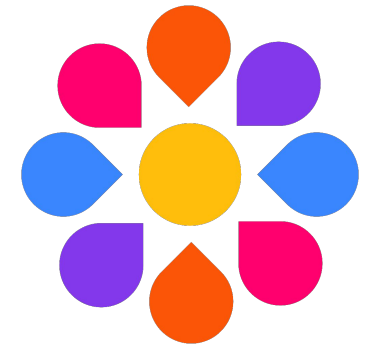


Workshop “Presenting the concept and the implementation of the Agora”

A University
Partnership
for
Acceleration
of European
Universities
(aUPaEU)

Politecnico di Torino, January 26, 2024





Program

- 10:00 am - Presentation of the concept and implementation of the Agora(s)
- 10:30 am - Preliminary catalogue of acceleration services
- 10.40 am - Understanding the Agora as a locus of best practices
- 10:50 am - Integration of existing data sources and the sustainability of the Agora(s)
- 11:00 am - Planned tests with user groups
- 11:05 am - Guided discussion



Presentation of the concept and implementation of the Agora(s)



Jesus Alcober, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya
Politecnico di Torino, January 26, 2024



Presentation of the concept and implementation of the Agora(s)

Agoras offer acceleration services by providing a collaborative **platform** where HEIs can access **guidance**, **share** knowledge, and receive **support** to accelerate their efforts towards institutional **transformation** and innovation





Presentation of the concept and implementation of the Agora(s)



The **aUPaEU** project **creates** and **maintains** agoras, **packages** them, and **offers** them to University Alliances and research networks with the option for branding **customization**.




Presentation of the concept and implementation of the Agora(s)



Unite! Agora powered by the aUPaEU project

through examples

Collaborative Transformation: Exploring the Unite! Agora's Role in Accelerating HEI Development



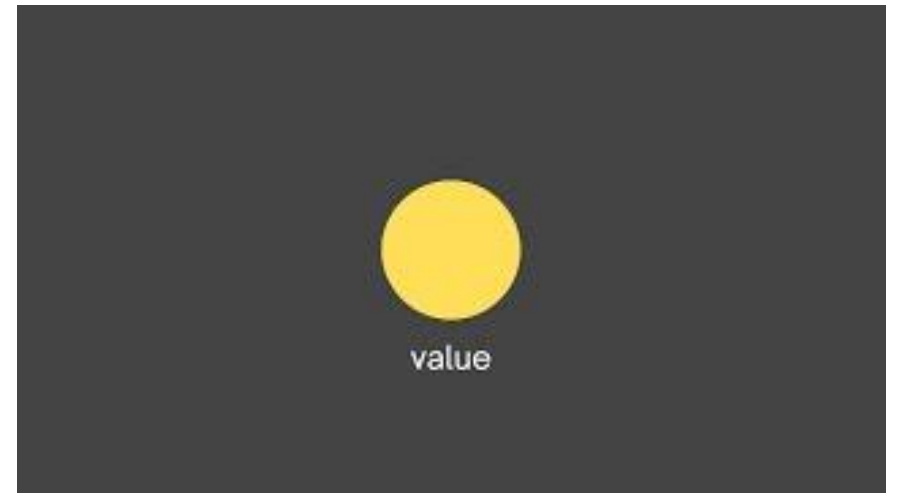
January 26th 2024

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Aida: Revolutionising Agoras with Intelligent Assistance

- Aida is the AI (artificial intelligence) of the agora
- Using the Aida prompt, you will be able to ask the agora what you need:
 - Experts
 - Funding opportunities
 - Research infrastructures
 - and more ...





Preliminary catalogue of acceleration services



Pierre-Nicolas Timsit, Grenoble INP

Jesus Alcober, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya

Politecnico di Torino, January 26, 2024



Preliminary catalogue of acceleration services



During the first year of the project we have worked on a preliminary **catalogue** of acceleration services



Supply of Agoras



It provides customized digital **platforms** to higher education institutions and alliances, facilitating collaboration and knowledge **sharing**.

It offers user **support** and contributes to various research and educational **outcomes**, developed by academic and administrative staff for widespread academic and societal benefit.



Catalogue of Research Infrastructures and TTOs



It **connects** researchers for **collaboration**, offering a platform with **guides** and **support**.

It aligns with the Higher Education Transformation Agenda, enhancing researchers' **careers** and supporting **shared strategies** in research and innovation.

The service includes access to the Agora platform, online collaboration spaces, and tools for **data sharing** and project management.

It's provided by academia and technical **experts**, benefiting a wide range of users in academia and the research and innovation ecosystem.



Events, Conferences, and Workshops



It organizes **events** in higher education to foster collaboration, promote cooperation, and enhance researchers' careers, with a focus on gender equality and citizen involvement.

It provides detailed event information and may use **AI** for tailored **recommendations**.

The service supports increased **collaboration** and knowledge **sharing**, with infrastructure and AI enhancing event planning and **engagement**.

It's aimed at **academia**, administrative **staff**, and the research and innovation **ecosystem**, providing **tailored** experiences for professional development and knowledge exchange.



Accessing Grants and Funding



It **assists** in finding European grants and funding **opportunities**, particularly for higher education institutions and researchers.

It provides detailed information on grants, utilizes **AI** for personalized **recommendations**, and offers human **support** for the application process.

This service **enhances** research **collaboration** and career **advancement** by making funding more **accessible** and **tailored** to individual research interests and profiles.



Coaching and Support



It provides tailored **coaching** and **support** to higher education institutions, aiding in institutional **transformation**.

It covers areas like **funding** access, service **implementation**, leadership **development**, and stakeholder **engagement**.

The service is **customised** to meet specific needs, offering **resources** and **expertise** from academia and the research and innovation **ecosystem**.

It's aimed at HEIs and stakeholders seeking **guidance** and **support** in various aspects of **transformation**.



Investment Strategy



It helps higher education institutions and ecosystem stakeholders **develop** and **execute investment strategies**.

It offers a structured approach for **planning**, accessing **funding**, and **implementing** transformations.

This includes a **knowledge base** for informed decision-making and a **platform** for collaboration and networking.

The service is aimed at facilitating **strategic planning** and **fostering innovation** in HEIs and their ecosystems.



Stakeholders management



It focuses on **managing** and **aligning** stakeholder interests effectively.

It develops **engagement** strategies, collects and analyzes stakeholder **data**, and facilitates **communication** and conflict resolution.

This service ensures **collaborative** and informed **decision-making**, aiming to make projects relevant and successful for all involved parties.



Showcases



It provides websites for higher education institutions to display their **collaborative initiatives**.

It enables stakeholders to **access** resources, provide **feedback**, and **interact** efficiently.

The service enhances **engagement** and resource **sharing**, with outputs including functioning **websites** and feedback **reports**.

It's useful for HEIs, their community, and external stakeholders to **engage** with and benefit from these **collaborative** efforts.



Understanding the Agora as a locus of best practices



Dr. Michael Anger, Dr. Claudia Kramer, Dr. Kerstin Wedlich-Zachodin
Karlsruhe Institute of Technology | Dpt. Research Services
Politecnico di Torino, January 26, 2024



The vision of an Agora of best practices

- The concept of the Agora may be ancient, but its reinvention in the digital age holds the potential to create an innovative hub of best practices
- In several areas, there are already best practices to approach particular challenges. However, not all of these practices are established and well known.
- The Agora offers a digital communication platform that can serve as a foundation for sharing best practices with other HEIs



How do we implement this vision?

By following a multi-faceted conceptual and empirical approach

- Analysis of R&I Agendas and Roadmaps to derive best practices and inform our approach
- Inventory of operating acceleration services at Unite! and EPICUR partner universities
- Testing of acceleration services with user groups and determining user needs



How do we implement this vision?

- Agora architecture builds on an established open source ERP (enterprise resource planning) software of European origin and follows a best practice framework for IT service management (ITIL)
- Commitment to Open Science and stakeholder engagement



Best practices as a guideline (e.g., WP4)

WP4 aims to ...

- gather information on best practices on operating acceleration services at Unite! and EPICUR partner universities
- develop best practice coaching services that include a wide range of HEI transformation agenda topics for stakeholders
- provide guidance for HEIs on how to implement best practices via the Agora of acceleration services
- contrive business processes for the alliances using Agoras
- provide guidance for HEIs in the form of an action plan



Agoras as places of FAIRness

FAIR stands for Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable and usually refers to research data, but also increasingly to other aspects (e.g., software, educational resources, ...)

- Acceleration services provided by the Agora should be FAIR
- Services that are evidence-based, FAIR and reflect best practices are promising tools to boost R&I
- Better compliance with the ERA policy agenda



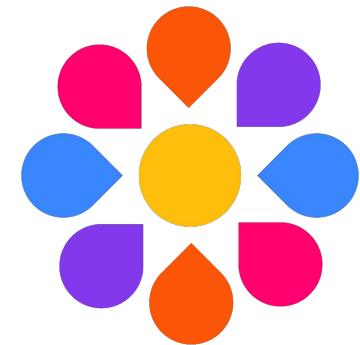
Conclusion: Agoras as best practices?

- It is not necessary to reinvent the wheel over and over again. Sometimes it is more beneficial to identify operating good practices and refine them into best practices.
- Via the Agora platform, **aUPaEU** pursues an integrated approach to create a space for offering and consuming services and sharing best practices between stakeholders.
- The Agora platform itself aspires to become a best practice example, enabling better community-building in university alliances and contributing to an improved **ERA**.

Integration of existing data sources and the sustainability of the Agora(s)

Jacek Marciniak, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Politecnico di Torino, January 26, 2024





Why integrate any existing data sources?

- HEIs participating in the Agora will contribute data from their own systems and/or input it manually
- Data sources collected outside the HEI will be beneficial in terms of enriching the Agora.
- The need for manual data collection already stored in other systems should be eliminated



Sustainability of the Agora and the validity and retrieval of data

- Agora will serve as a cooperation tool for scientist-to-scientist, HEI-to-HEI, and network-to-network
- It will integrate information of different nature, origin and validity
- To ensure good cooperation through the Agora:
 - the provided information should always be up to date,
 - it should be equipped with effective methods of retrieving information, even if the user does not know how to ask a question



Categories of data in existing data sources

- People/Researchers - scientist profiles with identifiers, such as ORCID
- People/ Experts - dependable information about experts, including scientists and domain experts like industry professionals
- Publications - publications, books, articles, conferences, and conference materials that confirm expertise in a subject area
- Scientific projects - research projects, R&D projects, and science popularization projects
- Patents - databases confirming the acquisition of patents and other forms of intellectual property protection
- Financing - current and upcoming grant calls, research funding institutions, and funding methods and priorities
- Research Infrastructure and Services - information about research equipment in HEIs and information about supporting teams



Key conclusions of the analysis of existing data sources

- Scope of the system: systems are functionally heterogeneous, processing various data types simultaneously causing data fragmentation, consistency issues, and duplication
- Purpose of the system: systems designed for mandatory data collection as enforced by laws and regulations, often contain low-quality, quickly outdated data
- Access to the data: the more localized a database is, the more limited is the access to its data
- Validity of data: validity of data is often overlooked by researchers and institutions due to the lack of systematic methods/legislation for maintaining quality
- Availability of API: newer IT systems are more likely to have API availability
- Languages: system interfaces are often in English, but data up to the national level are typically described in the national languages



Planned tests with user groups

Objectives:

1. Test the acceleration services developed with identified user groups
2. Validate the Minimum Viable Solution (MVS) of the agora of acceleration services
 - The methodology used to achieve this result will be an interactive process that directly involves the members of the user groups and takes into account the evolution of acceleration services over time.
 - Unite!, EPICUR, CATALISI and Accelerate HEI have already been invited to join the Agora
 - The developed acceleration services will be open to other alliances or universities' networks that could be involved in the testing.



What should third parties do?

The user groups will access the acceleration services from the catalogue providing a constant feedback

How?

- **Iterative focus group sessions:** bringing together representative user groups to discuss their interactions with the services, with the aim to understand their needs and expectations.
- **Interviews:** to delve into individual experience, addressing expertise on certain topics and individuals or groups who have a vested interest in the acceleration services and the Agora.
- **Surveys:** will be designed to measure key performance indicators (KPIs) and other relevant metrics that align with the overarching goals of the service assessment.
- **Platform usability testing:** participant will be asked to perform tasks providing feedback.



Guided discussion



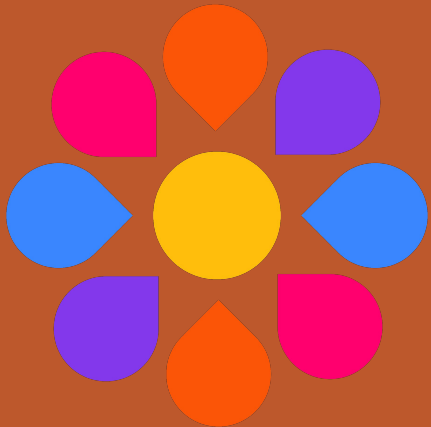
Cristina Marullo, Politecnico di Torino

Jesus Alcober, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya

Politecnico di Torino, January 26, 2024

DISCUSSION

“Rules of the game”





- Based on the presentation of real offerings the Agora provides through examples, we will walk you now through **three discussion topics**, with **two open questions each**

These encompass three main areas (**10 min. each**)

- **Agora functionalities,**
 - **Acceleration Services,**
 - **Evaluation and Barriers**
-
- We will use **PADLET**, a collaborative tool to share ideas on each topic. Link in chat
-
- You can **write your comments** on the post-its as well as **open your microphone and interact with us.**




Unite! Agora (through examples)



Unite! Agora powered by the aUPaEU project through examples

Collaborative Transformation: Exploring the Unite! Agora's Role in
Accelerating HEI Development



January 26th 2024

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Envisioning Agora Functionalities

Imagine your institution or workgroup now having access to an Agora platform offering a suite of acceleration services.

What specific functionalities would you expect or wish to see in such a platform to enhance your work efficiency?

<https://polito.padlet.org/sofiavercellone/imagine-your-institution-or-workgroup-now-having-access-to-a-j0nn5xwnbmyu9cgy>





Envisioning Agora Functionalities

Imagine your institution or workgroup now having access to an Agora platform offering a suite of acceleration services.

Reflecting on your daily professional activities, how could an Agora platform streamline or augment these tasks?

Please provide practical examples or scenarios.

<https://polito.padlet.org/sofiavercellone/imagine-your-institution-or-workgroup-now-having-access-to-a-qmvfvyus9rwoqms>





Relevance of Acceleration Services

Considering the diverse needs of your institution or workgroup:

Which acceleration services offered by an Agora would be most valuable to you?

Please elaborate on why these services stand out.

<https://polito.padlet.org/sofiavercellone/considering-the-diverse-needs-of-your-institution-or-workgroup-vn1eug97wxqh81i7>





Relevance of Acceleration Services

Data drives innovation:

What types of data do you believe are crucial for developing effective acceleration services in an Agora? How would you envision using this data?

<https://polito.padlet.org/sofiavercellone/data-drives-innovation-what-types-of-data-do-you-believe-are-important-for-developing-effective-acceleration-services-in-an-agora?h038xkr9ybzkmxf>





Evaluation and Barriers

If you were to pilot test Agora's services, what criteria would you use to assess their effectiveness and utility?

Think about both qualitative and quantitative measures.

<https://polito.padlet.org/sofiavercellone/f-you-were-to-pilot-test-agora-s-services-what-criteria-woul-mshdoqazqkau9npc>





Evaluation and Barriers

Identifying obstacles is key to improvement.

What potential barriers could hinder the optimal use of Agoras in your context?

These could be technical, organisational, cultural, or other...

<https://polito.padlet.org/sofiavercellone/identifying-obstacles-is-key-to-improvement-what-potential-b-54f7gm9o0xojejhq>





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