



M3.14 Assessment of user support services and promotional activities

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Work package: WP3 'Training, outreach and community support'

Partner: RBINS

Reporters: Isabella Van de Velde & Thierry Backeljau

In cooperation with: Daphne Duin (VU) & Dimitris Koureas (NHM)



1. ASSESSMENT OF USER SUPPORT SERVICES

Within ViBRANT, Scratchpads is a data-publishing framework for people to create their own thematic virtual research communities supporting biodiversity science (<http://scratchpads.eu>). The Scratchpads platform provides at present the following support systems for users:

- the help desk dealing with the issues tracker, all emails, calls and meetings related to user support;
- a help system with help pages integrated into the individual Scratchpads;
- the Scratchpads 2.0 Help wiki;
- the sandbox and home training sites for self-training;
- training courses and online training manual;
- a blog to inform the community on new features, Scratchpads update, training courses etc.

1a. Support services: Training and training manual

Organised training sessions

ViBRANT Year 1

	Course level	Location	Date	Participants
1	Basic SP1	Natural History Museum London	09.12.10	11
2	Basic SP1	Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle Paris	19.01.11	12
3	Basic SP1	Natural History Museum London	16.02.11	10
4	Basic SP1	Natural History Museum London	28.02.11	14
5	Basic SP1	Natural History Museum London	15.08.11	11
6	Basic SP1	Heriot Watt University Edinburgh	25.08.11	12
				70

ViBRANT Year 2

	Course level	Location	Date	Participants
1	Basic SP	Natural History Museum London/Imperial college	13.02.12	29
2	SP2 update maintainers	Royal Botanic Gardens Kew	20.03.12	8
3	SP2 update maintainers	Natural History Museum London	21.03.12	6
4	SP2 Basic	Natural History Museum London	23.05.12	12
5	SP2 Basic	Swedish Museum of Natural History Stockholm	07.06.12	9
6	SP2 Advanced	Swedish Museum of Natural History Stockholm	08.06.12	5
7	SP2 Advanced	Natural History Museum London	12.06.12	2
8	SP2 Basic	American University Blagoevgrad	26.06.12	15
9	SP2 Basic	Natural History Museum London	16.10.12	5
10	SP2 Basic	Hellenic Centre for Marine Research Heraklion	17.10.12	20
11	SP2 basic	Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, Cape Town*	19.10.12	12
12	SP2 Basic	People's Palace, Beijing*	29.10.12	12
13	SP2 Basic	Joinville, Brazil*	11.11.12	13
				136

* e-monocot funded

Evaluation training courses and manual

Training has been evaluated by means of the online 'Scratchpad Survey Maintainers 2011' and the feedback training form available online on the Scratchpads website.

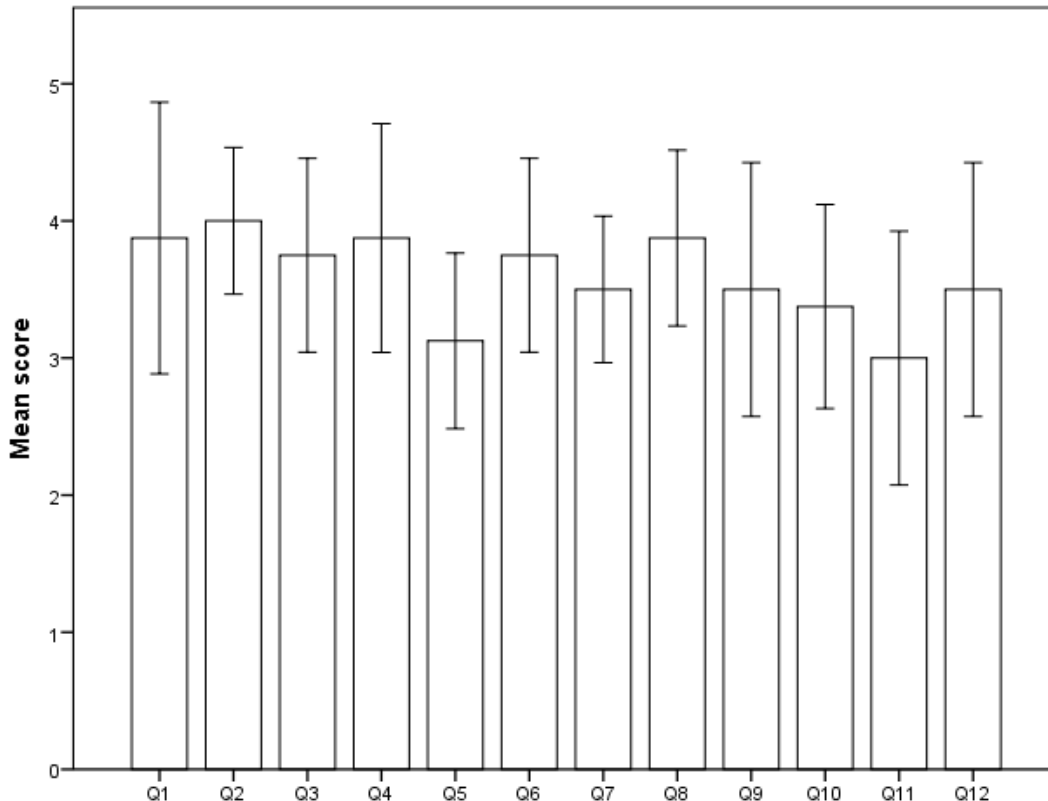
Evaluation of delivered training is essential if maximum impact is to be achieved. Hence, all course attendees are asked to complete an online feedback form (which can be done anonymously if desired).

Feedback training form

Since November 2010 an online feedback form is available on the Scratchpads website: <http://scratchpads.eu/training-course-feedback>.

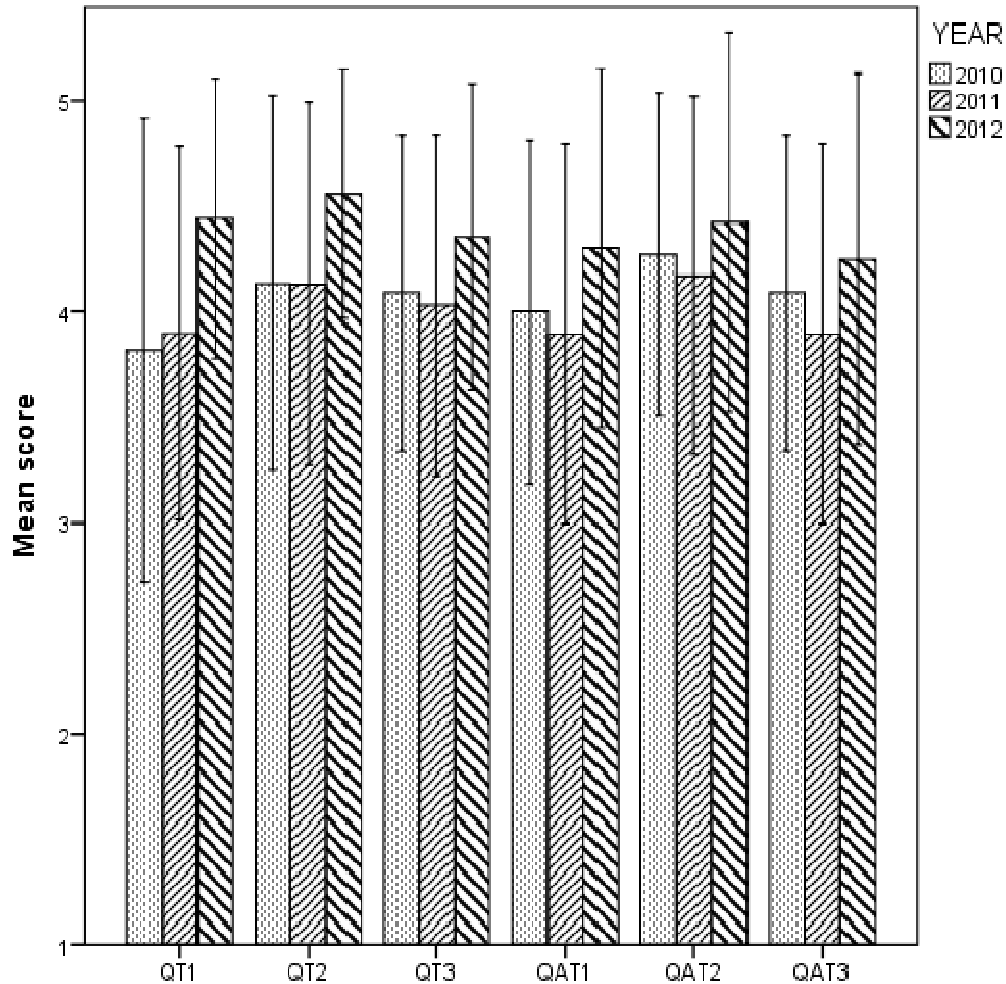
All course attendees are asked to complete the feedback form. Two sets of questions are answered by the participant. A first set of 12 questions assesses the impact of the training course to Scratchpads understanding, the second set is used to assess the communication abilities of the training providers. Answers are ranked from 1 to 5 (1 = poor, 5 = excellent).

Overall the participants evaluated the training course with a score of 3.9 ± 0.8 (mean value \pm SD). Some of the results are presented below. All details and a statistical analysis can be found in the document 'Descriptive statistical analysis on feedback from training courses participants - Years: 2010-2012' (see D3.2 Service delivery and evaluation, Annex 2).



Mean score and standard deviation based on feedback from all the participants (n=98) for the first set of questions.

Q=question; score: 1=poor, 5=excellent.



Mean score and standard deviation on a per training course year basis for the second set of questions.
 QT=question principal trainer; QAT=question assistant trainer.

Scratchpad Survey Maintainers 2011

To get a better view of user needs and to improve the further development of Scratchpads 2.0, a user survey was distributed to all Scratchpads 1.0 maintainers (379) in the period September-November 2011. The results of 61 feedback forms are discussed in detail in the report 'Scratchpad Survey Maintainers 2011' and recommendations for development, project management and future user studies have been formulated. Both reports and the questionnaire are available at:

<http://vbrant.eu/content/scratchpad-maintainer-survey-2011>

Training evaluation

Only 37% of the respondents attended a course; basic training courses were most attended. Concerning training evaluation, the majority of the participants said that the training met their expectations (80%), the content was easy to follow (80%) and adequate time was provided for questions and discussion (75%). The remaining of the respondents gave a neutral response on expectations (20%) and on time allocation for questions and discussion

(25%); 10% of the trainees found that content was not easy to follow.

Issues to be improved

40% of the respondents that attended a training elaborated on issues that could be improved in the training courses. The remaining of the respondents gave a 'no' answer (35%) or they said that they do not know (25%) what to improve.

The issues to be improved are a.o. a methodological explanation of the Scratchpads structure and its workflow, how to customise content types, examples of what can be achieved, clearer and slower explanations.

Need for additional training

60% of those that already attended a training course responded that an additional training course would help them in using their Scratchpad. And once more, it is clear that there are at least two top areas to be addressed in training: how to prepare data for upload on a Scratchpad and how to customise a Scratchpad. Furthermore, some of the respondents prefer a tailored-made or a face to face training.

Training manual Scratchpads 1.0 version

85 % of the respondents have used the training manual. 61% find the information in the manual sufficient to help them. 39% do not find the info sufficient. The comments received centered on the following issues: more detailed explanation is needed, more easily searchable content and more information on certain topics.

There is a strong demand for training courses and courses are appreciated. Based on the feedback of the respondents, a list of key recommendations to consider in future training is given in the report 'Recommendations for Scratchpad developers, project management and future user studies' available at:

<http://vbrant.eu/sites/vbrant.eu/files/Recommendations%20Survey%20Maintainers%202011.pdf>

Furthermore, it is evident from the answers that there are two audiences: those that are familiar with IT terminology and content management systems and those that are not. Hence, training needs to be well structured with special attention in the use of IT terminology. Trainees would appreciate if they could use their own data during the training course instead of examples.

1b. Other support services: issues tracker, email, phone, help pages, personal contact

These support services were evaluated by means of the 'Scratchpad Survey Maintainers 2011'.

99% of the respondents use one or more of the above mentioned services. Most used were the help pages (86%) followed by Email (73%), personal contact (49%), issues tracker (47%) and phone (10%). Concerning satisfaction rate of the way a problem was handled in the different support systems, only 9 replies out of 120 indicated dissatisfied or very dissatisfied for Issues system, email and Help pages. Notable is that the Help pages scored the worst with 7 dissatisfied answers out of 120. Remaining answers were neutral, satisfied

or very satisfied for the various support systems.

Concerning satisfaction rate of the way a problem was handled by the Scratchpads support team, only 4 answers out of 61 answers indicated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Most respondents gave a neutral reply or were satisfied to very satisfied.

1c. Scratchpads 2.0 Help wiki

With the launch of Scratchpads version 2.0 in March 2012, the Scratchpads Help wiki is being developed. This Help wiki forms part of the support services for Scratchpads 2.0. http://help.scratchpads.eu/w/Main_Page

The Help wiki contains:

- illustrated training manuals;
- glossary of Scratchpads terminology;
- video tutorials;
- documentation on advanced topics with examples;

The wiki is a work in progress and is continuously expanded and updated. Taking into account the users' feedback, improvements have been made such as e.g. screenshots have been incorporated in the training manual, a glossary with Scratchpads terminology is available online.

The Scratchpads Help wiki can be used to create printable PDFs of pages if you want to print a training manual similar to those used on training courses.

Currently the wiki is only editable by the Scratchpad Team but it is planned to open this up to some users or to all Scratchpads site maintainers in the future.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES:

It is our intention to launch in the beginning of 2013 a survey related to Scratchpads **version 2.0** in order to evaluate the needs of Scratchpads users and their satisfaction rate of Scratchpads software update and the support services.

2. ASSESSMENT OF PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

In the document M3.10 Delivery of a promotional strategy for ViBRANT services (http://vbrant.eu/sites/vbrant.eu/files/M.3.10_Delivery%20of%20a%20promotional%20strategy%20for%20ViBRANT%20services_0.pdf) a ViBRANT promotional strategy and foreseen outreach activities for the duration of the project have been elaborated and the following tools to achieve the outreach activities were defined:

- ViBRANT logo;
- ViBRANT website;
- ViBRANT & Scratchpads flyer;
- active participation in conferences, meetings and other relevant events;
- scientific papers and other publications;
- organisation and provision of dedicated training workshops;
- establishment of the Ambassadors network;

- support services for using the tools and services;
- sociology of the user-base and nascent user communities.

Overall progress is judged by the usage of ViBRANT tools and services. To evaluate the success of the promotional strategy the following data were collected and analysed.

Use of the ViBRANT tools and services

The number of site owners, registered users and visitors on a site were collected and average growth percentage.

Scratchpads user categories*	2010	2011	2012	Average growth %
Site owners	184	280	405	40,04
Registered users	2.350	3.800	7.286	70,01
Visitors	18.724	32.468	48.591	44,09

*Source: D3.2 Service delivery and evaluation

Website analytics

ViBRANT

vbrant.eu

	1 Oct 2010 - 30 Sep 2011	1 Oct 2011 - 30 Sep 2012
Unique visits	3.740	4.322
Visits	8.443	6.976
Average visit duration	0:03:44	0:02:45

Scratchpads

scratchpads.eu

	1 Oct 2010 - 30 Sep 2011	1 Oct 2011 - 30 Sep 2012
Unique visits	9.842	10.004
Visits	16.475	17.581
Average visit duration	0:03:01	0:03:09

Publicity material

Number of flyers produced:

ViBRANT flyers = 4.000 ex.

Distribution of flyers at events is catalogued.

Events

Data on participation/organization are tracked together with data on given presentations, posters:

<http://vbrant.eu/talks>

Publications

Data on papers submitted to journals is collected:

<http://vbrant.eu/biblio>

Training courses

ViBRANT year 1 = 6 courses

ViBRANT year 2 = 13 courses

ViBRANT year 3 = planning is ongoing

Ambassadors support infrastructure

In order to promote Scratchpads use and to foster long-term sustainability of the Scratchpads community, ViBRANT is recruiting a group of enthusiastic and experienced Scratchpads users to be the official local representative of the Scratchpads 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 call for Ambassadors was launched on the Scratchpads website and ViBRANT website in May 2011. Currently the network comprises 16 Ambassadors in 15 countries all over the world (8 EU countries, Canada, USA, South Africa, Australia, Guam, Colombia, Malaysia): <http://scratchpads.eu/support/ambassadors>

Some of the outcomes of the Ambassadors are:

- distribution flyers;
- beta testing Scratchpads 2.0, selection for test group;
- Scratchpads in the news (<http://www.seriouslyfish.com/africhthy-the-interview/>)
- organising interview with Scratchpad users community and VU sociology team:
 - Scratchpads users community Leiden, 15/05/12;
 - Scratchpads users participants Stockholm, 07/06/12;
- organisation on-site of Scratchpad training and promotion on conference website:
 - 'International Symposium on Flatworm Biology', Swedish Museum of Natural History from 11-16/06/12;
 - 'Sixth European Hemiptera Congress', American University, Blagoevgrad, 25-29/06/12;
- presenting Scratchpads at conferences (presentation and/or poster):
 - 'Grasses online – Scratchpads for Poaceae', presentation, ASBS conference, Perth, 23-28 September 2012;
- Scratchpad seminar 'ScratchPads 2.0 online databasing' for MSc students, Biology Faculty, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv on 12/10/12;
- Scratchpad seminar 'ScratchPads 2.0 online databasing' for staff of State Natural History Museum, Lviv on 18/10/12.

User support services

The frequency with which help resources are accessed, the number and kind of requests/bug reports posted to the different support systems and request processing time are recorded:

<http://dev.scratchpads.eu/project/issues>

<http://dev.scratchpads.eu/project/issues/statistics>

3. REFINEMENT OF SUBSEQUENT MILESTONES

The following new milestones to be delivered in Year 3 have been added in D3.3 Community delivery and evaluation (RBINS Nov 2013):

- M3.15 Ambassadors' network is fully operational (RBINS - April 2013)
- M3.16 Established user support services to keep the open source network community alive and vibrant (RBINS - Nov 2013)
- M3.17 Suggestions for potential new user groups (VU – Oct 2013)