Grant Agreement No.: 761802

D6.1: Internal communication platform

This deliverable contains a report on the internal communication systems that allow for efficient communication between the members of the MARCONI consortium.

Projectmarconi.eu

Work package	WP6
Task	Task 6.2 Project management, internal communication and quality assurance
Due date	30/09/2017
Deliverable lead	VRT
Version	1
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Keywords	MARCONI, internal communication, channels, project management

Disclaimer

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 761802.

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Project co-funded by the European Commission in the H2020 Programme	
Nature of the deliverable:	**R**
Dissemination Level	
PU Public, fully open, e.g. web	

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document outlines the internal communication procedures that are key to effective and efficient project management. After having reviewed and compared different possibilities and services for internal communication, we have installed a set of tools that provide a cohesive view on the communication structure of the MARCONI project. The types of tools and corresponding advantages are listed in this Deliverable.

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1 Internal communication

Internal communication is of vital importance to an effective communication strategy, as it relates to the very core of each and every project: the people behind it. By developing sound internal communication procedures, a system is put in place that allows for members to work effectively together with transparent understandings and goals. Similarly, a regular evaluation of these processes allows for growth and trust within the project organisation. It is therefore also important that the usage of tools is monitored and corrected if needed.

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2 Project tools & communication platforms

During the kick-off meeting, a set of different channels was proposed and already accepted by all of the consortium members. After some technical difficulties, all communication channels are now put in place and used by the consortium.

2.1 OwnCloud
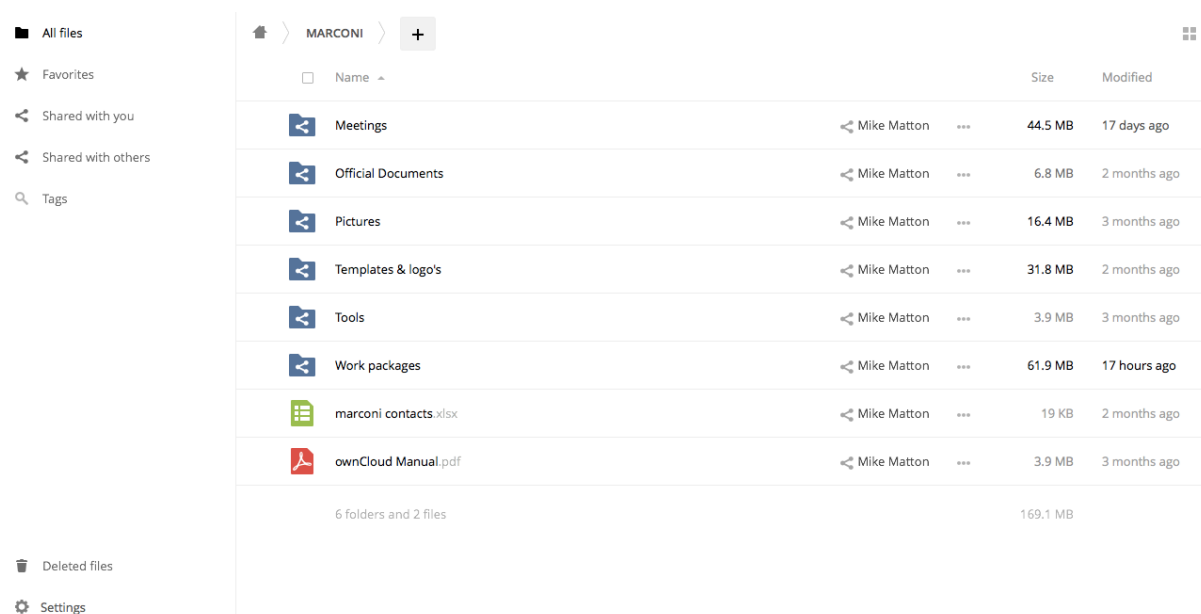
OwnCloud is an enterprise file sharing solution for online collaboration and storage. We use it as a document repository that can easily be accessed by every consortium partner. The platform enables its users to access data no matter where it is stored or which device is used.

The OwnCloud service is hosted by VRT in a secure environment. The content stored in OwnCloud is backed up on the VRT infrastructure on a daily basis.

There are several files that give an overview on the status of the project:

- Meetings folder: documents on presentations, agenda and notes

- Official documents folder: grant and consortium agreement

- Pictures folder: collection of pictures taking during the project

- Templates and logos folder: document on the font type, logo's, partner logo's, and templates

- Tools folder: overview of the internal communication toolkit

- Work packages folder: documents on each work package, such as the Deliverable, use cases etc.

Figure 1: Overview of OwnCloud document repository

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2.2 Rocket.Chat

For our daily communication, the project requires a tool which we can easily resolve questions and discussions, without excessive mailing. In that extent, we chose for the team chat software solution of Rocket.Chat. It is the leading team chat alternative for Slack and is free, unlimited and open source. The Rocket.Chat service is hosted on VRT infrastructure in a secure environment.

All consortium partners have access to the MARCONI domain on Rocket.Chat. Apart from a general channel, we have created a separate channel for each work package, in order to structure the topics of our discussions. In addition, separate channels and direct messages are easily created for any other queries. For example, channels for social media and videos have been made to collect inspirational and relevant content.

Figure 2: List of MARCONI channels on Rocket.Chat

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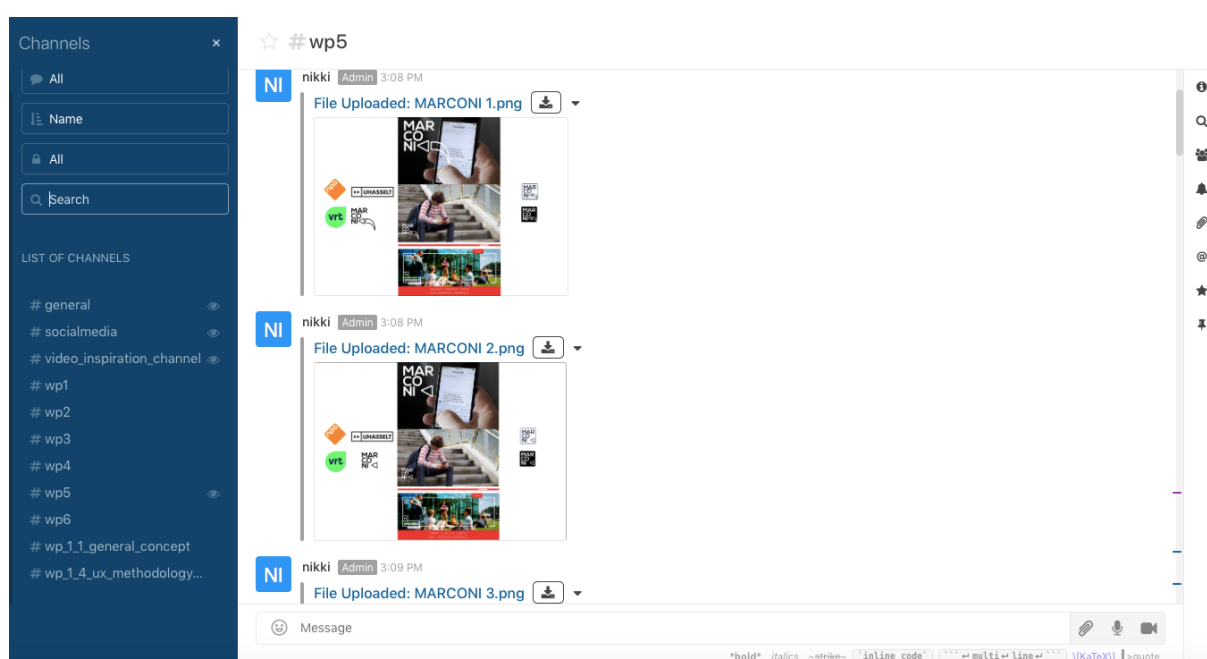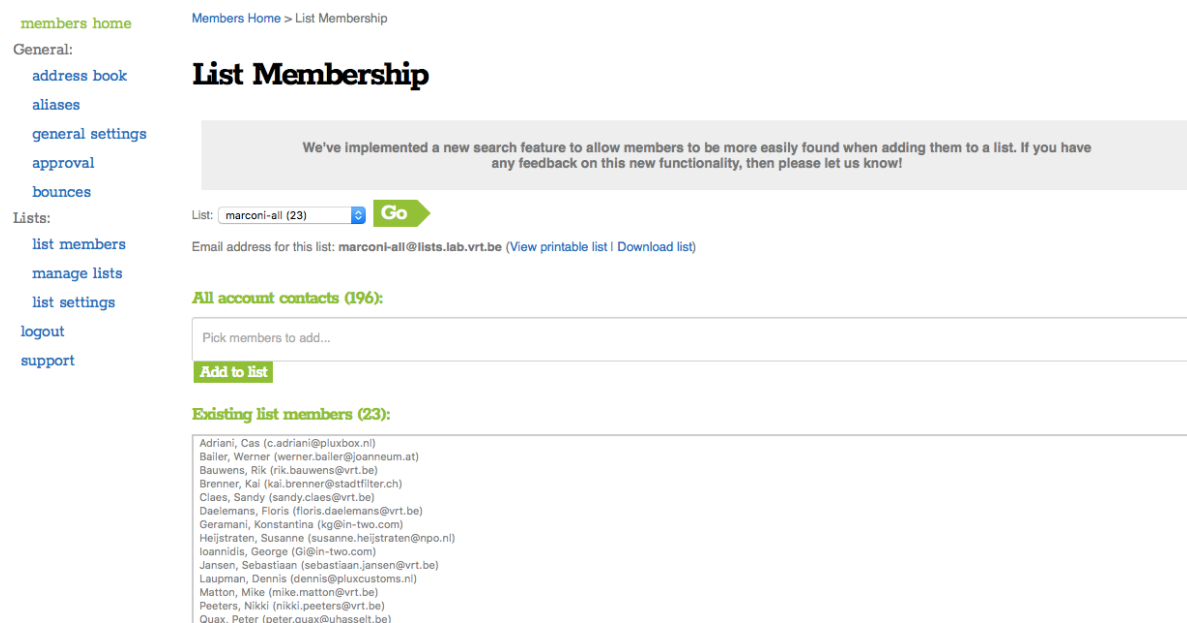
2.3 Simplelists

In order to organize and manage different mailing lists, we make use of the email list hosting service and mailing list manager Simplelists. By creating multiple lists on the platform, ranging from a general list, an admin list, to a list for mails with technical issues, the targeted group of people can easily be addressed.

Figure 3: Simplelists list settings of MARCONI general list

2.4 Zoom.us

Zoom.us is an audio video conferencing system, comparable to Webex and GoToMeeting. It allows us to schedule and set up video conferences. Consortium partners are able to join a video conference via computer, mobile device or telephone. There are browser plugins for all major browsers, international dial-in numbers for almost every country, and plugins for Outlook, lync and desktop clients. It is an efficient and user-friendly tool for organising online meetings.

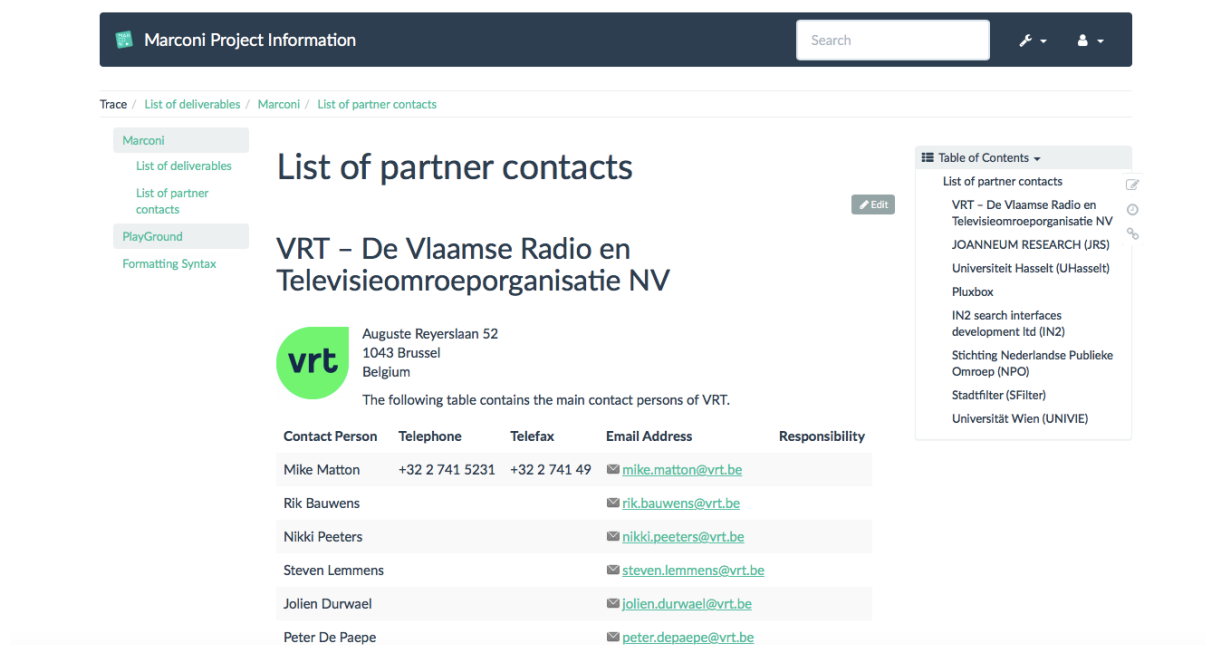Figure 4: Zoom.us dashboard for scheduling an online meeting

2.5 Wiki

Wiki offers key information on the project and consortium. The main purpose of this tool is the maintenance of the project handbook and other living documents, such as the data management plan. Every partner has access to update info, in order to make sure that all the required information is up to date and readily available.

Figure 5: Wiki page for partner contact info

2.6 Google Drive

Collaborative editing and revising remains to be a strongpoint of Google Drive. Therefore, we selected Google Docs and Google Spreadsheets as the best tools to collaborate on work in progress.

With Google Docs, the consortium is able to efficiently draft and share the editing status of project Deliverables. Consortium partners are able to easily comment on existing work and review changes in the editing history, without having to send different versions via mail.

Google Spreadsheets offers the opportunity to share an event and communications calendar with the consortium partners, to which everyone can add activities and notes.

Google Drive is not used as a document repository as it is unsuitable for archival purposes. The archival of documents happens on the OwnCloud system described in Section 2.1.

Figure 6: Google Drive working document repository

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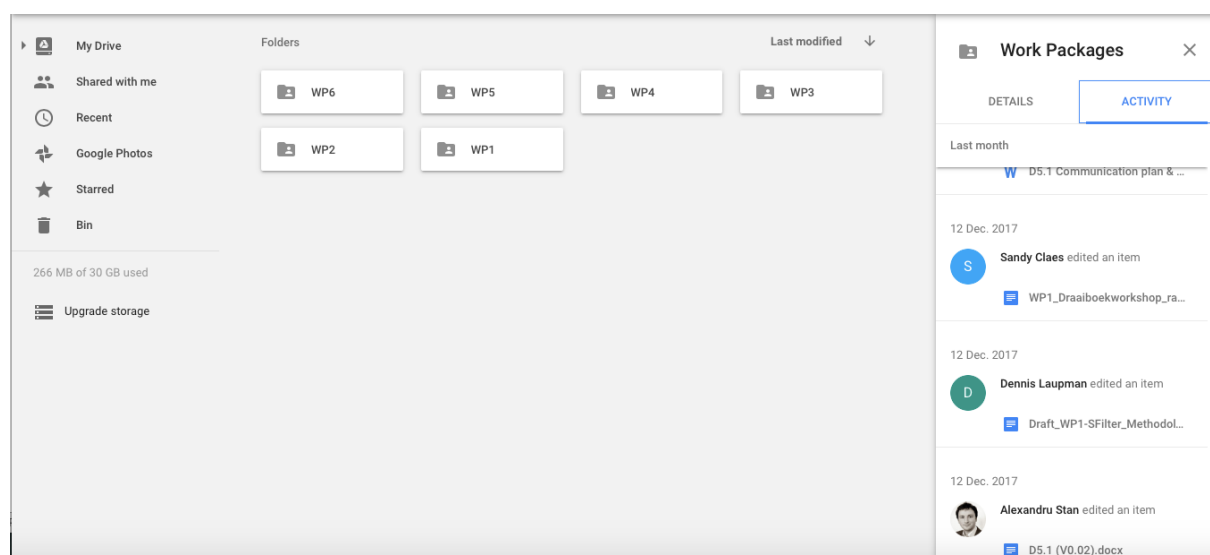
3 Conclusion

Effective internal communication procedures are key to the progress of the project. With this Deliverable, we have given an overview on the types of tools and platforms that structure the internal communication processes between the consortium partners. These aforementioned tools are now in full use and are found to effectively support the needs of the project.

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