

OPEN SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION IN THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA FOR SSH - PREPARATION

WP4: Transnational access to publication services

D4.4 A service to involve the communities: The Forum platform

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DRAFT



OPEN SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION IN THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA
FOR SSH - PREPARATION

Deliverable D4.4

A service to involve the communities: The Forum platform

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I. Abstract

The Report presents the activities related to the setting up of the “European Communities in SSH” forum which is an integral part of the OPERAS RI. The forum serves as a communication venue for users of publishing platforms, enabling dialogue and exchange of experiences and best practices on critical aspects of open scholarly communication.

II. Introduction

OPERAS-P (Preparing open access in the European research are through scholarly communication) is a Horizon 2020 (H2020) project (Grant Agreement no: 871069) aimed at supporting the European research infrastructure for open access publications in the social sciences and humanities (SSH). To further the development of the infrastructure, OPERAS-P supports the ESFRI application, the implementation of innovative services as well as the expansion of the consortium. Among the main objectives of the project is the design of a dynamic communication and networking framework open to users from different locations and diverse communities of practice to foster interaction among them and enable user participation in virtual communities. This objective is achieved through the setting up of the “OPERAS Forum”. In the following sections, we present the steps taken for the creation of the OPERAS forum, moderated by EKT on behalf of OPERAS.

III. The OPERAS Forum

A. The Background

The management of OPERAS infrastructure user communities (Task 4.4/ WP4 “Transnational access to publication services”) aims to identify current scholarly communication practices and user needs and design a user forum as an integral part of the OPERAS RI. The forum will serve as a communication venue for users of publishing platforms, enabling community interaction and the exchange of information and expertise on critical aspects of online scholarly communication processes.

The idea behind the creation of an OPERAS Forum was already discussed during the OPERAS Conference that took place in Athens in 2018. During the conference, EKT organized a round-table with PKP that brought together stakeholders involved in the scholarly communication process with the aim to explore the ways in which PKP could provide further support to European users of OJS and OMP. The creation of a dedicated forum was among the ideas proposed as a way forward. The OPERAS-P project provided the opportunity to move forward with this idea and was described among the activities of the project.

B. Selection of the appropriate venue

During the first months of the project, the EKT team focused on assessing different options for hosting the OPERAS Forum. The Description of Work (DoW) referred to a “communication venue” thus providing flexibility during the project implementation phase regarding the selection of such venue. Among the various possible venues for hosting the forum, the following were discussed: mattermost channel, slack platform, PKP Forum. The first two (mattermost and slack) despite their merits were not deemed appropriate for such an activity. On the one hand, slack platform would also require a subscription which was deemed not convenient in the long-run. On the other hand, while mattermost has been used as a project internal communication tool, several project partners did not use it regularly. Taking that into consideration, attention focused more on the PKP Forum. The latter was proposed as more appropriate as it already operates as a forum focusing on technical aspects, while PKP is also an international member of OPERAS RI. Furthermore, OJS and OMP are widely used by OPERAS members as well as other European and international stakeholders, therefore PKP and its Forum already attract a significant number of stakeholders. Embedding therefore the OPERAS Forum in the PKP one would create synergies, benefiting both parties. In addition, this would also lead to a reinforcement of the work done by both entities and show in practice how the OPERAS community works.

C. OPERAS and PKP join forces

Having agreed and discussed with the project coordinator about the possibility of hosting the OPERAS Forum under the PKP Forum, the next step has been to contact PKP to discuss this further. A call was scheduled in May 2020 with members of PKP, EKT and the Project Coordinator. The call can be considered as a continuation of the discussions that had taken place during the Athens OPERAS Conference in 2018, yet this time the OPERAS team had concrete steps to propose.

It was agreed that the OPERAS Forum would focus primarily on non-technical aspects. Given that the focus of the PKP Forum is on technical issues, it was agreed that the addition of the OPERAS Forum would broaden the scope of the PKP Forum, by opening it up to new stakeholders like researchers, journal editors and managers. This was considered significant as it would allow PKP to benefit from the input of the wider community. In addition, PKP would also benefit from the input of the European community. As was also highlighted by the PKP team the idea of creating a community of practice had already been discussed, so having OPERAS on board could provide a significant step towards that direction. OPERAS members stressed from their side that the work done within OPERAS and the various projects (like OPERAS-P, TRIPLE), along with the participation of its members to various networks, could feed-in the discussions of the forum and raise attention to diverse topics of interest to the community.

A further important element focused on metrics. PKP ensured OPERAS team that it possible to have a record of activities and thus OPERAS team would be able to have a better image

regarding the activity within the OPERAS Forum.

The next important point in the discussion focused on the name of the forum. This proved a not so easy point. While “OPERAS Forum” might have been the obvious choice, concerns were raised regarding the extent at which such a name would attract those not familiar with OPERAS RI and its work. Furthermore, the use of “OPERAS” could be perceived as a way to make a distinction between the OPERAS community and the rest of the European stakeholders which is not desirable. After some brainstorming, agreement was reached on the use of “European Community in SSH” as more encompassing name.

This first meeting concluded with the agreement on the actions to be taken. The following steps were agreed:

- ✓ PKP to create a separate category under the Regional Networks
- ✓ EKT to provide a short description of the category, based on the guidelines for doing so provided by the PKP Forum
- ✓ EKT members to create an account in PKP
- ✓ PKP to upgrade EKT members to Moderators of the OPERAS Forum
- ✓ EKT to create an initial list of topics

IV. European Community in SSH

As a first step, a sub-category has been created under the “Regional Networks” category. The title is “About the European Community in SSH category” and provides a short description of the Forum (respecting the word-limit set by the PKP Forum). The description aims to provide basic information on the forum and introduce it to the members of the PKP Forum or visitors. The description is the following:

This category is for everyone involved in the scholarly communication process (authors, editors, publishers, journal manager etc.). The category is moderated by EKT on behalf of OPERAS, the European Research Infrastructure (RI) for the development of open scholarly communication in the social sciences and humanities (SSH).

★ About the European Community in SSH category

Regional Networks [European Community in SSH](#)



pmangahis  Staff

1  Jun '20



This category is for everyone involved in the scholarly communication process (authors, editors, publishers, journal manager etc.). The category is moderated by EKT on behalf of OPERAS, the European Research Infrastructure (RI) for the development of open scholarly communication in the social sciences and humanities (SSH).

    Reply

The description points out that the forum is open to everyone involved in the scholarly communication process. This has been an important concern, as both OPERAS and PKP want to stress that the forum is not a space for OPERAS members, but instead it is open to all stakeholders. At the same time, it does point out that it is moderated by EKT, on behalf of OPERAS to show in this way the links with OPERAS.

A second step in the process has been the creation of initial topics. The idea behind this is to be able to attract the community by showing a couple of topics that would act as a trigger. To do so, several communications have taken place with OPERAS members to explore the possibility of contributing. These resulted in the creation of two sub-topics: 1. Business Models and 2. Networking (national communities)

European Community in SSH

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Regional Networks ▶

European Community in SSH ▶

all tags ▶

Latest

Top

Topic

⚙ About the European Community in SSH category

This category is for everyone involved in the scholarly communication process (authors, editors, publishers, journal manager etc.). The category is moderated by EKT on behalf of OPERAS, the European Research Infrastructu... read more



Experiences with immediate publication of paper



Networking (national communities)



Business Models



For the topic “Business Model” the following description has been provided:

We look forward to hearing from publishers, researchers and other stakeholders involved and interested in open scholarly communication and practices about issues related (but not limited to):

- ***the transition paths to open access publishing practices***
- ***the challenges encountered during this transition***
- ***the ways in which this transition affects current publishing practices and researchers***
- ***what changes such a transition implies to funding models***

Colleagues from Serbia has commented by sharing their experience regarding the gap the notice between infrastructures and users with the former being a step ahead of user needs. This results in a low uptake of epublishing and innovation. And while this may not undermine the sustainability of the infrastructures it does discourage the development of innovative initiatives.

For the topic “Networking” the following description has been provided:

This topic provides a forum for national communities to present and exchange experiences regarding the setting up of national networks to promote open scholarly communication, the lessons learned, the challenges faced, as well as the ways in which national communities and stakeholders respond to user needs as identified in each case. By enabling community interaction, we seek to strengthen efforts undertaken at national level, but also provide support and guidance to stakeholders who seek to develop national nodes and enhance cooperation at national and European level on open scholarly communication.

The first post come from Germany and discusses the setting up of the German national node (OPERAS-GER) which aims to transfer the objectives and services of the project from the European level to the national level, and therefore to enhance awareness of OPERAS in Germany. While this post is more related to the OPERAS work, it nonetheless provides interesting insights regarding the setting up of communities at the national level and on raising awareness about the need to strengthen the links between the national and European level for the latter to respond to user needs.

A third category “Experiences with immediate publication of paper” has been added by the community. Journal managers have shared issues they have faced with the immediate publication of papers and the subsequent harvesting/indexing by Scopus, leading to a vivid discussion among members of the community.

Overall, the key element behind the setting up of the forum is a bottom up approach where the input (posts) come from members of the community. This approach is expected to provide us with a better understanding of user needs and challenges and will allow infrastructures like OPERAS to develop services and tools that respond in the best possible way to such needs. The community engagement will also provide valuable input in OPERAS’ presence in EU and other international fora.

V. Communication & Dissemination Activities

During the period covered by this report several activities have taken place with the aim to communicate and disseminate the OPERAS Forum. This is an ongoing task and therefore further activities are expected to take place in the following months. Some of them are already planned and described in the following paragraphs.

The setting up of the forum was announcement through the following channels:

- **Posts**

The following posts have been made to promote the creation of the forum:

OPERAS website

“OPERAS and PKP join forces to launch “European community in SSH” forum,
<https://operas.hypotheses.org/4488>

EKT website

“Online forum for open scholarly communication in SSH from OPERAS and PKP”, <http://www.ekt.gr/el/news/25358> [in Greek]

“OPERAS and PKP join forces to launch “European community in SSH” forum, <http://www.ekt.gr/en/news/25388>

The post has been also shared through OPERAS LinkedIn account and twitter account (@OPERASEU) PKP (@pkp) and EKT LinkedIn, Facebook and twitter accounts (@EKTgr and @openaccessgr).

▪ Newsletters

The creation of the forum has also been included in the EKT Newsletter. The Newsletter list comprises 43.900 recipients.

▪ Mailing Lists

The Forum has been shared with the following mailing lists:

OPERAs mailing list: This is a more encompassing list as it comprises OPERAS members.

OPERAS-P mailing list: The list comprises OPERAS-P project partners.

TRIPLE mailing list: The list targets the partners of the TRIPLE project. TRIPLE partners are OPERAS members.

OPERAS members as well as project partners have been active in promoting the forum to their national networks and communities.

EKT ePublishing mailing list: The list comprises editors and journal managers of journals hosted at the EKT ePublishing platform <https://ejournals.epublishing.ekt.gr/>. The platform is currently hosting 48 journals, most which are SSH journals.

Furthermore, targeted communication has been made with editors who are more active.

The announcement has also been re-shared by other initiatives and projects. A typical example is the socialpolicy.gr platform that presents topics of interest to social scientists (it is coordinated by a PhD Candidate in Greece) and welcomes contributions from the community. The platform is also present in LinkedIn and twitter. In addition, the announcement has been shared through two dedicated lists of MWS (in Germany).

Next Steps

As was discussed during the project monthly meeting, partners who will organize national events have been encouraged to present the OPERAS Forum in their events and nudge participants to contribute.

The coordinator of the OPERAS Forum has also been invited to the following events:

- Open Access Books Network series of talks called boOkmarks. This involves writing a blog post and participating at a Zoom interview session (date to be confirmed with

organizers)

- Knowledge Bridges webinar series called “Real Skills for Real Scientists”. The “Knowledge Bridges” project aims to bring together and connect Greek scientists working in Greece and abroad and to enhance the creation of networks. (date to be confirmed with Knowledge Bridges Coordinator)

MWS is in the process of creating a flyer for OPERAS-GER that will also include a reference to the Forum.

The OPERAS Forum coordinator will engage further with OPERAS-P members in order to explore further possibilities of engaging with national/ local communities and stakeholders.

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