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Report on project management tools and procedures

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Abstract

This report describes the internal online management and collaboration resources (wiki, repositories, etc.) and the procedures for effective usage of those (tracking work activities, sharing information, publication approval, collaborative editing of reports, etc.).

Participant organisation name	Short name
SIMULA RESEARCH LABORATORY AS *(Coordinator)*	SRL
CELERWAY COMMUNICATION AS	Celerway
TELENOR ASA	Telenor
NETTET SVERIGE AB	NET1
NEXTWORKS	NXW
FUNDACION IMDEA NETWORKS	IMDEA
KARLSTADS UNIVERSITET	KaU
POLITECNICO DI TORINO	POLITO

1   Online management and collaboration tools

Efficient management of a joint research project requires deploying a set of online tools that takes into account factors such as ease of use, flexibility, suitability and cost. The MONROE consortium has decided to structure all internal collaborative work around a set of four main tools: a project *wiki*, several *mailing lists*, a *system for production of documents and code*, and a *teleconferencing system*. With the exception of one mailing list, access to all these tools is restricted to consortium members.

1.1   Internal wiki

A project wiki for only internal usage has been set up and is hosted by SRL. The site is served only via HTTPS/SSL. Access is restricted to a list of pre-registered users. Creation of user accounts is managed by the Coordinator (self-registration is not possible). All registered users have editing access rights so as to decentralise and ease the creation and management of the wiki's contents. By default, access to both the project wiki and the main mailing list (§ 1.2) is systematically granted to all technical participants.

The wiki is used as a hub for several collaborative tasks, and serves two main roles: a system for sharing ideas, and a repository of (relatively static) project-related information. The main wiki page is currently structured as follows:

- **Basic information about wiki usage:** for easy access to information on wiki syntax.

- **Research work topics:** links to specific wiki sections devoted to:

  - Per-WP activities and ongoing work, typically structured per Task.
  - Project's output so far, in particular a list of both submitted and accepted publications (§ 2.1) and a bibliographical database in BibTeX format.
  - Pointers to datasets containing experimental data and scripts.

  Per-WP / per-Task pages are often used as living documents before migrating their contents to e.g. a publication or a deliverable.

- **Dissemination topics:** collects dissemination-related material (e.g., logos and slide templates) and information on past and planned dissemination activities (e.g., living dissemination plan), and also a link to the external MONROE web site[1].

- **Administrative / project management topics:** links to sections related to: (a) keeping track of living information such as action points, meetings and project calendar; (b) internal procedures (e.g., for reporting to the EC or for internal early disclosure of publications, (§ 2); (c) reporting templates and documents; (d) archiving of static information (e.g., contractual documents such as Grant and Consortium Agreements).

- **Other collaboration tools:** links to document and code repositories (§ 1.3), mailing lists (§ 1.2) and information on the use of the teleconferencing system (§ 1.4).

- **Partners:** basic information about project participants for ready reference, such as lists with names and emails of all persons involved, both technical and non-technical.

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[1]Available at: https://www.monroe-project.eu/.

1.2 Mailing lists

We have so far set up three mailing lists for internal communication:

- `monroe@simula.no`: for all researchers and technical participants.

- `monroe-admin@simula.no`: for financial and administrative officers plus principal investigators (and/or designated researchers) of all partners.

- `monroe-ab@simula.no`: for communication with the MONROE external Advisory Board.

All these lists are managed by the Coordinator. Additionally, ad-hoc mailing lists will be created in the future if and when the need arises (e.g., for federating e-mail communication around a particular Task or activity). Furthermore, we will create a mailing list dedicated to external users in the future to support them.

1.3 Document and code repositories

Production of documents issuing from the project is based on two *git* repositories: one for deliverables and another for publications. Git[2] is a natural choice for distributed version control: it is one of the most common version-control systems for open-source projects, most MONROE participants are already familiar with it, and there is a wide range of clients for all common computing platforms. BitBucket[3] was chosen for hosting the repositories since SRL already had a paid subscription to it. The features offered by the SRL subscription suit well the usage envisioned for the project. In particular, BitBucket provides secure access and the possibility of creating private repositories with detailed access-control options (as many private repositories with as many contributors as desired).

For all of our software-development efforts, we have selected the well-known Github platform[4]. MONROE will provide all components of the system design as open-source software (OSS) and Github was chosen due to its high popularity in the open-source community.

1.4 Teleconferencing tool

The consortium presently uses Skype for audio and video conferencing[5]. Skype offers free-of-charge multi-party audio and video conferencing, as well as the possibility of sharing documents on-screen.

2 Procedures and online tools

Some lightweight procedures have been designed for collaborative work, fully based on the previously-described tools. The number and details of the procedures are suitable for a small-scale collaborative project such as MONROE. All procedures are documented in the project wiki, together with a FAQ-like description when suitable.

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[2] https://git-scm.com
[3] https://bitbucket.org/
[4] https://github.com/
[5] http://www.skype.com/

2.1 Early internal publication disclosure

In accordance with the detailed rules specified in the Consortium Agreement for IPR protection, the early internal disclosure procedure is based on both the main (technical) mailing list and the project wiki. The mailing list is used for announcing to the consortium any intended publication. Complementarly, a specific table in the wiki is used to list all intended submissions (papers, standards contributions, etc.) while waiting for publication clearance. The Coordinator maintains such a table so that all partners can keep track of the status of intended submissions and any objections raised. Approved publications are systematically and periodically moved from this table to the wiki section devoted to publication efforts. The case of possible joint publications with collaborators from outside the consortium is explicitly considered, in line with the IPR protection policy.

2.2 Production of deliverables

2.2.1 Templates

A set of deliverable templates[6] have been designed by the Coordinator, and made available on the BitBucket repository devoted to EC reporting. These templates are maintained by the Coordinator, and are of mandatory use for all deliverables. In this way, a uniform visual style for all MONROE reporting documents is enforced. For Quarterly Management Reports (deliverables 6.6), the pre-defined template provides also the reporting categories to be filled each quarter.

2.2.2 Writing and editing

We document in the project wiki the full procedure for collaborative editing of all reports, including Quarterly Management Reports. This procedure describes:

- What template from the BitBucket repository to use.

- Who acts as main editor.

- How each partner has to contribute and in what role.

- The precise timeline for document production.

- The internal reviewing / quality assurance mechanism before submission to the EC.

2.3 Teleconference meetings

The consortium has agreed to hold regular progress meetings by teleconferencing means, every fourth week. All partners are expected to attend these remote meetings. Skype is the tool of choice for these regular meetings which started on April 13, 2015. If needed and as a backup solution, the Coordinator can provide access to its existing Internet-based videoconferencing system with no additional cost[7].

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[6]After careful consideration of several options, including a standard word processor, web-based systems such as Google Docs, and wiki plugins to allow exporting of contents from the wiki, we decided to adopt LaTeX for document writing and typesetting. Its potential drawbacks are outweighed by (a) familiarity of many project participants with it, (b) its very easy integration with a version-control system such as git.

[7]http://www.vidyo.com/

MONROE

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