) for license details.

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**Lego Serious Play** or **LSP**.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>Legal information</b>	<b>4</b>
License	4
Trademarks	4
<b>Table of contents</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Framing URL</b>	<b>8</b>
Lego Serious Play	9
Online Communication Model	11
<b>URL: User Requirements with Lego</b>	<b>12</b>
What is URL	13
Advantages of URL	14
Limits of URL	17
History of URL	18
<b>URL: how to</b>	<b>20</b>
Organizing an URL workshop	21
People	21
Space and time	23
Lego bricks	24
Other materials	25
URL workshop: step by step	27
URL workshop: report	41
<b>Annexes</b>	<b>42</b>
Checklist - Before the workshop	43
The workshop step by step	44
<b>Contacts</b>	<b>45</b>

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# INTRODUCTION

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This guide explains URL: User Requirements with Lego, a methodology to elicit user requirements for online communication applications.

This guide is addressed to online communication consultants, such as web agencies or freelancers, as well as to communication departments in large organizations.

The guide explains what is URL and how to use it. It gives hints on why use URL with clients and helps in persuading them.

URL is an application of Lego Serious Play (LSP), supports the requirement analysis and contributes in building the team.

URL was developed at the laboratories NewMinE and webatelier.net, Faculty of Communication Sciences, Università della Svizzera italiana (University of Lugano, Switzerland) with the collaboration of trivioquadri and Kharta, and was formerly known as Real Time Web (RTW). In this document an overview of theories and practices behind URL is given, namely LSP and the Online Communication Model (OCM).

URL is then presented in details, in particular what it is, what are the advantages in using it and its limitations.

In the last chapter the methodology is explained, starting from the organization of an URL workshop, continuing with the phases of the workshop and including the report.

This document is based on the manual (Open-source/Introduction to Lego Serious Play), available online at the address [www.seriousplay.com/19483/HOW TO GET IT](http://www.seriousplay.com/19483/HOW_TO_GET_IT).

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**/\*FRA-  
MING  
URL\*/**

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# LEGO SERIOUS PLAY

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This is a short introduction to Lego Serious Play, a tool developed by Lego to unlock innovation within a company. For further information about this methodology, please read the brochure *Open-source/Introduction to Lego Serious Play*.

In general, Lego Serious Play offers means for a group to:

- share ideas, assumptions and understandings
- engage in a rich dialogue and discussion
- work out meaningful solutions to problems

During a structured process, participants use Lego bricks to create models that express their thoughts, reflections and ideas. LSP is based on the assumption that everyone within an organization can contribute to the discussion, and help generating solutions. In fact, “LSP begins with the assumption that the answers are ‘already in the room’, and invites participants to ‘think with their hands’ to build their understandings” (*Open-source/Introduction to Lego Serious Play*).

The main idea in LSP is developing a method that “gives your brain a hand”, i.e., that holistic thought, supported by doing together with reflecting instead of just thinking, can enhance understanding and creativity. In order to support creativity and expression, LSP leverages on Lego bricks, which have the following relevant features:

- simple to use
  - known by most of the people
  - come in many shapes/colors and can often provide inspiration for metaphors
  - provide ready-made powerful symbolic pieces
  - can be built into simple or complex forms
  - are used in many different cultures
-

---

In a LSP session, each activity is based on three steps:

- a. Creating a model
- b. Attributing a metaphorical meaning to it
- c. Sharing that meaning with the rest of the group as a story



# ONLINE COMMUNICATION MODEL

URL: User Requirements with Lego is based on the Online Communication Model (OCM). OCM, formerly known as Website Communication Model (WCM) or coffee-shop approach, was developed by researchers of webatelier.net. OCM describes the communicative elements of an online communication application, such as a website.

The Online Communication Model understands a web application as the interaction of people (managers / administrators and users) through a web application made of content and functionalities, within a larger environment.

The OCM illustrates the areas of concern for designing, implementing, maintaining, promoting and evaluating an online communication application. As presented in this Page, OCM is based on four main pillars:

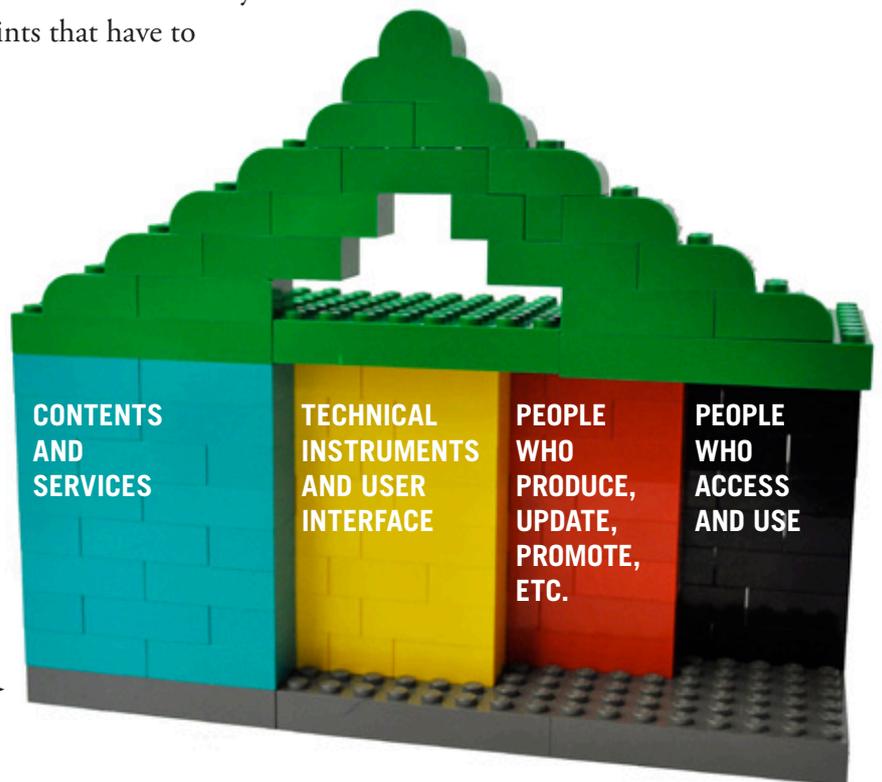
1. contents and services
2. technical instruments and user interface
3. people in charge of building, managing and promoting the website and interact with users
4. people who access the website and use it

The competition arena around it represents the website’s environment: the context/world, with information competitors and other players. OCM allows stakeholders to share a clear idea of what they should create and suggests which are the main points that have to be discussed during the workshop.

In this framework of understanding, the methodology here proposed involves every aspects of the Online Communication Model.

For further information on OCM, please refer to Cantoni L., Tardini S. (2006). Internet. Routledge, London (UK) – New York (NY).

**THE CONTEXT/WORLD,  
THE RELEVANT INFO-MARKET**



**/\*URL  
USER  
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# WHAT IS URL

URL: User Requirements with Lego is an application of Lego Serious Play (LSP).

URL supports the definition of strategies in online communication, by helping in the elicitation of user requirements for web applications. In particular, URL helps in finding communicative requirements that usually do not emerge with other methodologies. For this reason, URL has to be intended as an additional methodology, used besides formal and structured strategies (such as interviews, focus groups, etc.) to find and define user requirements.

URL helps also in team building, yielding in few hours to share a common understanding of the online communication project.

When thinking of strategies in online communication, e.g. when building a new company website or redesigning an existing one, stakeholders are often professionals coming from several company units: executives, management, communication, corporate identity, marketing, sales, IT,... They should work in concert and agree on a common vision, strategy, and operative direction. Collaboration, discovery and negotiation of ideas at the early stage of design is known as requirements elicitation and analysis. At this stage, stakeholders should start developing and sharing basic design concepts, envisioning their application's users, contents and goals.

In this context, capturing, understanding and expressing communicative requirements for the design of web applications can be really a daunting task.

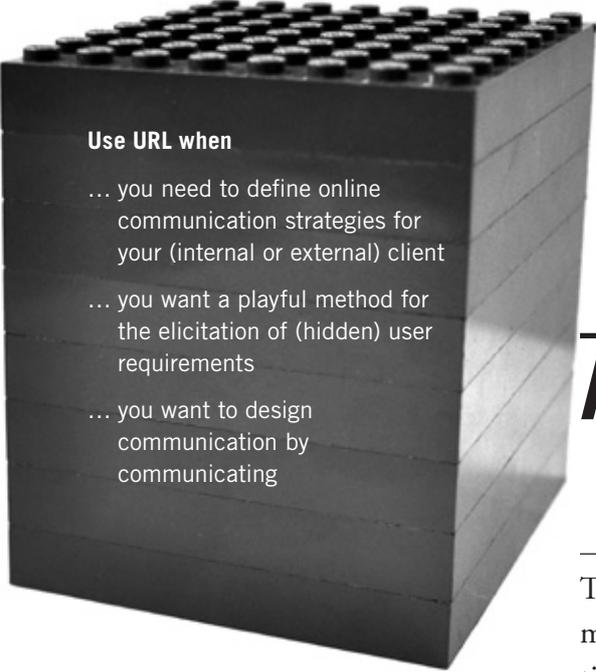
URL is a method for eliciting the requirements and strategic design issues of web applications based on the use of Lego bricks. In URL, the playfulness approach supports the elicitation of non-analytical requirements. URL follows the approach of Lego Serious Play, proposing a



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structured sequence of timed individual and collaborative activities, led by a facilitator.

URL is an innovative and holistic method, which generates a shared and agreed-upon view of the target web application, which can be quickly transformed into an initial design and can speed up the project.



#### Use URL when

- ... you need to define online communication strategies for your (internal or external) client
- ... you want a playful method for the elicitation of (hidden) user requirements
- ... you want to design communication by communicating

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## ADVANTAGES OF URL

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The use of URL offers several advantages when designing online communication. **URL is a powerful methodology** that points out perceptions and ideas of every stakeholder. You may miss a lot of important issues that remain hidden when using only traditional methodologies for user requirements elicitation. URL is precise: it helps prioritize needs and requirements. Participants are requested to build up a single Lego model, to represent “an important” or “the most important” content/service/intended audience. They cannot just list many items, as it happens quite often during interviews and focus groups. People understand that the more focused is the communication, the more effective and efficient it is. In this process, they are naturally driven to align

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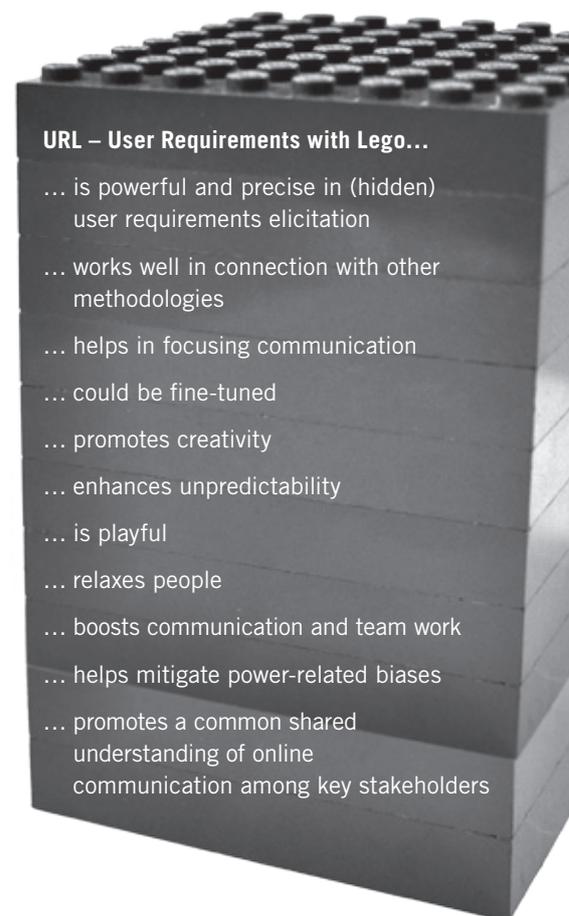
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web communication requirements with corporate business goals. URL can be fine-tuned for specific needs or it can be integrated with other LSP modules. The experiences done so far indicate that this approach can be extremely powerful, especially when skillfully combined with analytical methods, in providing a more precise understanding of a web application's requirements. According to the experience at webatelier.net, it was like adding a third dimension to a painting: the scene gets richer and clearer, more complex, lively, and engaging.

**URL fosters innovation** by pushing workshop participants to be creative and to find out-of-the-box solutions for effective web communication. Often, stakeholders have a non-analytical approach when working on user requirements, while most methods force them into narrow formats. A bad tension emerges between stakeholders' feelings and the analytical perspective of traditional conceptual tools for requirements analysis. URL helps in finding soft goals, by stimulating lateral thinking, encouraging people to explore wider scenarios, creating a relaxed environment where participants can freely express themselves, facilitating in tearing down conventional barriers. URL pushes unpredictability: while during interviews, people tend to be politically correct and say what they think the interviewer expects them to say, with URL they are spontaneous.

Insights get through URL have proven to be different and complementary to those identified with more conventional methodologies.

**URL is playful.** Capitalizing on the advantages of previous practices and research work, URL approach systematically bridges the gap between current methods for web communication requirements and an emerging family of design techniques focusing on active participa-



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tion of stakeholders in building and sharing meaning through playful artifacts. The playful experience of URL pushes people into a creative and constructive mood. Stakeholders feel less constrained, and dare exploring wider scenarios.

### **URL boosts communication and team work**

Thanks to its playful aspect, URL helps mitigate power-related biases. Following the structure of activities, participants can freely express themselves (“everybody has a voice”): there is no risk of just copying or approving boss’ ideas. This is a particularly relevant advantage, if compared with focus groups.

By facilitating dialogue and constructive communication, URL enables to generate shared and agreed-upon requirements, helps to make silent assumptions explicit and promotes a sort of double mirroring: stakeholders mirror their own ideas into a single Lego model, and at the same time, they can see how their viewpoints are reflected in the models produced by their colleagues.

While fostering buy-in to the company online communication website project, URL promotes a common shared understanding of online communication among key stakeholders, and helps fully integrating online communication within company’s strategies and everyday management.

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# LIMITS OF URL

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Three limits are clearly seen in URL.

## **Costs**

An URL session requires a face-to-face workshop of 3 to 4 hours, where all key stakeholders interact together. Setting such a workshop can be difficult and it requires a significant effort on behalf of the client company or organization. However, results of an URL workshop are reached with other methodologies with more costs and efforts in terms of money, time and other resources.

## **Completeness of user requirements**

URL provides sound user requirements, but it does not provide a complete map of them. Saliency is favored over exhaustiveness. Therefore, it is useful to complement URL with other user requirements techniques, as it cannot be used as the only method to gather requirements in a complex project.

## **Willingness to dare**

URL requires on the company side willingness to play and to be challenged in a new and unconventional way – a condition that sometimes can be hardly met. Good results are achieved by people and companies ready to take risks and experiment new practices.

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# HISTORY OF URL

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The use of Lego bricks as design tools for online communication at the Università della Svizzera italiana started in 2006. The laboratory [webatelier.net](http://webatelier.net) with the support of the NewMinE Lab were involved. The background idea was the use of real bricks to think about abstract things, such as online communication features. The need to use metaphors when building with Lego bricks pushes people to share meanings and negotiate a common ground.

After an exploratory phase, researchers started working with [trivioquadriodio](http://trivioquadriodio.com), a consultancy company based in Milan (Italy, [www.triq.it](http://www.triq.it)) specialized in using Lego Serious Play. The aim was to apply the LSP methodology to the design of web applications. The resulting methodology was defined with the support of Kartha, company based in Carpi (near Modena, Italy, [www.kartha.it](http://www.kartha.it)). The methodology was named Real Time Web and was first used at the end of 2007. As an international academic institute, [webatelier.net](http://webatelier.net) published first results in two conferences: the 27th ACM international Conference on Design of Communication (SIGDOC '09) and the conference for Human Computer Interaction International, HCII 2009.

After several workshops, the latest version of the methodology is presented here and re-named as URL, User Requirements with Lego.

Many thanks to the people who contributed and tested this methodology. Among them:

- Lego company and its people, in particular Cecilia Weckstrom.
  - the supporting and funding companies:  
[trivioquadriodio](http://trivioquadriodio.com) (Leonardo Previ, Dario Villa, Paolo Antonini),  
and Kartha (Stefano Zanoli)
-

- 
- researchers who contributed to develop the methodology:  
Davide Bolchini, Luca Botturi, Chiara Bramani, Leonora Giovanazzi,  
Elena Marchiori, Emanuele Rapetti
  - collaborators and students: Barbara Biffi, Barbara Guggiari
  - all the people involved in several workshops

The work with Lego bricks yielded to two scientific publications:  
Cantoni L., Marchiori E., Faré M., Botturi L., Bolchini D. (2009). A systematic methodology to use Lego bricks in web communication design. In Proceedings of the 27th ACM international Conference on Design of Communication (Bloomington, Indiana, USA, October 05 - 07, 2009). SIGDOC '09. ACM, New York, NY, pp. 187-192.

Cantoni L., Botturi L., Faré M., Bolchini D. (2009). Playful Holistic Support to HCI Requirements using Lego Bricks. In M. Kurosu (ed.), Human Centered Design, HCII 2009, LNCS 5619, Springer-Verlag, Berlin Heidelberg, pp. 844-853.



# **/\*URL HOW TO\*/**

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This section presents the URL: User Requirements with Lego methodology in details, as well as practical issues about the organization of a workshop.

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## ORGANIZING AN URL WORKSHOP

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Organizing a workshop requires a careful planning and preparation. The consultant has to identify participants, find a suitable date and place and prepare materials.

## PEOPLE

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### PARTICIPANTS

An URL workshop requires the participation of the main stakeholders involved in communication activities, such as, for instance, the CEO, communication executives, corporate identity experts, legal consultants, marketing and sales, IT staff.

An URL workshop works well with 7- 12 people. If the stakeholders' group is larger, it may be split in two smaller groups, setting up two tables.

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## FACILITATOR

URL workshops are run through facilitation. The facilitator should be an URL expert and should be external to the stakeholders' team.

Main tasks of the facilitator are:

- design of workshop's goals with the client
- plan materials and spaces
- introduce participants to the method
- assign the building challenges
- structure the workshop phases
- manage time and pace

The facilitator's task is to get the group's dialogue to serve its purpose and make the participants capable of expressing the ideas that are needed for the group to reach its common goal. The facilitator should ask questions that encourage the participants to dig deeper into the meaning of their model and the story attached to it.

Her/his role is to accompany the team during the workshop phases, to listen to the participants and to answer the questions, but *s/he* intervenes as little as possible. For instances, *s/he* never touches the models.

A good facilitator must be:

- an expert of URL methodology
  - flexible  
(adapting constantly the workshop structure to participants' needs)
  - active observer and listener
  - able to summarize others' ideas and stories
-

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# SPACE AND TIME

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## LOCATION

An URL workshop takes place in a room with two big tables. One table is used to build models and all participants should seat around it. The second table will be used as “parking lot” for already built models and to prepare landscapes. Every participant should have enough space to express herself and everyone can easily reach the bricks.

## DURATION

A typical URL workshop requires about 3-4 hours.

## TIMING

Every step of an URL workshop has a precise timing. Each participant should have time to tell her/his stories and the overall time of the session should not be too long. Controlling the timing and keeping the discussion on track are important tasks for the facilitator.

## PREPARATION

Every model built by participants should be described by a single keyword. The keyword is written by the facilitator on a flag. Be sure to prepare the flags before the URL workshop. You may use paper tape and distinguish models type with different flagstaff colors.

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# LEGO BRICKS

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An ad-hoc URL Lego KIT may be available in few months. In general, you need enough bricks so that every participant can build three models. A suitable set will include standard Lego bricks and special elements such as wheels, tires, windows, trees, minifigure parts, sticks, globes and small base plates. Be sure to have flags and connections.

Specific kits for Lego Serious Play are recommended and can be ordered on the Serious Play website.

## **Starter Kit**

Product number 2000414

[www.seriousplay.com/19609/2000414](http://www.seriousplay.com/19609/2000414)

It includes: selection of standard Lego bricks combined with a few DUPLO elements; selection of special elements such as wheels, tires, windows, trees, minifigure parts, sticks, globes and small base plates.

## **Identity and Landscape Kit**

Product number 2000415

[www.seriousplay.com/19587/](http://www.seriousplay.com/19587/)

The Lego Serious Play Identity and Landscape Kit is designed for use in conjunction with the Starter Kit (2000414). It includes: large special mix of Lego bricks combined with DUPLO elements including animals; extensive selection of special elements such as wheels, tires, windows, trees, minifigure parts, sticks, globes, spiral tubes, ladders, fences and spider webs; large selection of base plates; 3 grey plastic sorting trays.

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**Connection Kit**

Product number 2000413

[www.seriousplay.com/19565/2000413](http://www.seriousplay.com/19565/2000413)

The Lego Serious Play Connections Kit is designed for use in conjunction with the Starter Kit (2000414) and the Identity and Landscape Kit (2000415). It includes: large selection of long Lego bricks; extensive selection of connecting elements such as spiral tubes, ladders, fences, bridges and strings.

# OTHER MATERIALS

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## CHECKLISTS

As annexes of this document, you will find a set of checklists to help you in organizing an URL workshop. Use them as reference or to take note of what participants say about every single model.

## PHOTOCAMERA

A visual documentation of models is needed to write the report. Be sure to have a camera (check battery and storage). If possible, a person in charge of taking pictures may be involved. Be sure to have a clean table as shooting desk.

## VOICE/VIDEO RECORDER

Besides notes, you may want to record participants' explanations. Be sure to inform them and get their agreement.

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#### MUSIC PLAYER

The workshop's activities are performed on a musical background which supports lateral thinking and promotes a laid-off environment. We suggest to create a cd or a playlist with instrumental music. You may choose music that lasts exactly the time given for every single exercise.

#### STOPWATCH

Time is really important and the facilitator should check it carefully.

#### LABELS

A list of labels is needed.

#### FLIPCHART

A flipchart with sheets and pens is needed.

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# URL WORKSHOP STEP BY STEP

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An URL workshop involves several steps. URL is basically a sequence of facilitated and timed activities, following the format of LSP modules, and designed on the basis of the Online Communication Model (OCM).

Hereafter an outline of the workshop is given, later on details on every single activity will be explained.

#	Activity	Duration (about)
A	Introduction, explanation of goals, theories	5-10 min
B1	Warm up: build the highest tower	5 min
B2	Warm up: metaphor, build dream/nightmare colleague	15-20 min
B3	Warm up: description, build something	15-20 min
C	First challenge: your role	15-20 min
D	Second challenge: user	15-20 min
E	Third challenge: blackbox landscape	10-12 min
F1	Fourth challenge: content or functionality	15-20 min
F2	Fourth (bis) challenge: functionality	15-20 min
G	Fifth challenge: landscape	10-15 min
H	Sixth challenge: connections	5 min
I	Seventh challenge: final landscape	10-15 min
J	Eight challenge: completeness check	10 min
	Total time	about three hours

The building challenges B2, B3, C, D, F1, F2 follow the main structure of Lego Serious Play activities, which include three phases:

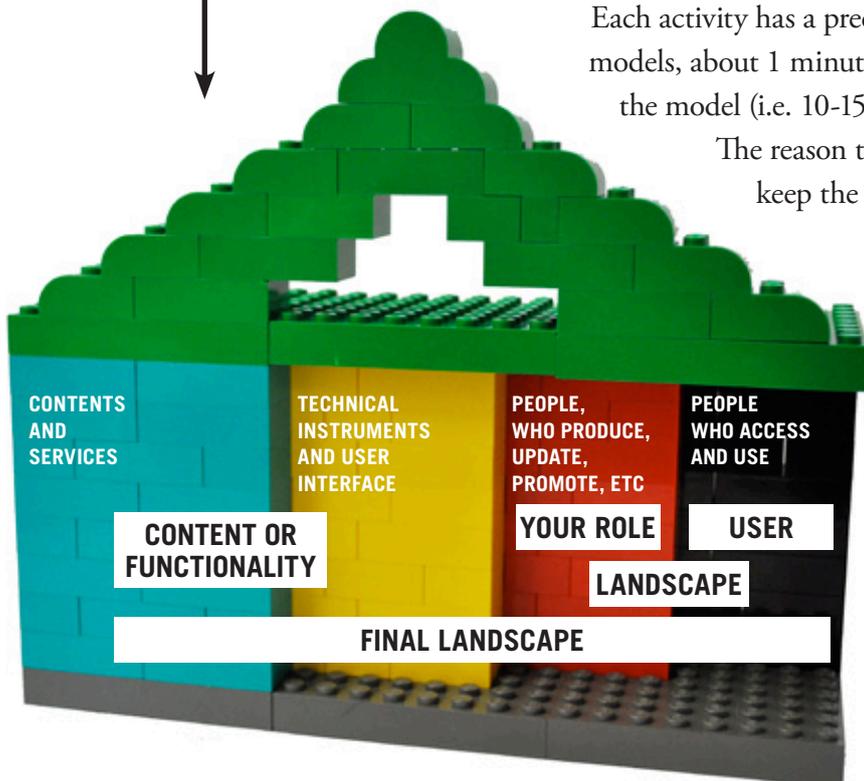
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1. challenge: the facilitator poses the building challenge to the participants.
2. building: the participants build a Lego model representing their reflections on the building challenge.
3. sharing: the participants share the meaning and the story that they have assigned to their own models.

These 3 phases are repeated several times, beginning with a simple task and gradually up to more complex tasks. The building phase has a musical background. During the sharing phase, the facilitator asks each participant to explain her/his model to everyone in about one minute. The starting order is not important and should be changed at every challenge. The facilitator listens carefully to the participant's explanation, asks questions if needed and asks for a single descriptive keyword. The keyword should be written on a flag which is stiked to the model. Flags of different colors could be used for different challenges (e.g. blue for roles, yellow for users, red for contents and black for functionalities), helping to clearly see differences when items are put together in the landscape. The facilitator writes on the flag then gives the flag to the participant, who puts it on the model. The facilitator never touches models.



**THE CONTEXT/WORLD,  
THE RELEVANT INFO-MARKET**



Each activity has a precise timing: 5 minutes for building individual models, about 1 minute for each participant to share the meaning of the model (i.e. 10-15 minutes depending on the size of the group).

The reason to have a time limit is to prompt action and to keep the overall workshop within a defined time limit.

The consultant may choose to allow for more time if useful (e.g. 7 minutes for building).

The workshop's basic structure can be fine-tuned for specific needs.

Activities are presented below in detail.

**OCM & URL**

*OCM and related URL activities*

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# INTRODUCTION

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# A

The facilitator welcomes participants, introduces her/himself, explains the goal of the project and the goals of the workshop. Participants seat around the table, while the facilitator stands up and walks around.

A brief introduction on the URL methodology is given and its basic rules explained. No detail is given about challenges that follows. Participants are invited to express themselves with the models, they are not judged, there is no right answer. They are asked to respect time constraints: having few time pushes them to think with their hands since they do not have enough time to design the model before building it.

The facilitator asks participants to introduce themselves. Goals of this first part are: introducing the methodology, presenting the workshop structure, knowing each other and creating a relaxed atmosphere.

**People involved:** facilitator speaks, participants listen

**Timing:** 5 to 10 minutes



# B1 WARM UP: BUILD THE HIGHEST TOWER

The first three activities (Bx) are warm-ups in order to re-familiarize with Lego. The first one (B1) is to build a tower as high as possible. The facilitator asks the participants to build the highest tower they can (higher than the towers built by others). The only rule is that the tower should stand without help. Time is about 3 minutes. Before starting, the facilitator puts Lego bricks in the center of the table. Participants could take bricks from everywhere on the table (not only those in front of them). It is not allowed to reserve bricks. If one tries to reserve bricks, others could “steal” them.

After 3 minutes, the facilitator asks to stop and looks at the towers, identifying the highest one. Then differences in building towers are pointed out, stating that there is no right or wrong way to build with Lego bricks. The facilitator could show some examples (e.g.: using flat bricks in vertical).

The models are then demolished.

**People involved:** individual exercise

**Timing:** some time for explanations, 3 minute for building, some time for comments



## TOWER

*“the highest tower built  
by a participant”*

# WARM UP: METAPHOR, BUILD YOUR DREAM/ NIGHTMARE COLLEAGUE

# B2

Participants are requested to build a model that represents their dream colleague in 5 minutes (or nightmare, the facilitator decides only one and same challenge is given). More bricks and other Lego parts are put on the table (e.g. minifigures). From now on, bricks and parts are added as needed. After the models have been done, participants are asked to explain in about 1 minute each their model to the others. The facilitator asks questions to better understand the meanings of different parts of the models. The models are then demolished.

After having introduced the method and got familiarity with Lego bricks, the facilitator underlines the fact that now the “serious play” begins. The facilitator highlights the three steps of the methodology, namely: building, metaphor and sharing.

**People involved:** individual exercise

**Timing:** some time for explanations,  
5 minutes for building,

10-15 minutes for explanations  
(about 1 minute for participant)



## CLOSE MINDED

*“my nightmare colleague stays in his office and never looks outside. His mind is closed.”*

# B3 WARM UP: BUILD SOMETHING AND REINTERPRET IT

The facilitator asks to build whatever everyone wants to. There is no rule, except using imagination and having fun. Once the models are done, the facilitator asks each participant to explain the model in 1 minute. The facilitator attributes randomly a meaning to the model of each participant, one by one. For instance, the facilitator says “Please, explain us why your model represents X” and participants have to explain it according to the suggested meaning.

This exercise helps participants understanding how powerful can metaphors be, and pushes them to stretch the tension between the actual model and what it can represent, according to the story/narrative attached to it by its creator. The models are then demolished for the last time. Here you can find some suggestions for this exercise:

Explain why your model represents:

- a dream holiday
- your favorite activity
- a relaxing day
- an ingenious invention
- the ideal home
- your favorite song
- your neighbor
- the car of the future



**People involved:** individual exercise

**Timing:** some time for explanations, 5 minutes for building, 10-15 minutes for explanations (about 1 minute for each participant)

# FIRST CHALLENGE: YOUR ROLE

# C

The facilitator asks participants to build a model that represents how everyone thinks he or she can contribute to the online communication project.

It is also explained that the models which will be built in the next steps have to be solid in order to facilitate their displacement.

The challenge may be explained with sentences like: “Please, build a model that represents your role in the project, your contribution, what you can do in the project.”

Once built the model, everyone has to briefly explain it to the others. The facilitator asks for a single word that describes the model, then writes it on a flag and gives it to the participant, who puts the flag on the model. The model is moved to another table and a picture is taken.

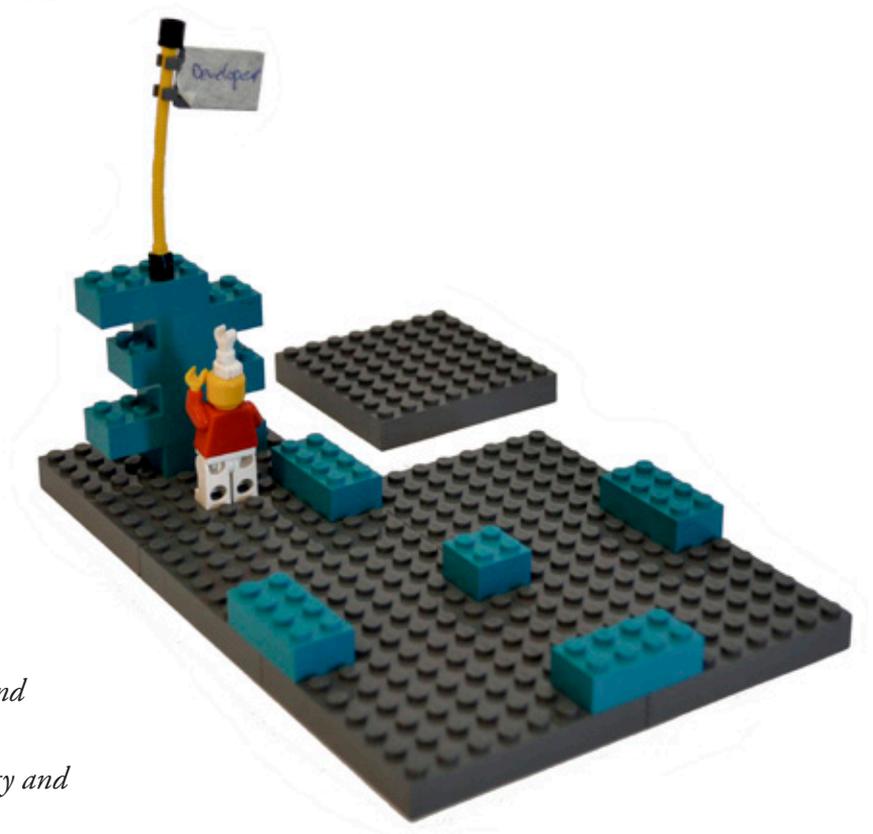
**OCM pillar 3:** people who manage the website

**People involved:** individual exercise

**Timing:** some time for explanations,  
5 minutes for building,

10-15 minutes for explanations

(about 1 minute for each participant)



## DEVELOPER

*one of the participants is a web developer and describes his role in the project:*

*“I am a developer, I take pieces of technology and use them to put together the website.”*

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## D SECOND CHALLENGE: USER

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The facilitator asks participants to build a model that represents a relevant user type of the web application. More than names, the models represent the main features of specific users, and why/how/when they might use the website.

Once built the model, everyone has to briefly explain it to the others. The facilitator asks for a single word that describes the model, then writes it on a flag and gives it to the participant, who puts the flag on the model.

The model is moved to another table and a picture is taken.

**OCM pillar 4:** visitors

**People involved:** individual exercise

**Timing:** some time for explanations, 5 minutes for building, 10-15 minutes for explanations  
(about 1 minute for each participant)



### RESEARCHER

*a team is building a website for a research group in human computer interaction.*

*A participant thinks that most important users for the website are other researchers:*

*“Our main user is a researcher.”*

---

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# THIRD CHALLENGE: BLACKBOX LANDSCAPE

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# E

The models are arranged on the second table, participants stand up and walk around the second table. The facilitator puts in the middle a symbolic object (the black-box) which represents the web site or application as a whole.

Participants have 10-15 minutes to create a landscape, i.e. to position the models according to a shared meaning/narrative.

This black-box landscape is the first step in collaborative thinking and team alignment. Shared models are built by combining individual models into a single landscape, through a process of dialogue and negotiation. At the end of this exercise, one participant on behalf of the whole group explains in a narrative way how the landscape was built, its structure and meaning.

The facilitator does not intervene during the group negotiation, but can answer to specific questions and can ask questions him/herself after the presentation of the landscape.

**OCM pillars 3:** managers, and **4:** visitors, as wells as partially the fifth element: the context

**People involved:**

group activity

**Timing:** some time for explanations,

10-15 minutes for creating the landscape,

2 minutes for explanations.

Pictures of the landscape are taken.

## RESEARCHER

*Participants negotiate the landscape*



# F1/F2

## FOURTH CHALLENGE: CONTENT OR FUNCTIONALITY

Back to individual activity (and sitting around the first table, while the second table remains quiet with the black-box landscape): the facilitator asks participants to build a model that represents the most relevant/important content item or functionality in the web site.

Once built the model, everyone has to briefly explain it to the others. The facilitator asks for a single word that describes the model, then writes it on a flag and gives it to the participant, who puts the flag on the model.

The model is moved to the other table and a picture is taken.

According to needs, this challenge could be repeated asking to build one model for content and one model for functionality.

**OCM pillar 1:** content and functionality, and partially **2:** user interface

**People involved:** individual exercise

**Timing:** some time for explanations, 5 minutes for building, 10-15 minutes for explanations (1 minute for each participant)



### VIRTUAL TOUR:

*a participant, designing a website for a shop, says that the most important content is a virtual tour:  
"The website should offer a virtual tour of our shop."*

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## FIFTH CHALLENGE: LANDSCAPE

---

# G

Participants move again to the second table. The black-box is removed and replaced by content and functionality models. The facilitator asks participants to rearrange the whole landscape in order to fit the new situation and to make sense of it through a consistent narrative. Again, only one person on behalf of the group describes the full landscape. The facilitator does not intervene during the group negotiation, but can answer to specific questions and can ask questions him/herself after the presentation of the landscape.

**OCM pillars:** all of them

**People involved:** group activity

**Timing:** some time for explanations, 10-15 minutes for rearranging the landscape, 2 minutes for explanation



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# H SIXTH CHALLENGE: CONNECTIONS

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The facilitator gives participants connecting pieces and asks them to link models. Two connections per participant are allowed: one between a manager model and a content/functionality model (indicating a management relationship), and another one between a user model and a content/functionality model (indicating a use relationship). This allows identifying more central or peripheral parts of the web, like e.g. some models with no connections at all and other models highly connected.

**OCM pillars:** entire picture

**People involved:** individual exercise

**Timing:** some time for explanations, 5 minutes for building, 10-15 minutes for explanations (about 1 minute for each participant)



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# SEVENTH CHALLENGE: FINAL LANDSCAPE

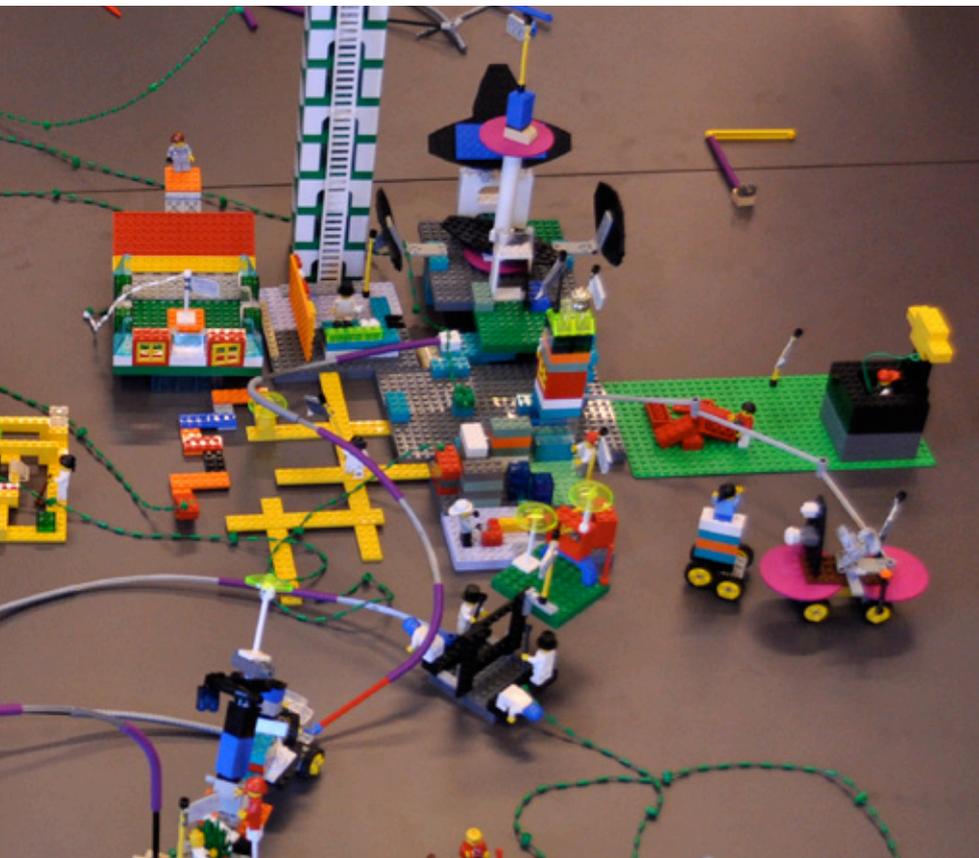
---

The facilitator invites participants to revise/refine connections. In particular, models without any connection should be carefully checked. If a content/functionality has no connection with a user, it could be useless, if it has no connection with a manager, nobody would possibly take care of it. If a manager has no connection with a content/functionality, her/his role is not clear. If a user has no connection with a content/functionality, nothing is provided for her/him on the website.

**OCM pillars:** entire picture

**People involved:** group activity

**Timing:** some time for explanations, 5 minutes for building, 10-15 minutes for explanations



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## J EIGHT CHALLENGE: COMPLETENESS CHECK

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A completeness check is done. In particular, are all relevant stakeholders represented in the landscape? Is any important content or functionality missing. Is some important user not here?

A list is created and written on the flipchart.

**OCM pillars:** entire picture

**People involved:** group activity

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# URL WORKSHOP: REPORT

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After the workshop, the consulting team produces a report which summarizes the main results. Context, goals, participants, models (keyword, description, pictures), landscape pictures and explanations, conclusions are clearly written.

An example of a report table of content is presented below:

**Executive summary****Table of content****Context**

Description of the company and of the project

URL short description

**Goals**

Of the project

Of the URL session

**Participants**

Complete list with names and functions, if possible a group picture

**Your role**

Models: keyword, description, picture, author, general comments

**Users**

Models: keyword, description, picture, author, general comments

**Black-box landscape**

Narrative, general comments

**Content and/or functionalities**

Models: keyword, description, picture, author, general comments

**Landscape**

Narrative, general comments

**Connection landscape**

Narrative, general comments

**Conclusions**

Main results

Identification of critical points or challenging design issues

**Reference of the consultancy company**

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**ANNEXES**





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# CHECKLIST

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## BEFORE THE WORKSHOP

- define the goals
- find a date which is ok for everyone
- find the room and book it
- plan 3-4 hours for the URL session
- room set-up: tables and chairs

## PREPARING MATERIAL

- Lego Kit (connections, flags, minifigures)
- Lego black-box (for the 1st landscape)
- Video Recorder or Audio Recorder (check the battery!)
- Camera (check the battery!)
- Laptop with Music player or hi-fi system
- URL CD or instrumental playlist
- bloc-notes and pen
- watch or timer
- adhesive (for keywords on flags)
- tickets with fixed meaning for models (for 2nd warm-up exercise)
- name badges for participants
- flipchart with sheets and pens

## PEOPLE

- 1 facilitator
  - 1 “cameraman”
  - Participants; 5-10 stakeholders
-



# THE WORKSHOP

## STEP BY STEP

ACTIVITY	DURATION (ABOUT)	ACTIVITY	DURATION (ABOUT)
Set-up the room Organize the room with tables and chairs, get the material ready			
Welcome the participants and illustrate the main steps in the session. Distribute the badges.			
<b>A</b> Introduction, explanation of goals and background theories	5-10 min	<b>E</b> Third challenge: blackbox landscape Move to second table Explain exercise Put black box in the middle Go away while participants discuss <i>10 minutes</i> End One participant tells you about the narrative <i>2 min.</i> Take a picture Record the stories	10-12 min
<b>B1</b> Warm up: build the highest tower Place Lego bricks in the middle of the table (without minifigures, flags and connections!) Explain exercise: highest tower, should stand by itself, 3 minutes Music – 3 minutes for building End Applause for the winner Destroy towers	5 min	<b>F</b> Fourth challenge: content or functionality Explain exercise Music – 5 minutes for building End Explanation: 1 minutes each Ask for keyword and write it on a flag Put model on second table Take a picture Record the stories	15-20 min
<b>B2</b> Warm up: metaphor, build dream/nightmare colleague Explain the 3 methodology steps: building, metaphor, sharing Explain exercise Music – 5 minutes for building End Explanation: 1 minutes each Destroy models	15-20 min	<b>F2</b> Fourth (bis) challenge: functionality Explain exercise Music – 5 minutes for building End Explanation: 1 minutes each Ask for keyword and write it on a flag Put model on second table Take a picture Record the stories	15-20 min
<b>B3</b> Warm up: build something and reinterpret it Ask to build whatever they want Music – 5 minutes for building End Explanation: 1 minutes each, give new meaning Ask for questions Destroy models	15-20 min	<b>G</b> Fifth challenge: landscape Move to second table Remove the black box and ask to replace it with models built Go away while participants discuss <i>10 minutes</i> End One participant tells you about the narrative <i>2 min.</i> Take a picture Record the stories	10-15 min
<b>C</b> First challenge: your role Explain exercise Music – 5 minutes for building End Explanation: 1 minutes each Ask for keyword and write it on a flag Put model on second table Take a picture Record the stories	15-20 min	<b>H</b> Sixth challenge: connections Give the connections and ask to put 2 different types of connection in the landscape: one color for roles and content/functionalities and the other for user and content/functionality. 3 minutes + explanation	5 min
<b>D</b> Second challenge: user Explain exercise Music – 5 minutes for building End Explanation: 1 minutes each Ask for keyword and write it on a flag Put model on second table Take a picture	15-20 min	<b>I</b> Seventh challenge: final landscape Go away while participants discuss <i>10 minutes</i> End One participant tells you about the narrative <i>2 min.</i> Take a picture Record the stories	10-15 min
		<b>J</b> Eight challenge: completeness check Altogether, observe the landscape and identify peripheral and central parts Find models left alone Remember to take pictures!	10 min

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# CONTACTS

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webatelier.net is a research and development laboratory of the Faculty of Communication Sciences of the Università della Svizzera italiana (University of Lugano, Switzerland). webatelier.net deals with a broad range of topics related to new media in communication, in particular in the tourism sector.

**Mission:** to investigate online communication as a true human activity, with a long-term, comprehensive and holistic approach. In particular, stressing human growth and quest for meaning in touristic experiences – eTourism.

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The New Media in Education Laboratory – NewMinE Lab – is a research and development laboratory of the Faculty of Communication Sciences at the Università della Svizzera italiana (University of Lugano, Switzerland). NewMinE people are a dynamic group committed to achieve excellence in both research and practice, exploring digital media innovations in all fields of education and in development processes.

**Mission:** to investigate online communication as a true human activity, with a long-term, comprehensive and holistic approach. In particular, stressing human growth and quest for meaning in educational experiences – eLearning – as well as in international development – ICT4D.

If you are interested to participate to an URL training workshop, feel free to contact us.

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