Åsa Smedberg

Åsa Smedberg is a lecturer and researcher at the Department of Computer and Systems Sciences (DSV), a joint venture of Stockholm University and the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Sweden. She has a PhD degree in Computer and Systems Sciences, her doctoral thesis is titled: "Online Communities and Learning for Health".

Her research interests include collaborative learning, online communities and the use of IT for continuous learning, with a focus on practical applications in healthcare. She began her research career by studying the use of different IT systems for continuous learning processes in a work context. Since 2003, she runs research in the field of web-based communities for increased learning. In-depth studies have been carried out of communication patterns in web-based health communities for people interested in changing their lifestyle. The user groups for these studies have included smokers and overweight groups. More than 600 online conversations and 3,000 posted messages have been systematically studied. Discourse analyses with a focus on the use of language as a social function as well as analyses of contents (in requests, advice etc.) in online conversations have been done. The studies also include comparisons with the public use of Ask the Expert systems in which medical professionals answer questions from people with health issues; a holistic view of the different health systems has been demonstrated. In order to look "behind the scenes", the community members' own experiences and opinions are also being addressed in present studies. The research results have been published internationally in conference proceedings and journals.

Åsa Smedberg is a program committee member of the IARIA conferences ICDS and e-Telemedicine. She is also a member of the Editorial Board of the "International Journal on Advances in Internet Technology", IARIA journals. She received Best Paper Award at the IARIA conference ICDS07. The last two years, she has been technical program committee co-chair at ICDS conferences, and in 2008 she was invited speaker at the ICDS08 conference. She is also a member of IADIS and a committee member of the IADIS International conference e-Health 2009.