



D3.1 Training strategy

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of the training task in WP3 is to organise, deliver and coordinate the training activities of the ViBRANT project. This document describes the training strategy and gives a summary of the activities and achievements during the first year of the project. We report on the delivery of courses, the set-up of the Ambassadors network and the distribution of a user survey. Based on the outcomes of these activities we present the training plan for Year 2 & 3 with announcement of courses for Year 2.

OBJECTIVE

Training is part of the outreach activities of the ViBRANT project. The major objective is to enhance the use of ViBRANT tools and to support and extend the user communities working with those tools. This will lead to an increased production of biodiversity information on the Scratchpads, a data-publishing framework for people to create their own thematic virtual research communities supporting biodiversity science.

Central to these efforts is the inclusion of sociological studies of ViBRANT's user-base. This work will underpin Scratchpads' development priorities and maximise engagement in the user community.

Hence, a significant emphasis is placed on training and services such as the help desk to support the users and on social science studies to understand the barriers to adoption and use of tools by our user community.

TRAINING STRATEGY

Responsibilities for training activities

Training is organised by the Scratchpad support team. At the time of writing (November 2011) the Scratchpad team consists of the project leader, three developers, and three user support staff (some only part time). At least 5 team members (developers and user support staff) take part in the delivery of training courses. In addition, it is expected that the Ambassadors network will engage in delivering demos and training in their research community.

Training resources

WP3, in cooperation with WP2, will organise and deliver training resources in order to support and extend the user communities working with ViBRANT products. This includes training courses organised at regular intervals mainly at NHM London and workshops bringing ViBRANT products to international conferences organised by user communities.

In addition to training courses, electronic resources are accessible to users at their home institution via the website. Training manuals and other help files are available on each Scratchpad (.../admin/advanced_help/scratchpadify_help) for self-training if no opportunity to participate in a training course arises. Self-training can also be done on the 'Sandbox' which is wiped every 6 hours. Or, the Scratchpad team can provide a home training site where users can practice for a longer period.

The Scratchpad platform also offers support systems such as the issues tracker and the help desk which create co-learning opportunities between developers and users (Brake I, Duin D,

Van de Velde I, Smith VS, Rycroft SD (2011) Who learns from whom? Supporting users and developers of a major biodiversity e-infrastructure. In: Smith V, Penev L (Eds) e-Infrastructures for data publishing in biodiversity science. ZooKeys 150: 177–192. doi: 10.3897/zookeys.150.2191).

Level of training

Training includes basic and advanced courses. In addition, tailor-made courses can be delivered on demand.

The one-day courses are intended to help current and prospective Scratchpad users to develop their site building skills. They are given the opportunity to learn best practice and gain a better understanding of what the Scratchpads can do for them and for their research community. The focus of the basic course lies on adding various kinds of data, on generating taxon pages and on communication with other users. The goal is to provide a taste of what the sites can do, and allow to independently explore the site after the training event. The focus of the advanced course lies on the import of data, creating of custom content types and views, and managing of projects (groups).

Training takes place in small groups (usually 12 participants) in order to give the trainee individual attention. No course registration fee is required but participants are responsible for their own travel and subsistence expenses when attending the Scratchpad course. And, a budget has been anticipated for certain trainees to attend the courses, if needed.

User needs & post training analysis

Evaluation of delivered training is essential if maximum impact is to be achieved. Hence, all course attendees are asked to complete an online feedback form (which can be done anonymously if desired) <http://scratchpads.eu/feedback-form-training-courses>. Most of the responses received are very positive and a detailed evaluation will be given in a forthcoming report (M3.14 'Assessment of user support services and promotional activities').

The feedback given by the participants after training influences the delivery and content of training as well as the future design of the Scratchpad software.

Getting to know the specific training needs of the Scratchpad users and of potential users is important. The Scratchpad team and WP3 have set up a user survey in order to get a better view of user needs and to influence the further development of Scratchpads 2.0 as well as implementation priorities. The survey covers the following issues: Scratchpad community characteristics, system improvements, training courses, technical support services. The user survey is available at <http://www.qualtrics.com>. The focal maintainers (±350) of all

Scratchpad sites were asked to fill in the online survey. The request was sent out on 9 September 2011 with a reminder on 6 October 2011. Results will be discussed in a forthcoming report (M3.14).

Ambassadors network

ViBRANT is recruiting a group of enthusiastic and experienced Scratchpad users to be the official local representative of the Scratchpad community, linking the Scratchpad team with Scratchpads' growing user base. Ambassadors spread the word about Scratchpads, promote the use of Scratchpads and arrange or give training in their local Scratchpad community.

The ambassadors network and programme can be viewed at:

<http://scratchpads.eu/ambassadors-programme>.

The process for planning and organisation of training courses and the ambassadors network is shown in the chart in annex (p.7).

TRAINING DELIVERY

Year 1 (Dec 2010 – Nov 2011)

A new version, Scratchpads 2.0, is planned for release in January 2012 and will include many enhancements. Hence, it was decided to put priority on the development of the Ambassadors network during the second half of Year 1 instead of delivery of training courses. However, to secure a continuity and to meet the demand of training the following training courses were delivered during Year 1.

Date	Location	Participants	Course level
9 December 2010	NHM London	11	Basic
19 January 2011	MNHN Paris	12	Basic
16 February 2011	NHM London	10	Basic
28 February 2011	NHM London*	14	Basic
15 August 2011	NHM London**	11	Basic
25 August 2011	Heriot Watt Univ. Edinburgh***	12	Basic
* Throughflow Workshop ** Convolvulaceae Unlimited Workshop *** MASTS BEF JRT Workshop			

Year 2 (Dec 2011 – Nov 2012)

With the release of Scratchpad 2.0, two updater sessions are planned in 2012 for current maintainers to learn about the new version. At least two basic training courses and one covering more advanced topics of interest to Scratchpad users are planned to be held at the Natural History Museum in London.

An inventory of upcoming conferences/workshops was assembled and a list of potential course locations was extracted to give back to back training sessions on the occasion of the event. Moreover, ambassadors offer to host a course at conferences they organise e.g. planning is ongoing to deliver a basic and an advanced training course in conjunction with the 12th International Symposium on Flatworm Biology, 11-16 June 2012, Stockholm.

The following training schedule has already been announced since November 2011 on the Scratchpad website (<http://scratchpads.eu/scratchpad-training-courses>) and more courses will be added:

- 21.03.2012, Natural History Museum, London, Scratchpad 2 update for current Scratchpad maintainers
- 23.05.2012, Natural History Museum, London, basic course
- 07.06.2012, Swedish Museum of Natural History, Stockholm, basic course
- 08.06.2012, Swedish Museum of Natural History, Stockholm, advanced course
- 12.06.2012, Natural History Museum, London, advanced course
- 16.10.2012, Natural History Museum, London, basic course

Based on training requests posted to the help desk, more courses in other locations will be organised. Furthermore, via de 'Suggestions' webform (<http://scratchpads.eu/scratchpad-training-courses>), people can give suggestions on where and when to offer a training course.

Year 3 (Dec 2012 – Nov 2013)

As in Year 1, three types of courses will be delivered: basic, advanced and tailor-made. The schedule will be announced in due time (end 2012).

Based on the experiences of former Scratchpad training courses, feedback of the participants and the results of the survey, training delivery is continuously improved to cope with user needs.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Overall progress is judged by the usage of ViBRANT tools and services. This will be reflected in:

- number of Scratchpads;
- number of Scratchpad users;
- number of Scratchpad nodes;
- number of comments and request processing time for support requests (issues tracker and help desk).

Ambassadors network & Scratchpads training courses Process for planning and organisation

