WP9: Communication and dissemination

D9.14 - Web site report
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Project Acronym: OPAALS

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Short Description: Report on website traffic as a measure of dissemination impact.

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Partners contributed: LSE
Made available to: All

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Name, organisation</th>
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<td>Neil Rathbone, LSE</td>
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Quality check
Internal Reviewers:
Anne English, LSE
Niall Brennan, LSE
## Dependences:

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The information marked with an asterisk (*) is provided in order to address Recommendation n. 4 from the Year 2 review report

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Introduction

In response to a review recommendation to measure the impact of communication and dissemination, we set up a recording and statistical analysis system of our web sites using Google Analytics. This deliverable provides a report and overview of the results for the year 2009.

The report covers both the web site and the OKS. These were both changed towards the end of the year in line with the strategy of devolving the web presence among a number of partners, and moving away from the web site towards the OKS as the primary platform. Thus a consistent set of statistics for the web site is only possible to review from January to November, and the statistics for the OKS begin from its launch in April 2009 to November.

Web site statistics are subject to a number of limitations due to the assumptions that have to be made. For example, visitors from .com addresses are assigned to the US but could be anywhere in the world, and a regular visitor accessing the site from a different ISP may be counted as a new visitor.

However, we believe that the statistics give such strong indications that the conclusions we have drawn are reasonable.
OPAALS Project (Contract n° IST-034824)

Public web site
www.opaals.org

OPAALS.org was set up as a static web site to provide a basic information point. The content was driven by the wiki (http://wiki.opaals.org/) so that project members could update content themselves. Since November 2009, this URL redirects the user to the Sirona website which will be supported long-term by TechIdeas.

The main public web site
Page views

During 2009 there were a total of almost 7,000 page views made by nearly 2,000 unique users.

*Weekly traffic January - November 2009*

Traffic sources

Site traffic came roughly one-third each from: direct URL entry, referring sites and searches. This indicates that there were a variety of users with different modes of access, most of whom were probably ‘finding’ the information for the first time.

*Source of traffic*

This information is reinforced by the data showing that most users are new visitors to the site.

*New versus returning visitors*
Geographical distribution

The mapping shows that traffic was world-wide, with most use coming from partner countries. The US data is probably the result of the allocation of .com addresses.

Geographical distribution of users

Newsletter pages

The newsletter is read via the site and so we are able to see both the volume and pattern of readership, which indicates that around 100 people read it within a week of publication and it continues to attract some readership as an archive.

A typical newsletter page
OKS

http://www.opaals-oks.eu/

OPAALS-OKS.eu was initially hosted by IPTI under the name Guigoh (IPTI’s collaboration platform) at www.opaals.org.br. It was launched in April 2009, with a new look and feel, as the OPAALS official OKS.

The OKS home page

Page views

Following a sustained series of peaks over Summer, usage seems to have fallen off over the winter months, but this may be the ‘normal’ level following the rush of set-up activities, and to some extent the natural pattern of activity for deliverable and review preparation. Total page views for the year 1,700.

Weekly traffic April - November 2009
Traffic sources
As most of the users are project participants and regular users, most traffic accesses the site by directly entering the URL.

Source of traffic

Geographical distribution
As expected, the visitors are currently from the partner countries.
Conclusions

The public Web site appears to have served its purpose of providing initial awaness and education. The information provided was basic and factual and aimed at those trying to quickly and efficiently find out about OPAALS. The access methods revealed by the statistics indicate that two-thirds of users were finding it via search engines and referrals, while three quarters of visitors were new visitors. This strongly supports the conclusion that the site has fulfilled a 'first information' function.

There is a continuous weekly flow of site traffic, with moderate peaks and troughs that we believe result from events and other communication activities causing individuals to want to find out about OPAALS and Digital Ecosystems. Certainly the geographical pattern of usage shows a heavy concentration in partner countries which tends to support the conclusion that local contacts and awareness activities are driving these 'discoverers'. Visitors did not stay long, which reinforces the conclusion that they came mainly in order to find out what it was about and, having acquired the information, moved on.

The page statistics for the newsletter pages would seem to indicate that newsletters have been read by virtually all the project participants within the first week of publication, followed by a continuing low level of occasional access, probably by new site visitors seeking background information.

The pattern of usage and the more direct means of access of the OKS is consistent with it being an internal project tool. The initial flurry of activity as users set up profiles and groups is gratifying in a new facility that must begin life empty, and indicates that there was a strong need among project participants as well as an enthusiasm to set it up. The initial 'set-up' peak was followed by a trough, which may represent a more normal ongoing level of usage, and may also reflect the pattern of project activity with peaks and troughs following preparations for key dates, deliverables, and reviews etc.

Overall, while web site statistics for a specialist research project such as OPAALS will never rival major public Web sites, we have been very satisfied with the level of interest and the profile of our visitors. We conclude that the web site achieved its aims of efficiently providing awareness and information on demand.

As a result of these statistics and conclusions, we plan to continue with a separate 'quick access' information web site at the new www.opaals.eu address and develop the OKS at www.opaals-oks.eu as the more substantial location to involve additional users in project work and encourage social networking among participants. We will continue to monitor both sites.