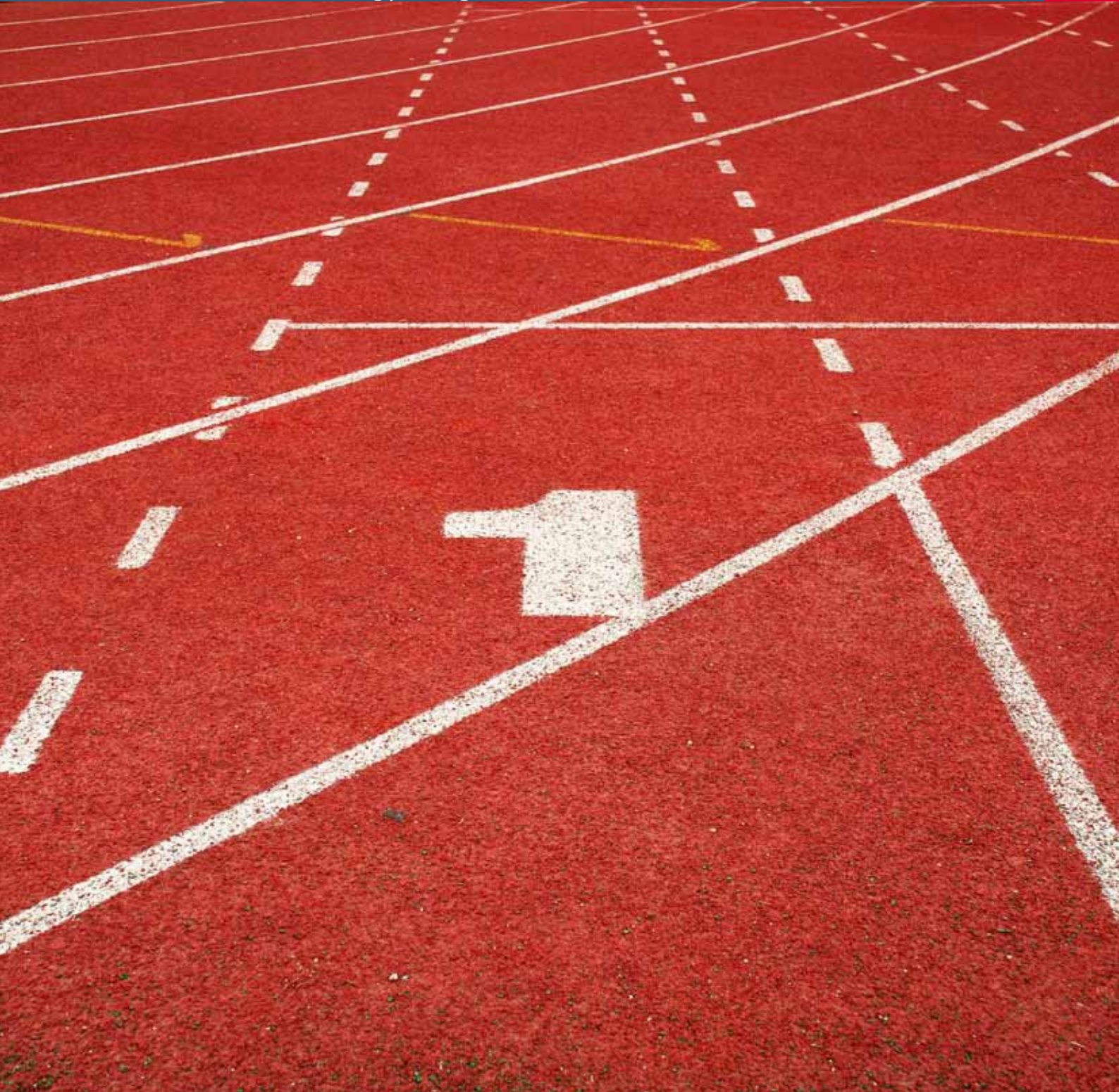


OpenHorizons



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ShareOnVibe - The Productivity Booster For Your Vibe Platform

by Dr. Werner Degenhardt

ShareOnVibe is a Firefox add-on that dramatically speeds up sharing content from the browser into a Vibe site. It provides several distinct ways of sharing information and handles many content types in a context-sensitive way. It works well with any Vibe installation, including Kablink Vibe. The configuration of the add-on is straightforward and can be imported/exported for backup and distribution purposes.

The Environment

In recent months, Vibe has started to gain a lot of popularity in the market, and a strong demand for social collaboration is fuelling the demand for Novell Vibe as a professional solution for enterprise collaboration.

With features like the strong integration into the Novell Collaboration Suite, perfect extensibility and customisability, unsurpassed ease in implementing customer-specific forms and workflows, and the new functionalities included in the recent update to Version 3.3 (especially Vibe Desktop and the Novell Vibe Add-In for Microsoft Office), Vibe is in a very strong position and satisfies many needs.

“Now, Vibe 3.3 is running at LMU/F11 and provides collaboration services for 25,000 users”

At LMU/F11, the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, Novell Vibe has been in use since Teaming 2.0 times. In the pilot phase, the IT department used Teaming for internal processes and a group of pilot users started to use the platform for research and project work as well as for the support of lectures.

Now, Vibe 3.3 is running at LMU/F11 and provides collaboration services for 25,000 users from all over LMU, providing several hundred active lecture workspaces to educational staff as well as hundreds of team and project workspaces to research projects, administrative staff, and the IT department.

Even though Vibe fits like a glove to most collaboration scenarios, it has a few small shortcomings, mainly due to the generic nature of the system and the need for the above mentioned customisability and extensibility.



All software has those little hitches, and no one minds them, as long as they do not interfere with the usability of the product or impede the user experience by slowing down processes that, from a user's perspective, should be fast and seamless.

ShareOnVibe takes care of one aspect that does prove to be a hindrance for users - the perceived barrier to entering arbitrary content while the mental focus is not inside Vibe, but on the information at hand.

What ShareOnVibe does

Every user of Vibe has been in the situation that during research (or while surfing for leisure), they have found some valuable information on the web, and want to drop it into Vibe to keep it for later use or to simply share it with others, adding a small comment and tagging it for better findability.

Let us assume the user is not logged into Vibe, does not have Vibe open in a browser window and does not use

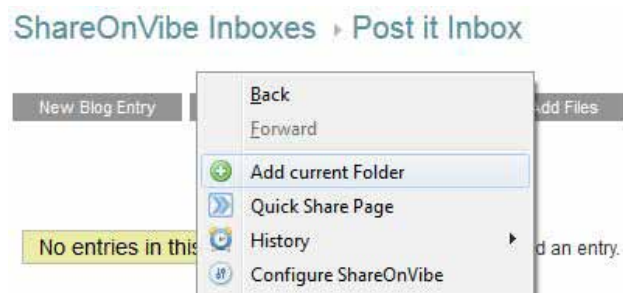


Figure 4: ShareOnVibe context menu



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GroupWise to access Vibe - which is rather common. The normal process to get the information into Vibe would be to open a new browser window or tab, open vibe, log in, navigate to the folder you want, create an entry, copy and paste all necessary information, add a text comment, create hyperlinks, save and then add tags to the entry.

Simply put, doing this for many pieces of information can get quite annoying and Vibe stops being the first choice as a quick-drop target for "hot" information - which is a pity.

Now let's see (the same process) how it's done with ShareOnVibe, already configured to have the favourite folder as a target to share to:

1. If you intend to share part of the web page you are on, select the text with your mouse
2. Right-click the selected text to share the selection, anywhere on the page to share a link to the page, or right click an image you want to share and upload
3. Select "Share Plus...", a dialog pops up that lets you select the target quickly, enter a comment and tags
4. Click "Share" (one-time SOAP login popup on first share is mandatory). That's it.

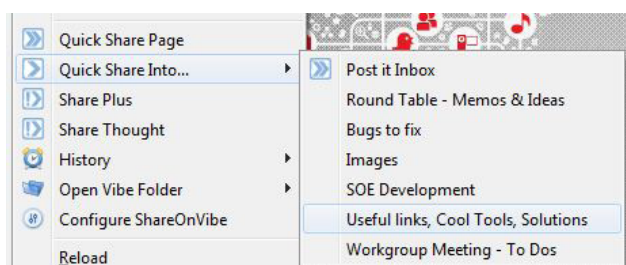


Figure 2: Quick Share

ShareOnVibe automatically adds the necessary meta information, including the browser window title and a link to the source page you shared from. And if you do not need to add a comment or tags, it's even easier:

1. Select/right-click just like above
2. Choose "Quick Share Into>", click on the target folder. Done.

This example demonstrates how ShareOnVibe accelerates and facilitates adding content into your Vibe platform. And with Vibe implementing enterprise grade security mechanisms, there is no possibility of spam or of users sharing into folders they don't have creation-access in.

Of course, the list of target folders you want to share into can be customised quickly and easily, while browsing Vibe it only takes two clicks. Now, the above example uses the function of sharing a web page - or part of it -



Figure 3: Share a thought

into Vibe. With ShareOnVibe, it is just as easy to share:

- Files linked on a web page - like the Novell documentation PDFs or Cool Solution downloads.
- YouTube videos - they are linked as well as embedded into the created entry.
- Images from a web page - for collecting images as design samples.
- a simple thought - no matter what you right-click on, you can always simply chose "Share Thought" and drop an entry with a title, a text and some tags into one of your Vibe folders - it's like digital collaborative Sticky Notes on steroids.

To quickly get to the information you shared, ShareOnVibe keeps a history of "shares" and opens them in new tabs on a single click. It also gives you a quick way to jump directly in to the Vibe folders you have selected as share targets.

For sharing into Vibe, it optionally uses Firefox's password manager to securely store your Vibe password, so logging in is not necessary anymore.

Sharing into several zones in your installation, or even into several distinct Vibe sites, is supported transparently and needs no special configuration.

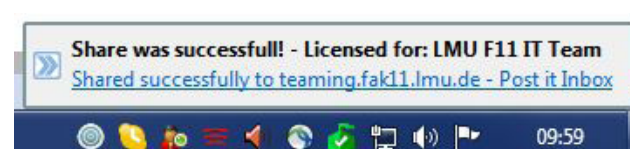


Figure 4: Successfully shared

In its entirety, this set of features opens up a big field of use cases for Vibe that without the add-on would take up too much valuable user time.

Use Cases at LMU/F11

Using ShareOnVibe since the first beta stages, the IT department of LMU/F11, together with a small group of researchers at the LMU Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, has explored a number of use cases for ShareOnVibe in the field of collaboration and research, as well as for personal use. Some of these are outlined here.

Easy collection of information without losing one's focus

When researchers go "information crawling", they can quickly share links, text snippets, images and linked papers into an "inbox" folder of the research project's Vibe workspace without leaving the page they are on, e.g. an academic search engine result page, thus keeping the mind focused on collecting information instead of copying it down and storing it. Also, the shared information is stored in a secure and safe place instead of the "endangered" laptop hard drive of the user.

"add to this the great extensibility of Vibe with custom forms, views, folders and workflows, and you arrive at a level of productivity that was not previously imaginable."

Quickly starting discussion threads without navigating to a specific folder

While actively working in a research team, e.g. while writing a wiki page inside Vibe, Share Thought is used to drop a question that comes up into a Vibe discussion folder in the same Vibe site, starting a discussion without interrupting the writing process and freeing the mind from the question.



Figure 5: Quickly share a video

Quickly mass-create tasks developed during a meeting

In a project meeting, tasks are developed and dropped into a Vibe Task Folder with Share Thought. After the meeting, the organiser sorts, assigns and times the tasks while having the full list view (Of course, people also use it for personal task management/creation).

Collect information of personal interest

Users come across lots of information during the day that they would like to peruse later on in their free time at home. Instead of "getting caught in the link-after-link-loop", they now share the link/information into a personal, protected folder and revisit the Vibe entry when they are out of the office - no matter if it's work-related or lolcats. (check it out!)

Collect and pin down technical information

In the IT department, a long and tedious search for technical information, bug help, TIDs and so on now leads to the necessary information being added to the IT Knowledge Base workspace, with added comments and proper tagging, so the information is quickly found on the next instance of a problem.

Update an action log for tasks

The IT administrators use Share Thought to quickly submit information, e.g. about having updated a server, to a work action log. Especially in IT administration work, the amount of time needed to document a performed task must be significantly lower than the time needed for doing the task itself. With ShareOnVibe, this is achieved easily, since the navigation, entry creation, tagging and such are done in one simple dialog.

Replacing the cloud of Sticky Notes

Several employees who tend to write many things down on little pieces of paper have taken to using ShareOnVibe instead. Most of them give "because now I find the stuff I wrote down" as the main reason.

This list goes on and on, from collecting company contact information, via creating and feeding a library of educational videos and instructions, and on to managing a link/URL collection to replace browser bookmarks that cannot be synchronised between browser flavours. Now, add to this the great extensibility of Vibe with custom forms, views, folders and workflows, and you arrive at a level of productivity that was not previously imaginable.

Conclusion and Perspective

At LMU/F11, ShareOnVibe has indeed proved to be a productivity booster for all user groups, be it researchers, be it IT staff or students. Since it fully adopts the "generics" approach of Novell Vibe, it is generally independent of the version of Vibe you use and can treat specialised entry types and forms transparently as simple entries.

There have been special use cases, however, where a more detailed functionality - like changing task priorities while sharing - would have been desirable, but the charm of the tool - and the efficiency of sharing information with it - are based on its simplicity.

We will continue to use ShareOnVibe, and are looking forward to future improvements.

We recommend you to take a look at it.

The Technology Behind ShareOnVibe

ShareOnVibe is designed as a platform independent Add-on for Mozilla's Firefox Browser and it works on Windows, Linux and MacOS.

It is built on standard technologies using SOAP over http(s) to communicate with Vibe's web service interface. This means that transparency for the network and proxies as well as security through standard HTTPS enable the use of this functionality without limitations - if you can reach your Vibe site, then the add-on can fulfil its tasks.

ShareOnVibe is a client side solution, no configuration on the server side is necessary. Users sharing content to Vibe via **ShareOnVibe** have exactly the same privileges they have when using the default browser interface, the Vibe Add-in or Vibe Desktop.

ShareOnVibe allows the import and export of your configuration (as XML), thus making it really easy to deploy a preconfigured set of target folders to be used by the users inside your environment.

With all of these technologies being strongly standardised and long-time support being a very safe bet, the well-known and highly praised "upgrade safety" of Vibe will carry over to **ShareOnVibe** and enable a timely benefit from new Vibe features.

ShareOnVibe was created by Code and Concept and is available under the label co3tools from inetra de . More information can be found on <http://shareonvibe.com>



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