Teamwork is knowledge work and includes all aspects ranging from research and joint processing to transfer and publication. Thereby, different techniques will be employed, which, in accordance with the respective task and team need to be configured exactly. Here, the basic architecture for the realization of virtual knowledge spaces “open-sTeam” turned out to be the ideal basis; not an individual platform is in the centre of considerations, but an extendable ensemble of functions and virtual knowledge space configurations. The following examples illustrate how multifaceted the linked applications become through this.

In Paderborn, in addition to the department of computer science, numerous sections of the faculty of mechanical engineering intensively use open-sTeam for internal cooperation and knowledge exchange. In this context, classical forms of asynchronous communication, such as forums and chat, will be linked with modern wiki-technology and, for instance, applied to documenting/protocolling experiments within a practical course. In university didactics and media studies, didactic scenarios for discourse structuring, as, for example, pyramid discussions or thesis-criticism-replica methods, are applied in teaching with digital support based on open-sTeam.

Since more than two years, the Decision Support & Operations Research Lab of computer science in Paderborn maintains its own sTeam server, having ported the learning management system OpenSMT to open-sTeam technologies. Resulting from the cooperation with NXP Semiconductors in Hamburg, special project management software was developed, which makes particular use of the ability to generate and make available different kinds of access structures to strongly enhance internal cooperation.

In the context of the Locomotion project, a modern community platform has been created, which employs current Web 2.0 technologies and provides them on an integrated level in line with eLearning support. This platform for co-active learning and working (koala) is run by the Centre for Computer Science and Media Technology at the University of Paderborn since October 2006 and is at disposal for all university members not only for special teaching-learning scenarios, but also to spread and systematically process knowledge in the long run.

In cooperation with the research community “Sifa-Langzeitstudie” a special community platform has been developed for the exchange between security specialists and has now been run for one year by the University of Dresden.

The RFID-support centre, which is a collaborative initiative between research institutes in NRW, maintains a jointly developed web-based platform, specially adapted to the initiative’s needs. Here, open-sTeam serves to self-administer working groups of different subjects.

Due to these versatile requirements open-sTeam’s capacity to be extended and configured has been enhanced profoundly. In this context, additional modules, such as a chat-applet, calendar, quota-system, extension of search functionalities, extended wiki-functionalities, didactic scenarios, as, for instance, pyramid discussions, thesis-criticism-replica methods, software for the planning of processes, as well as many other components may be installed on the server at-run-time. Since the presented community-platforms are based on open-sTeam, these server extensions may also be used for the platforms mentioned above. This way, different core features of online communities can be realized and used in various application contexts.

The increasing number of web applications using open-sTeam as their main architecture shows the success of the approach to use virtual knowledge spaces to support processes of cooperation ranging from WWW-based web content management to mature community platforms. Thus, many of the developments discussed today in the context of Web 2.0 are already available in an integrated architecture.