

SWAD–Europe requested additional report: Reassess target audience for dissemination efforts and outline how to reach them

Project name:

W3C Semantic Web Advanced Development for Europe (SWAD-Europe)

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3. Dissemination and Exploitation

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Deliverable title:

Dissemination Plan 2

URI:

http://www.w3.org/2001/sw/Europe/reports/dissemination_plan_2

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Abstract:

Following SWAD-Europe's successful intermediate review, the project was asked to reassess its target audience for dissemination efforts and outline how to reach them. This document extends the SWAD-Europe Dissemination and Use Plan [1] which remains our primary dissemination and exploitation document. The Dissemination and Use plan describes plans for the dissemination of knowledge gained during the work among the different target groups: industry; content producers, researchers and academics; the Open Source community; developers. These groups remain our target groups for dissemination. This document describes a change of distribution of effort among these groups and an evaluation strategy for the effectiveness of dissemination in SWAD-Europe. It was updated in May 2004 to reflect changes in our evaluation strategy with respect to the information collated in the previous six months, as requested.

STATUS:

Completed report, last updated 2004-06-03. Comments should be sent to public-esw@w3.org, the project mailing list ([archive](#)).

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Updated summary

In the previous version of this document, SWAD-Europe described seven steps to increase outreach in the target groups and evaluate the extent of that outreach. This summary describes in brief the results of taking each step, and evaluates the success of each step as described in step 7 below.

1. Create a monthly email newsletter, with RSS 1.0 feed

We have done this by using the contents of the SWAD-Europe weblog[2] and mailing out a selection of articles every month to the public-esw-news@w3.org mailing list[3]. The SWAD-Europe weblog has an RSS 1.0 feed[4], which means that the articles appear in aggregators such as Planet RDF[5] and also in weblog search engines such as Feedster[6].

The main aim of the newsletter was to enable the project to discover who it was reaching. Uptake of the newsletter has not been very high with 34 (not including project members) individuals on the two mailing lists that receive the newsletter. However, the newsletter is an edited version of the weblog, and so has ensured there are plenty of articles there, which means that our reading audience is high although difficult to evaluate, as the articles are syndicated through the use of RSS 1.0.

2. Create a short questionnaire for users of the SWAD-Europe site and people who wish to receive the newsletter, enabling the identification of target groups and target FAQs

The main aim here was to try to evaluate who was using SWAD-Europe outputs.

For technical reasons integrating the questionnaire with the rest of the website proved to be more difficult than anticipated. However, we have done an analysis[7] of the individuals we have interacted with in workshops and via the mailing lists and tshirt distribution, to produce a breakdown of the sectors we are reaching. It is worth bearing in mind that our reach is much wider than implied by this analysis - in particular, regular weblog entries and activity in the wiki reach a large number of individuals via RSS syndication.

3. Use evaluation forms for collating statistics on workshop attendees

We have done this for workshops held since the peer review: developer workshop 4 (Semantic Web Storage and Retrieval) [8], 5 (Image Description)[9] and 6 (Introduccion al uso de la Web Semantica)[10]. The results from developer workshop 4 are available[11].

4. Update the Dissemination and Use Plan in April 2004 and September 2004, summarising statistics

See Dissemination and Use Plan[7], section 5 - Evaluation.

5. Create a best practice document for events and RSS 1.0 for IST projects

The aim here was to work with other IST projects more closely. We have produced a document describing RSS and events[12], although it did not lead to closer working with our target project KTWB[13].

However, throughout the project we have worked closely with individuals funded by the IST programme, through our participation in various W3C working groups and the Semantic Web Interest Group[14]. This is particularly true now as we have several project member working on the Semantic Web Best Practices Working Group[15], whose aims[16] are very close to those of SWAD-Europe[17]. In particular KnowledgeWeb[18] is well-represented on the SWBP working group.

We also plan to hold a joint workshop with DERI Galway in September 2004, linking with the various IST-funded projects (SDK-Cluster[19]) coordinated there.

6. Continue holding European workshops and talks; conference sessions and posters in European countries; continued availability on mailing lists and in IRC; continued updating of wiki and FAQ documents

See workshops and conference sessions[20], talks[21], FAQs[22].

7. Re-evaluate outreach efforts in May 2004

This updated document forms this re-evaluation.

Target groups for dissemination

- Internet, Web and Open Source developer communities
- Academic and Research Community
- Content and Tool Producers
- Industry and Commerce

In the review it was felt that of these, outreach to internet and Open Source and content and tool producers had been fairly strong, while outreach to academics and industry could be improved. It was also felt that the project was too UK-centric, and that better European outreach was important, including

activities with sister IST projects such as KTWeb.

Previously, we had some evidence about outreach to the communities we are concerned with. For example, the attendees at the SWAD-Europe Semantic Web calendaring workshop in Bristol[23] were a good mix of academic and business, Open Source and other content producers. Similarly the virtual meetings on RDF calendaring and querying we have held since (see [1]). However these are relatively small groups of people interacting heavily with the project, and we would have liked to be able to evaluate the project's impact on the much larger number of people who use resources developed by the Āproject, such as the website, the wiki, and the weblog.

Unfortunately, because the SWAD-Europe site is part of the W3C site, obtaining statistics detailed enough to be useful in terms of evaluating which target groups are accessing the website, wiki and weblog is not possible because of the W3C's Privacy policy[24]. Web statistics are themselves notoriously unreliable. Furthermore, the idea of asking users to fill in a short questionnaire before receiving the newsletter was not successful, with almost no new additions to the mailing list after the newsletter was created.

Evaluation strategy

In order to objectively evaluate the project's impact, insofar as is possible, we planned to focus effort on collecting information about the users of the website, where the project's reports are held. We planned to achieve this by inviting visitors to the site to subscribe to a monthly email newsletter, allowing us to ask them one or two questions about the sector they were in, enabling us to track our outreach efforts. We also wanted to produce the newsletter information as an RSS feed, to maximise its outreach possibilities.

For the reasons described above, the questionnaire was not implemented, although it would have made little difference, since so few people opted to receive the newsletter. However, the RSS feed has resulted in wide (although difficult to evaluate) syndication of our project results and FAQs.

As planned the Dissemination and Use Plan has been updated as of May 2004 and will be updated again at the end of the project to reflect what we know about our users. This information will also inform the Technical Implementation Plan (TIP).

Outreach to Europe

We are continuing to hold workshops and talks in Europe. A workshop was held in Amsterdam in November 2003[25], and two more are planned for June 2004 (one in Spanish) [9] [10]. The final workshop will be held in Ireland in conjunction with the SDK Cluster, in September 2004. SWAD-Europe had a poster at the European Semantic Web Symposium (ESWS) 2004 and used this opportunity to talk to other IST projects there.

Activities with other IST projects

Our previous plan was to liaise with KTWeb[13] about using Semantic Web technologies to distribute their events feeds. Our aim was to produce a best practice document for using RSS and events together and then contact related IST projects to see if they can output their information in this way as well. Members of SWAD-Europe will also attended the KTWeb workshop: Knowledge and Content Technology research - the past and the future, December 2-3 2003, Luxembourg.

However, KTWeb ended in December 2003, and although our best practice document on RSS and events was published[12], It has not been used by KTweb. Our attention has focussed on FP6 projects started in 2004, especially those in the SDK Cluster[19]. We are holding our final workshop in conjunction with the SDK Cluster (DERI Galway) and we had a poster at ESWS 2004[26].

References

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[6] Feedster
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