M3.14 Assessment of user support services and promotional activities

Date: November 28, 2012
Work package: WP3 ‘Training, outreach and community support’
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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](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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course level</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Basic SP1</td>
<td>09.12.10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Basic SP1</td>
<td>19.01.11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Basic SP1</td>
<td>16.02.11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Basic SP1</td>
<td>28.02.11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Basic SP1</td>
<td>15.08.11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Basic SP1</td>
<td>25.08.11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ViBRANT Year 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course level</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Basic SP</td>
<td>13.02.12</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SP2 update maintainers</td>
<td>20.03.12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SP2 update maintainers</td>
<td>21.03.12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SP2 Basic</td>
<td>23.05.12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SP2 Basic</td>
<td>07.06.12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>SP2 Advanced</td>
<td>08.06.12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>SP2 Advanced</td>
<td>12.06.12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>SP2 Basic</td>
<td>26.06.12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>SP2 Basic</td>
<td>16.10.12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>SP2 Basic</td>
<td>17.10.12</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>SP2 basic</td>
<td>19.10.12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>SP2 Basic</td>
<td>29.10.12</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>SP2 Basic</td>
<td>11.11.12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 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 ± 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](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](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](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://vibrant.eu/sites/vibrant.eu/files/M.3.10_Delivery%20of%20a%20promotional%20strategy%20for%20ViBRANT%20services_0.pdf](http://vibrant.eu/sites/vibrant.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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scratchpads user categories*</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>Average growth %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site owners</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>40,04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered users</td>
<td>2.350</td>
<td>3.800</td>
<td>7.286</td>
<td>70,01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors</td>
<td>18.724</td>
<td>32.468</td>
<td>48.591</td>
<td>44,09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: D3.2 Service delivery and evaluation

### Website analytics

**ViBRANT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unique visits</td>
<td>3.740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>8.443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average visit duration</td>
<td>0:03:44</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Scratchpads**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unique visits</td>
<td>9.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>16.475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average visit duration</td>
<td>0:03:01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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](http://scratchpads.eu/support/ambassadors)

Some of the outcomes of the Ambassadors are:
- distribution flyers;
- beta testing Scratchpads 2.0, selection for test group;
- 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):
  - 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)
[http://dev.scratchpads.eu/project/issues/statistics](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)