

POPULARIZATION COMPONENT – COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION 1 – CREATION OF THE ONLINE SUPPORT OF THE PROJECT

CONTEXT

GENERAL CONTEXT

The communication of scientific results and academic works is taking more and more importance in research projects. The recent pandemic crisis showed how important a good scientific communication is, as general audience is, in fact, willing to learn about how science works, and sometimes are happy to participate and contribute (see Deliverable 2 for more detailed points about citizen science). A good communication should be considered as an important part of academic work.

Depending on the cultural and societal context, it is important to choose a way to communicate that is accessible, easy to use and to understand for the civil society.

INSIDE THE PROJECT

As Estonia is a very “digital” country, where inhabitants can already find a lot of information and do many proceedings online, a webpage or a blog seemed to be the most adapted media to communicate about the project. This also allowed people to directly comment or ask question through the platform, and therefore could be a good tool for interactions with public.

As some part of the study also include dissemination events or online survey, this platform could also be used as a helpful support and an easy way to communicate about steps of the project.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

BACKGROUND

This is the first step of the communication plan, and of the popularization component in general. It is made possible by the existence of video and photo materials, gathered for Workpackage 3, and more presented in Deliverable 12.

PURPOSE

The purpose here is to create a platform that will become the main support of the communication part of the project, as well as an important echo for any event created for the dissemination plan.

PRACTICAL ASPECT

METHODS AND TECHNICS

The website is hosted by Tartu University servers. This part was done entirely by the IT department, who then send account access.

The website is a WordPress structure, installed as University Guidelines required (see guidelines, in Estonian, in the annexes), via cPanel platform (this will cost 50€ per year).

The theme of the website is Natural Lite, and plugins used are Classical Editor 1.6.2 (old WordPress contents compatibility), Contact Form 7 5.5.3 (creation of contact forms), MaxButtons 8.8.3 (creation of buttons), Pretty Links 3.2.4 (links manager), Smush 3.9.2 (media files manager), W3 Total Cache 2.2.1 (cache management) and Yoast SEO 17.7.1 (SEO solution). All of them are royalty free.

Pages created were (in this order):

- Home page (English and Estonian): <https://www.crows.ut.ee/>
- Privacy Policy page (English): <https://www.crows.ut.ee/privacy-policy/>
- Presentation of the project pages, in English version (<https://www.crows.ut.ee/presentation/>) and in Estonian version (<https://www.crows.ut.ee/tutvustus/>)
- For a better SEO and in order to ease navigation, these two texts are also available as posts (in English: <https://www.crows.ut.ee/about-the-project/about-the-project-english/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/> and in Estonian: <https://www.crows.ut.ee/about-the-project/projektist-eesti-keel/kes-me-oleme-ja-mida-me-teeme/>) through the head menu
- Contact form (English and Estonian): <https://www.crows.ut.ee/contact-kontakt/>
- 2 posts describing Autumn observations in Tartu (English: <https://www.crows.ut.ee/field-observations/tartu-october-2021/> and <https://www.crows.ut.ee/field-observations/tartu-november-2021/>) and their Estonian versions: <https://www.crows.ut.ee/field-observations/tartu-oktoober-2021/> and <https://www.crows.ut.ee/field-observations/tartu-november-2021-2/>
- A post describing Winter observations in Tartu (English: <https://www.crows.ut.ee/field-observations/tartu-december-2021/>) and its Estonian version <https://www.crows.ut.ee/field-observations/tartu-detsember-2021/>

A head menu was implemented to ease navigation, containing:

- Home (back to the home page)
- About the project (link to all posts categorized as “About the project – English” and “Projektist – eesti keel”)
- Privacy Policy
- Contact

Categories were created for categorization of posts (one post can have multiple categories):

- About the Project – English
- Projektist – eesti keel
- Tartu
- Paris
- Autumn/Sügis
- Winter/Talv

ETHICAL AND SAFETY COMPLIANCE

The webpage is hosted by University of Tartu, supported by the university servers. Consequently:

- No information or media put on the webpage, by the research team or general public users (with the system of “Comments”) is monitored by a third party.
- All information, data, media are property either of the university or of the administrator (in this situation, that means myself).

- No copyright can be applied on data or media that could prevent them to be share with others scientists or research teams.
- No information put on the webpage by general public users can be used for commercial or advertising purposes.
- The webpage is as protected against informatic attacks or hacking as is any content managed by the University IT department.

FEEDBACK

In order to test the general structure of the website, the link was sent to a very small sample of people (5) outside of the project (from 19 to 63 years old, 2 females, 2 males, 1 non-binary, all able to read English but no one able to understand Estonian).

- Tests were made on computer (3), tablet (1) and mobile (4)
- Structure and robustness:
 - o No major variation was observed from switching between different devices (some widgets changed of place, but nothing is disappearing)
 - o A broken link was spotted and corrected.
 - o Due to the double creation, as a page and as a post, of the presentation of the project, it can appear twice when doing a research via internal research tool
 - o One person was disturbed by the fact that posts can not be opened by clicking on the text preview, but only on the title (no solution was found at the moment)
 - o One person would like posts about field observations to be available in the head menu (that can only contain pages but not posts, no solution was found at the moment)
 - o Three persons found a bit confusing that categories were organized alphabetically and not thematically (this was solved by modifying the widget properties to include hierarchy)
- Style and theme: “Sober”, “Appropriate for research content”, “Clear”, “Serious”, “A mix between strict and pleasant”, “A bit gothic” (the last one will be interesting due to the aesthetic value of corvids in Tartu in particular, see document D3)
- Readability: Finding information was described as easy
- Interest and involvement:
 - o One person suggested the creation of a system where people can subscribe to be notified by email of every new post (a solution with the plugin MailPoets is currently studied)
 - o Two persons requested more pictures and visual contents

GENERAL PROJECT – CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

IMPORTANCE OF THE CURRENT STEP

This step is crucial for the rest of the popularization component, in particular the communication aspect. Without this step, almost no other part of the communication plan is possible.

PROPOSITIONS FOR OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT

ACADEMIC ASPECTS

The webpage is mainly created for people and general public, but it can also be used as a display of the project for academic purpose, especially for exchanges and relationships with international partners.

RESEARCH ASPECTS

The webpage could be used in the research part of the program as a way to spread survey or interviews requests, increasing their visibility and consequently increasing the chances to obtain numerous and relevant answers.

NEXT STEPS

The webpage should now be advertised, perhaps through the Instagram of the University, by proposing pictures of field work.

Also, texts in Estonian should be checked by a native, as the current version is automatically translated, and probably not good enough, given the general weakness of the English-Estonian corpus on which the software is based.

ANNEXES

LINKS

Webpage: <https://www.crows.ut.ee/>

Guidelines for WordPress implementation: <https://wiki.ut.ee/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=35685841>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Katre Pärn for documentation and explanation about the guidelines for University hosted websites' creation.

Tamer Jõe, from the IT department, for assistance and documentation about University hosted website creation and Wordpress implementation.

The five volunteers who tested the alpha version of the website and gave very useful feedback.

DOCUMENT

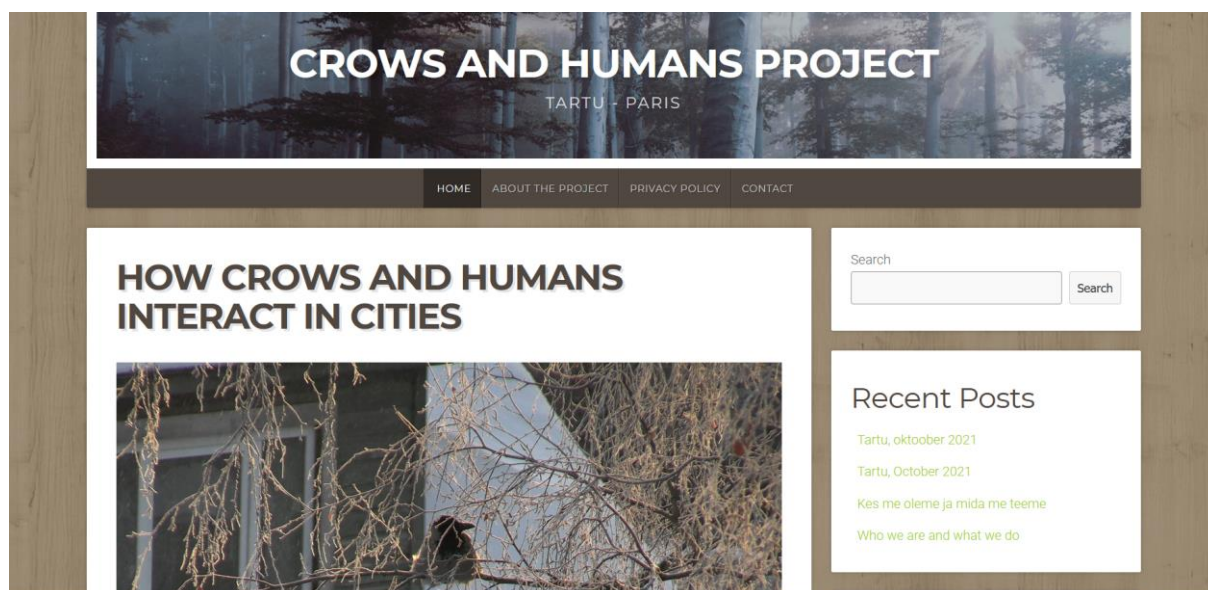


Figure 1 - Preview of the homepage