Network of Excellence

NEWCOM#
Network of Excellence in Wireless Communications#

FP7 Contract Number: 318306

WP3.6 – The NEWCOM# Portal and related Web Presence Tools

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Software Description Document

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Document Information

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Authors

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Beneficiary / Organisation</th>
<th>e-mail</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eduardo Diaz Diaz</td>
<td>CTTC</td>
<td><a href="mailto:eduardo.diaz@cttc.es">eduardo.diaz@cttc.es</a></td>
<td>Contributor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Company</td>
<td>CTTC</td>
<td><a href="mailto:david.company@cttc.es">david.company@cttc.es</a></td>
<td>Contributor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giorgia Bertozzi</td>
<td>CNIT/BO</td>
<td><a href="mailto:g.bertozzi@unibo.it">g.bertozzi@unibo.it</a></td>
<td>Contributor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrian Kliks</td>
<td>PUT</td>
<td><a href="mailto:akliks@et.put.poznan.pl">akliks@et.put.poznan.pl</a></td>
<td>Contributor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosa Martinez</td>
<td>CTTC</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rosa@cttc.es">rosa@cttc.es</a></td>
<td>Contributor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberto Verdone</td>
<td>CNIT/BO</td>
<td><a href="mailto:roberto.verdone@unibo.it">roberto.verdone@unibo.it</a></td>
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</tr>
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Reviewers

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Luis M. Correia</td>
<td>INOV</td>
<td><a href="mailto:luis.correia@inov.pt">luis.correia@inov.pt</a></td>
<td>2013-04-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luis M. Correia</td>
<td>INOV</td>
<td><a href="mailto:luis.correia@inov.pt">luis.correia@inov.pt</a></td>
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Executive Summary

This document shows and presents the status of the first set of web tools, newly implemented at the contractual date of the delivery (actually, on April 3th, 2013): all the screenshots were made on that day, and then collected and published on this document. The deliverable starts by presenting the features of Joomla, the platform selected for the development of the web portal. Then, the structure and contents of the project web portal are described in detail, presenting the pages one by one. The EuWIn website is also presented in short, as one of the additional tools that be used to facilitate dissemination of contents related to the experimental track. Then, the remaining web presence tools are shortly mentioned: the mailing lists, the newsletters, and the videoconference tool. The activities devised on social networks to help creating a networked community of researchers, are also reported. The document shows that, after the first six months of project activities, all web related tools needed to support the networking and integration activities, to permit fruitful cooperation among scientists and to facilitate dissemination of project results, are ready and operational.
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1. Introduction

This document shows and presents the status of the first set of web tools, newly implemented at the contractual date of the delivery (actually, on April 3th, 2013): all the screenshots were made on that day, and then collected and published on this document.

The aim of the deliverable is to show that all web presence tools are ready and operational at date of delivery of this document (i.e. at M6).

It does not aim to be a user guide for the same tools or an exhaustive report about selected tools, technologies and their implementations. Current users of the tools are receiving guidelines, brief how-tos and other useful instructions about how to use and interact with them; same guidelines and how-tos are also available from the website itself. Since those tools and their implementations are being updated and modified, following the growing needs and wants of the NoE, almost on a daily basis, and therefore also the related guidelines are constantly changing, we choose to shape and organize this document as a documentary evidence of the actual deliverable, as it was at the date of its production.

Section 2 is split into four main parts. The first (subsection 2.1) describes the security and management components of the web portal; the second (subsection 2.1.1) introduces Joomla, the platform selected for the development of the project web portal, summarising its main features; the third (subsection 2.1.2) describes the implemented web pages, introducing them one by one with screenshots; in the last part, the remaining subsections describe the other web presence tools, like the mailing lists, the social networking activities, the newsletters and the EuWIn webpages.
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2. Portal and related Web Presence tools

This section contains three parts. The first one describes the security and management of the Portal and mailing lists as well as partners/people in charge of maintenance and content, security, access, access management, server location and access for the Joomla, the platform used to develop the portal. The second briefly shows the Joomla and its components as content management system. The third part shows and discusses some snapshots of the website. The fourth part, composed of several subsections, describes the remaining web presence tools used within Newcom#.

2.1 Security and Management

2.1.1 Portal

The website is hosted in the CTTC facilities, in Castelldefels (Barcelona). Thus, the CTTC system administrators are responsible for the maintenance of the website. The main maintenance tasks include completion of daily backup copies, software updates, monitoring tasks, access management and security. CTTC system administrators are also responsible for solving technical incidents that may appear for the website, as long as providing necessary user support.

Different user roles, with different editing rights, are defined in the website. This allows the registered users to upload contents to the website, based on their roll. The contents can be uploaded and modified via web, no matter where the user is.

The CTTC system administrators are Eduardo Díaz and David Company.

2.1.2 Mailing Lists

The mailing lists of the project are set up in a mailing server, hosted in the CTTC facilities, in Castelldefels (Barcelona). Thus, the CTTC system administrators are responsible for the maintenance of the mailing list server and the project mailing lists. The main maintenance tasks include completion of daily backup copies, updates, monitoring tasks, access management and security. CTTC system administrators are also responsible for solving technical incidents that may appear, as long as providing necessary user support.

The project mailing lists can be administered or moderated via web. Administration includes user management. Moderation includes approval or denial of messages posted. Users belonging to the mailing lists can also manage their subscription via web or with control emails.

The CTTC system administrators are Eduardo Díaz and David Company.

2.2 Joomla!

Joomla is a free and open source content management system (CMS) for publishing content on the World Wide Web and intranets and a model–view–controller (MVC) Web application framework that can also be used independently.
Joomla is written in PHP, uses object-oriented programming (OOP) techniques (since version 1.5) and software design patterns, stores data in a MySQL or (since version 2.5) MS SQL database, and includes features such as page caching, RSS feeds, printable versions of pages, news flashes, blogs, polls, search, and support for language internationalization. As of March 2012, Joomla has been downloaded over 30 million times. Over 6,000 free and commercial extensions are available from the official Joomla! Extension Directory, and more are available from other sources. It is estimated to be the second most used CMS on the Internet after WordPress. [1]

2.2.1 Plugins / Components

2.2.1.1 Remository

Remository is a highly capable file repository for use within one of the supported CMSs (Content Management Systems - currently Joomla! or Mambo or Aliro). It can organise files into folders (described in the system using the generic word “containers”) that can be nested to an arbitrary depth. Files can be uploaded or downloaded by site visitors, subject to constraints configured by the site administrator.

There are three different ways in which files can be held by Remository, described in the following paragraphs.

The most flexible is to store the files in the CMS database, which means that operations such as moving a file from one folder to another does not involve an operation on the disk system. Also, the database is not prone to the file permission problems that can create difficulty in some hosting situations, nor is it affected by the pernicious PHP safe mode.

Database storage can become difficult if the volumes are very large. This may run up against issues of maintenance (depending on the extent of access to the server) or against hosting policies. So files can alternatively be located in the file system on the web server.

Remository can also make available files that are located elsewhere on the internet. These are known as remote files and are defined by a URI (Uniform Resource Identifier). [2]

2.2.1.2 Akeeba Backup Core

Akeeba Backup Core is the Free (as in “free speech” and as in “free beer”) contains the necessary features to have a complete backup, restoration and site migration solution for your Joomla!-powered websites. It is what 95% of our users will ever use. While it includes all the essential filters, it is missing some of the most advanced features which are appealing only to web professionals. [3]

2.2.1.3 Explorer

eXplorer is a PHP- and Javascript-based File Manager, which you can be placed on your own web space.

The main features of eXplorer are:

- Copy & Move Files and Directories by Drag&Drop
- Dynamic Directory Tree with on-demand loading of subdirectories
- Edit Files (with Syntax-Highlighting thanks to EditArea)
- Rename, Delete or Create new Files and Directories
- Access Files through "FTP" or directly (using PHP) to totally overcome permission and file ownership issues
2.2.1.4 GCalendar

GCalendar is an extension for Joomla based web sites which supports a smooth integration of your Google calendar. Simplicity, integrity and performance are the main targets to show your Google calendar tight integrated in your Joomla site. [5]

2.2.1.5 Userport

With userport, one can easily export, add, update or delete users in his/her own database.

The main features include:

- Users can be mass deleted, blocked, unblocked and activated. A re-activation string can be set and their group assignments can be changed; all with only a few mouse clicks.
- All user information can be set or updated, including registration date, activation string and parameters.
- The exported user list can be downloaded as CSV text directly.
- userport can be configured by non-super users too: all options can be set and checked in the 4-step workflow.
- An export can retrieve all user information from all users. Basic filtering can be applied to restrict which users need exporting.
- A ‘test mode’ allows to test the import file and to verify the notification emails safely: without touching the destination database, and without disrupting the userbase.
- userport will not time-out: it has been tested to successfully import more than 20000 users using 1 import file.
- It automatically uses default values for those fields that are not supplied.
- All options and their consequences are clearly explained on the configuration page. [6]

2.2.1.6 NotifyArticleSubmit

The extension sends emails when someone adds/modifies an article at your Joomla website. Sending of emails can be restricted by categories, article ids, user groups, particular users. You can turn off email sending for modification done by a particular user or user groups. Or vice versa, enable notification only for particular articles, users or user groups.

The email may optionally contain author/modifier name, date, article title, intro and/or full text overview (HTML is converted to text). The email may contain links to view articles and to edit articles (one must be logged in to follow such links successfully).[7]

2.2.2 Homepage

A first goal of the Newcom# website is to allow visitors to be informed about the network of excellence and the most important news and events. In fact, both news and events have a special place in the homepage itself and, of course, a dedicated area on the website. The calendar, located on the right side of the page, as it can be seen in Figure 2.1, allows a quick view of the most important events and appointments of the network.
In the left menu of the homepage, all sections of the website are shown. Information such as Newcom# structure, partners, governing bodies, key persons and WP leaders can be found.

The log in area is at the top of the homepage, in the right side. According to a set of permissions assigned at folder or file levels, all web pages can be updated by the reference persons of the various institutions or groups with an account.

2.2.2.1 The NoE and the JPA

The NoE shows a brief explanation of Newcom# in order to allow visitors to have a quick understanding of the network itself.

The Joint Program of Activity (JPA) is articulated into four tracks: Theoretical Research (Track 1); European Lab of Wireless Communications for the Future Internet - EuWin (Track 2); Training Dissemination and Human Capital (Track 3), and Management (Track 4). Tracks 1 and 2 host the so-called set of Integrated Core Research Activities. Track 3 is mostly devoted to Spread of Excellence activities and, to some limited extent, non-research based Integration tools. Finally, Track 4 ensures the interaction and proper functioning of the network in terms of guaranteeing scientific excellence and proper management. More in depth, all the Tracks, Work Packages and main people involved are detailed under the JPA section of N# website, as it can be seen in Figure 2.3.
2.2.2.2 Partners and associate partners

The network is composed of 14 partners, each one from a different country of the EU. In addition, N# has four entities linked as third parties through Special Clause number 10. Partners have a dedicated area on the website so visitors can easily find information regarding the main contributors of the network.

Furthermore, NEWCOM# also benefits from the contribution of a number of Associate Partners (Aps). Associate Partners are Academic Institutions or Companies that are active in the same research field as the one of NEWCOM#, are not EC beneficiaries under the same Grant, and wish to participate to some extent into the activities of NEWCOM# without receiving any financial support. Two main types of APs are envisaged: Type I, which are those more interested in conducting dissemination-related activities in collaboration with project partners; and Type II, the main aim of which is to conduct research activities in collaboration with project partners. Figure 2.5 shows the N# portal section devoted to the network Associate Partners.
2.2.2.3 Journal Special Issues

Announcements about Newcom# Special Issues and also links to other special issues in journals of high impact can be found under this section.

2.2.2.4 Mobility

Grants for mobility are a crucial way to allow mobility between partners and institutions. NEWCOM# researchers can download news, events, files with complete descriptions and details for all grants available.
2.2.2.5 Schools

This section will be available to any partner who needs a web space where to host and store documents, materials, news, and any other digital stuff for organising and setting up a NEWCOM# schools.

2.2.2.6 Newsletter

Communications of the outcomes of the network and the main events are given also on the N# newsletter, which of course has a special place in the webpage where all visitors can download it, see its online version and also be subscribed to the distribution list.

In order to achieve the first goal an intensive email exchange between the project coordinator and newsletter editor-in-chief has been initiated during which the structure of the bulletin and the publishing policy have been discussed. Based on the decisions made the initial structure
of the newsletter has been proposed. It has been agreed that the graphic design, especially colours, shall correspond to the layout and colour of the project web-page and the NEWCOM# logo. The exemplary empty title and internal pages are illustrated in Figure 2.8.

![Newcom#](image)

**Figure 2.5: Associate Partners**

In the meantime the dedicated space on the NoE webpage has been created, i.e. the special link in the left menu is activated which redirects the user to the Newsletter webpage. The screenshot presenting this section is shown in Figure 2.9. One can notice that each issue of the NoE newsletter will be available in two forms: as the pdf file for download, and as a flip-book for online reading. It is worth mentioning that the online version offers the reader more interaction and has sophisticated graphical design. The tools available for free at FlashPageFlip.com have been used for creation of the flip-book. The screenshot presenting the flip-book version is shown in Figure 2.10.
**Figure 2.6: Journal Special Issues**

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• IEEE Journal of Selected Topics in Signal Processing - [LINK]</td>
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**Figure 2.7: Mobility**

Mobility

Researcher mobility is crucial in order to facilitate the integration of partners' research agendas. Thus, NEWCOM+ periodically (once per year) issues specific calls for Mobility Grants for long term stays at a host institution in the project. Preference is given to stays in one of the sites of the NEWCOM+ EUWIN Lab. The grants are assigned upon a rigorous evaluation process. NEWCOM+ keeps track of all mobility actions taking place within the NoG giving full visibility of them on this portal.

**Open Call for Mobility Grants Call 2013**

**Important dates:**
- **Opening:** 31st January 2013
- **Application deadline:** 15th March 2013
- **Notification:** 15th April 2013

**Related documents:**
- [Guidelines](#)
- [Application Form](#)
Figure 2.8: Pure exemplary pages (title and internal ones) from NEWCOM# newsletter

Figure 2.9: Screenshot from the Newsletter section in the NEWCOM# web-page
Figure 2.10: Screenshot presenting the online version of the NEWCOM# Newsletter

After establishing the basis for effective releasing of each new bulletin issue, i.e. the document skeleton and the web-page, the first call for content has been circulated among the NEWCOM# partners. Each Work-Package and Task leader, but also each individual partner, is welcomed to provide contributions to the newsletter. The inputs collected after the first call allowed the editor for preparation of the six-page bulletin, presenting the latest news from the project, released in February 2013.

One of the emerging tasks that are currently being investigated is the most efficient way for dissemination of the just-released bulletins in the future. Up to now, everyone interested in receiving the last issue of the newsletter is asked to send the email to the editor, however it is planned to automatize this process by establishing the dedicated subscribing list managed by the editor.

### 2.2.7.7 File Repository

This section is a restricted area only for the partners of the network and the EC. The section is organised into sub-sections, as it can be seen in the figure below, with different goals and scope. This is the main exchange area where all partners can download and upload its work, minutes of meetings, etc.

### 2.2.8 Deliverables

Deliverables section is outside this page as this can be accessible by any visitor. Delivered reports can be downloaded clicking on its link.
2.3 Mailing Lists

2.3.1 Mailman

Mailman is free software for managing electronic mail discussion and e-newsletter lists. Mailman is integrated with the web, making it easy for users to manage their accounts and
for list owners to administer their lists. Mailman supports built-in archiving, automatic bounce processing, content filtering, digest delivery, spam filters, and more. See the features page for details.

Mailman is free software, distributed under the GNU General Public License. Mailman is written in the Python programming language, with a little bit of C code for security. [8]

Figure 2.13: Mailing Lists
2.3.2 Lists

The mailing lists created and in use at time of delivery of this document are:
project_office@newcom-project.eu
executive_board@newcom-project.eu
sci_contacts@newcom-project.eu
admin_contacts@newcom-project.eu
all_newcom@newcom-project.eu
wpXY@newcom-project.eu
wpleaders@newcom-project.eu
associate_partners@newcom-project.eu

As it can be seen, they follow the nomenclature: [mailing_list_name]@newcom-project.eu

Regarding the management aspects, the lists were initially populated with email addresses provided by the Project Office. However, after this initial set-up, wpXY mailing list administration was transferred to each WP leader. The administrator of the remaining lists is the Project Office.

Each mailing list requires a password in order to configure it. Mailing lists can be configured at http://lists.cttc.es/cgi-bin/mailman/admin/[mailing_list_name]

At http://lists.cttc.es/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/[mailing_list_name], mailing list owners can modify the member’s options, including subscription, unsubscription, digestification, delivery disabling, etc.

When a user becomes a mailing list administrator, the system sends an email with the main basic information about the mailing list. Figure 2.14 shows the email sent to the WP11 administrator.
Figure 2.14: email sent to mailing list owners

2.4 Social Networking

LinkedIn

The LinkedIn [9] project group has been launched at the beginning of the project in November 2013. This portal is a good opportunity not only to exchange information between Newcom# partners but also to spread it among external researchers and institutions about actions taken within the project. It can be seen as a tool supplementary to project mailing lists and web page. It can be nice a place to start some discussions or to take some polls. First big activity on Newcom# LinkedIn group was announcement of first call for Mobility
Grants at the end of January 2013. As for now more than 40 participants are enrolled for the Newcom# group representing a variety of countries, e.g. Spain, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Germany. However, all partners and external project observers are still welcome to join this group.

Two screenshots presenting the created LinkedIn group are shown in Figure 2-15.

Figure 2.15. NEWCOM# LinkedIn group

2.5 VideoConference

The chosen Videoconference solution is Radvision’s Scopia Desktop system. Scopia Desktop is a web-based Video Conferencing tool, compatible with both Windows and Mac systems.

Scopia Desktop works with the following internet browsers: Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari and Google Chrome, and only requires the installation of a plugin, plus a soundcard and a webcam.

Along with the Video/audioconferencing capabilities, it offers chat services and Real-time desktop sharing (presentations).

Other features are:

- Remote users can connect from anywhere
- Use of the standard http port
- Streaming available.
- Access restricted to Virtual rooms
- Secure access to the meetings
- Meeting moderation
The main configuration of the Scopia towards the project is up and running. A virtual room has been set up for every WP, Executive board and project office. An Invitation email (template) and password is available to all the virtual room owners, to be edited manually and sent to set up project meetings.

2.6 The EuWIn website

The EuWIn website has been designed using the same platform chosen for the Newcom# portal; Joomla. This makes their maintenance easier. It has been devised both as an instrument for facilitating cooperation among the institutions involved (through a private part used as repository of shared documents and measurement databases), and as a dissemination tool providing all the information needed to join the laboratory activities.

However, it is important to emphasise that the EuWIn website does not represent a duplication of the information reported in the Newcom# portal, and all official documents related to the project will be found only on the Newcom# portal. Therefore, deliverables and meeting minutes will be posted on the latter, where as promotional material (leaflets, video trailers, etc.) and documents describing in detail the lab facilities, will be found on the EuWIn website.

Moreover, the EuWIn website is integrated in the Newcom# portal, as all user credentials made available to Newcom# researchers to access the project portal will be imported on the EuWIn site, so that all Newcom# researchers will be given access to the private area of the EuWIn website under the same credentials.

The structure devised for the EuWIn website is as follows.
HOME: it contains a short welcome message and describes the goals of EuWIn. In the home page there is a counter of guests and members online and it contains also the log in form.

STRUCTURE: it contains a description of the lab structure. The submenu is formed by:
- Sites: with maps and links to the three institution websites
- Director: with a short description of role in EuWIn and a personal welcome message
- WP Leaders: with a short description of roles and a personal welcome messages
- Partners: in this page there is a mention of Newcom# partners active within EuWIn
- Liaisons: with a mention of the industries/labs/projects linked to EuWIn activities

FACILITIES: it contains a general description of the various platforms used, e.g. GEDOMIS, FLEXTOP, DATASENS, LOCTEST and others.

ACCESS: at this page is described the general access policy for using EuWIn laboratories. The submenu is composed of:
- Documents: with all links to public documents
- Join forms: it is a form to be filled for requesting access at the website
- Visit forms: it is a form to be filled for proposing a visit to the laboratory sites

EVENTS: the first release of the portal includes this menu that contains DEMOS, WORKSHOPS and SCHOOLS together. When EuWIn will become full operating with many demons, workshops and schools organized, there will be three different buttons for each different event. The submenu is composed by:
- DEMOS: it will contain inaugural video and images. Every demo realised will be contained in a different page with a short description.
- WORKSHOPS: it will contain the description of every workshop organized and it will have one submenu for each workshop.
- SCHOOLS: it will contains a description of every school organized and it will contains one submenu for each school.

CONTACTS: at this page there are available all EuWIn sites’ contacts.

REPOSITORY: it is contained in a different menu and only members can see it. There will be a form to be filled in for restricted access. Concerning the repository, whose access will be restricted to Newcom# partners and affiliate institutions, it was agreed by the WP Leaders that it will contain the outcome of the measurement campaigns performed within the Newcom# JRAs, and the documents needed to coordinate/facilitate access to the lab facilities.
3. Conclusions

The web tools needed to ensure smooth operation within Newcom# are up and running. They will be continuously maintained and updated by the institutions that are in charge of this responsibility: CNIT, CTTC and PUT. The web portal in particular will be maintained by personnel (project managers, system managers) at both CTTC and CNIT; this will ensure timeliness in its maintenance and updating of contents. PUT will be only responsible for the preparation and distribution of the newsletters, and for the management of the social networking activities.

The web portal, as for any other project, is an important instrument for the project life; in the case of Newcom#, it is also used for uploading and collection of all information needed for the internal MPA procedure. To this aim, it was carefully designed in order to facilitate content uploads.

The EuWIn website is an additional component, which aims at facilitating the dissemination of all information related to the experimental activities of the project. After M6, the researchers involved in Newcom# can now focus on development of research results, as all tools to support them, to disseminate the outcomes of the joint research activities, are now ready and operational.
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4. References

**Joomla**

**GNU Mailman**

**LinkedIn**

**Remository**

**Userport**

**GCalendar**

**Extplorer**

**Akeeba Backup Core**

**NotifyArticleSubmit**
Comments and suggestions for the improvement of this document are most welcome and should be sent to:

project_office@newcom-project.eu

http://www.newcom-project.eu