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Real-World Community Engagement Plan

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Executive summary

This deliverable contains the initial plans for community engagement, with emphasis on 'real-world' (face-to-face) events, toward the curriculum and training materials development and continuous improvement to take place within the EUCLID project. The Linked Data community has a strong 'hacker ethic' where events like hackathons and vocamps (vocabulary development events) contribute significantly to the spread of knowledge and best practice. Since Linked Data is, to a large degree, a movement encouraging the development and maintenance of best practice guidelines, it is essential that the EUCLID project engages with these events. Further, as an educational curriculum EUCLID must seek take-up at precisely the events where people are looking for education or education providers. For this reason presence at, and the offer of continuing educational opportunities beyond, conferences and summer schools are an important route to promotion. In both of these cases, which we distinguish as hacker-oriented and education-oriented, we shall seek feedback to ensure that the EUCLID curriculum is correctly positioned with respect to the needs of the community and is of the highest standard.

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Abbreviations

C4DM - Centre for Digital Music

ESWC - European/Extended Semantic Web Conference

ISWC - International Semantic Web Conference

QMUL - Queen Mary University of London

SemTech - Semantic Technology (& Business) Conference

WWW - World Wide Web (Conference)

1 Introduction

This Real World Community Engagement Plan - together with its dual, the Online Community Engagement Plan, presented in Deliverable 2.1.3 - will set forth means, feasible within the project's duration and resource constraints, that will allow the consortium to:

- promote the EUCLID 'brand';
- seek take-up of the training material as a whole;
- solicit feedback on the curriculum and training materials.

A large factor in the recent success of the Linked Data movement - otherwise defined by four simply-stated principles and the set of standards (W3C/IETF Web/ Internet standards and W3C Semantic Web standards) - is the large and enthusiastic community and the best practice they define. The Linked Data community has a strong 'hacker ethic' where the spread of knowledge and best practice is facilitated by events such as:

- **meet-ups** are irregular, demand- and theme-driven meetings organised on informal websites such as meetup.com;
- **hackathons**, where often a particular range of datasets, and domain experts who can give advice on their content and significance are present and participants develop 'mash-ups' and other types of prototypical applications;
- **vocamps**, where domain experts and enthusiasts comes together to define or extend semantic vocabularies to model a given domain.

Since Linked Data is, to a large degree, a movement encouraging the development and maintenance of best practice guidelines, it is essential that the EUCLID project engages with these events. Section **Error! Reference source not found.** describes the engagement plan for these types of events.

Beyond this, as an educational curriculum EUCLID must seek take-up at precisely the events where people are looking for education or education providers. Relevant events include:

- **conference tutorials** - as a 'taster' of the educational curriculum developed by EUCLID, half-day sessions at conferences, both those oriented towards researchers and industrial adopters of Linked Data technologies, will provide a route towards take-up of the training offering as a whole;
- **summer schools** - the intensive (and enthusiastic) learning environment of a summer school provides an excellent opportunity to trial, and receive rich feedback on, the learning materials developed in the EUCLID project;
- **dedicated training events** - partners in the consortium already conduct regular stand-alone training activities for the benefit of their customers.

For this reason presence at, and the offer of continuing educational opportunities beyond, conferences and summer schools are an important route not just to promotion of the project, but also to improving feedback. These types of events are considered in Section 2.2.

In both of these cases, which we distinguish as hacker-oriented and education-oriented, we shall seek feedback to ensure that the EUCLID curriculum is correctly positioned with respect to the needs of the community and is of the highest standard. The means to judge effectiveness of the engagement plan, later to be reported in Deliverables 2.3.2 and 2.3.3, will be established in Section 3, before we conclude in Section 4.

2 Events for Real-World Community Engagement

The need for engagement in real-world events is largely driven by the community-driven nature of Linked Data development and propagation of best practice. The following subsections document the EUCLID strategy for the real-world events where this work takes place.

2.1 Hacker-Oriented Events

Linked Data best practice has largely been formed, not out of corporate IT, but out of informal hacker networks. Thereafter there is a continuing culture of communicating advances in the state-of-the-art in relatively informal events. There are consequently a number of types of events that are important in terms of coordinating the EUCLID curriculum with advances in the state-of-the-art (vo-camps, hackathons), and promoting its materials (meet-ups and hackathons).

2.1.1 Meet-ups

A number of informal meet-ups exist in the Semantic Web community that have taken a major interest in recent years in Linked Data technology. Meet-ups tend to appeal especially to start-ups who view them as a combination of education and networking. EUCLID will engage, in particular, with the Lotico [1]-organised Semantic Web meet-ups in London [2] and Berlin [3] (other meet-ups exist, such as Frankfurt [4], but, perhaps reflecting the involvement of a strong start-up culture in London and Berlin, activity here has tailed off and the meet-ups become infrequent).

Within the consortium there are connections with Lotico and experience presenting at their native New York meet-up [5]. The strategy would be foremost to liaise with existing contacts relating to the EUCLID motivational scenario, for instance at the Centre for Digital Music (C4DM) at Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) [6] and the BBC, who use the music ontology and MusicBrainz dataset in their music reviews [7], and try to organise a meeting for the London Meet-up group relating to this topic. In case of difficulty in achieving this, and in order to engage with meet-ups in other cities, there are several components of the EUCLID curriculum (see Deliverable 1.1.1) that could address many meet-up themes and where we could offer to include a session in a spontaneous meet-up; in particular data cleansing and visualisation fit this criterion.

2.1.2 Vo-Camps

Vo-camps are even more spontaneous need-driven events where the one, not even necessary, common feature is to be listed on the Wiki at vocamp.org [8]. The philosophy of vo-camps is to *start* work, or coordination, on the creation of ontologies/schemas for domains where semantic data needs to be exposed. It is a common feature of these events that there is a wide range of experience with semantic technologies, from the pure technologists to domain experts who may have very little knowledge. Engaging with such events, then, is a very useful way to promote the EUCLID curriculum and gain feedback on the training materials. The subject of vo-camps during the project, furthermore, is a useful way to monitor the continued relevance of the topics chosen for the curriculum. Due to the highly spontaneous nature of these events, however, making specific plans is very difficult, but we are already in discussion with existing collaborators on topics related to the EUCLID motivating scenario, specifically the BBC and C4DM/QMUL about organising a vocamp related to modelling audio features within recordings, motivated by projects including [12] and [13]. Ideally this would coincide with a London SemWeb meet-up as mentioned in the previous section.

2.1.3 Hackathons

Hackathons, like vo-camps, encourage the attendance of those with minimal experience with, in our case, Linked Data technologies, but in this case such attendees are often very focussed on a particular problem they are trying to solve, often having heard that semantic technologies may help. Similarly the other extreme of attendees are often technologists very much at the cutting-edge of Linked Data best practice. One example of such a hackathon, which would be ideal for EUCLID engagement was at the European Data Forum [9]. It is feasible that EUCLID could organise its own hackathon, during the second year, but the preference will be to align with one announced during 2012 or early 2013.

2.2 Education-Oriented Events

By offering formal tutorials at more formal events than those mentioned in the previous section, EUCLID has the chance to engage a different community of Linked Data adopters. This will increase the amount and the diversity of feedback offered, in turn leading to an even greater improvement over time in the comprehensiveness and timeliness of the curriculum and the quality of the associated teaching materials.

2.2.1 Conference Tutorials

The (Semantic) Web community has a number of academic conferences that have, in recent years, emphasised the practical approach of Linked Data and attracted a large audience of practitioners (to whom is often dedicated an entire 'In Use' track). We would name-check in particular:

- World Wide Web conference (WWW);
- International Semantic Web Conference (ISWC);
- Extended/European Semantic Web Conference (ESWC).

Since WWW 2013 is to be held in Brazil, and ISWC is either too soon to arrange sufficient material (2012) or beyond the length of the project, we prefer to organise a tutorial at ESWC 2013.

Beyond academic conferences the popular Semantic Technology and Business (SemTech) conference series, in part by absorbing the European Semantic Technology Conference (ESTC) series, has been extended with a number of European editions. Although the next such, to be held in London in September 2012, is too soon to the EUCLID project, we shall submit a tutorial proposal to a future edition.

In each case the limited amount of material that can be covered in the schedule will be used to promote the online materials, especially by reference to the eBook and by promotion of upcoming webinars and their archives.

2.2.2 Summer Schools

While conferences have a wide range of participant backgrounds, including many commercial practitioners, especially in the case of SemTech, summer schools in general have the advantage of intensive and dedicated study. The feedback on training materials that are used in teaching at summer schools will be invaluable. EUCLID will use the opportunity of the 3rd ESWC Summer School, in 2013, to present training material and gather detailed feedback. It may be possible to include EUCLID training material in further summer schools, but we have no fixed plans at this early stage.

As with conference tutorials, the EUCLID eBook will be promoted by frequent reference from the training material, and students will be encouraged to read beyond the material delivered in a classroom situation, especially when it comes to project work undertaken at the summer school. The students will also be encouraged to engage with the webinar content produced by the project, as the presenters of this will coincide with those at the summer school.

2.2.3 Dedicated Training Events

Ontotext already organise a bi-monthly training event in London [10], covering Linked Data technologies and several specific technologies covered in the EUCLID curriculum. In future iterations Ontotext will trial the inclusion of EUCLID teaching materials within this course. They will also offer to gauge customer interest in the inclusion of advanced topics from the EUCLID curriculum both in this open training event, and within the in-house training for which they are contracted by a number of major customers, particularly in the media and publishing industries.

As well as feeding into the sustainability and exploitation aspects of the project, this has the advantage that Ontotext customers include large organisations, such as the BBC and Press Association [11], who have already adopted Linked Data technologies - rather than 'testing their toes in the water', as is typical of the participants within conferences and meet-ups - and have strong ideas about the quality and the specific topics that they would want in training.

2.3 Summary and Timing

The main real-world events to be organised by EUCLID to achieve community engagement are:

- A training/awareness slot at a meet-up, preferably in London in late 2012/early 2013;
- A vocamp, preferably on audio features within recordings, preferably co-located with a audio-themed meet-up as above;
- A conference tutorial at an academic/researcher-oriented conference, preferably ESWC 2013 (May 2013);
- Use of EUCLID training material at the 2013 ESWC Summer School;
- A conference tutorial at an industry-oriented conference, preferably SemTech in London or Berlin in 2013;
- A slot at a meet-up in Berlin, late 2013;
- A hackathon, organised by, or including, EUCLID, possibly in combination with above;
- Inclusion of EUCLID training material in Ontotext professional training early 2014.

3 Measuring Engagement Effectiveness

Deliverables 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 will present on the effectiveness of the real-world engagement plan during the lifetime of the EUCLID project. In order to provide useful reporting in this regard, real-world engagement events must pay proper attention to make sure feedback is gathered. Each real-world event will gather paper-based feedback in the form of a questionnaire. This must establish:

- the background of each participant - whether a researcher, developer, IT manager, etc.;
- the previous exposure to Linked Data and Semantic Technologies;
- how they would self-judge their level of understanding of the particular topics covered before the event;
- how they would subsequently judge their level of understanding;
- how they would judge the technical contents of the training materials;
- how they would judge the training materials aesthetically;
- how they would judge the impression of professionalism given by the training materials;
- whether they were previously aware of the EUCLID project;
- whether they would now consult the eBook when faced with the need to learn further technologies;
- whether they would consider watching the webinar content from EUCLID.

Reports on the effectiveness of the real-world engagement will also include the number of participants, the number of the attendants at the greater event, if part of a conference or meet-up, and an attempt to measure transition from real-world engagement into take-up of online offerings.

4 Conclusion

In this deliverable we have motivated, analysed and provide strategies for the arrangement of - and inclusion of EUCLID training materials in - real-world events intended to increase the engagement of the Linked Data community, with a view to promoting the brand and take-up of the EUCLID curriculum and training materials, both on- and off-line, and their on-going improvement via feedback. We have distinguished several types of event that are relevant to this approach, and made concrete plans for their scheduling and for the provisions for monitoring the effectiveness of this real-world engagement plan.

References

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