

The LID Project

Living with Industrial Disaster and risk

Topic ICT-10-2015, Scope A - April 14, 2015

Final evaluation: 13,5/15

List of participants:

Participant organisation name	Country
(Coordinator) Public Research Partner 1: University of Siena , Department of Social, Political and Cognitive Sciences (DISPOC)	IT
Public Research Partner 2: Open University , Knowledge Media Institute	UK
Public Research Partner 3: University of Leeds , School of Media and Communication	UK
Community Partner 1: AFEVA – Associazione Familiari e Vittime dell’Amianto, Casale Monferrato	IT
Community Partner 2: Apuseni Mountains Union (NGO)	RO
Community Partner 3: Bhopal Medical Appeal (NGO)	UK
Digital Media Knowledge Center / SME: Technocité , Digital Programme Curator of “Mons European Capital of Culture 2015”	BE
Creative SME: PanSpeech srl	IT
Private Research Partner: AARBA – Association for the Advancement of Radical Behavior Analysis	IT

Project Abstract

In line with the topic specific challenge (ICT-10-2015, Scope A), and taking it its overall objective, LID aims to raise individual and collective awareness of the causes and consequences of industrial disasters, and to promote new approaches to preventing disasters and managing risk and uncertainty. It will do so through the realisation of an open Digital Public Space platform using integrated open tools and a dedicated digital repository. The LID platform will integrate the different functions and approaches of the three main models of web interaction: social networks, distributed production of knowledge, and the Internet of Things.

LID is a self sustaining, open to all and socially impactful pilot that engages four existing communities from four countries and promotes the development of effective responses to managing risk. The platform will be an open and easily accessible DPS for a global audience, and for citizens who have traditionally been excluded. Through the combination of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) and citizen knowledge, LID partners will also study how collective “repositories” of knowledge, intelligence and experience can be actualised within a multilingual and multicultural - as well as “multi-capability” - artificial environment (i.e. the LID platform).

Therefore, LID will enable citizens and communities living with the consequences of industrial disaster and risk to become autonomous, articulate and effective campaigners in their own causes. Through open conversation and the exchange of stories and creative practices, the platform – and its associated digital repository of environmental data, literature banks and co-produced texts - will fuel citizen participation in the processes necessary for dealing with precarious social contexts. It will draw on community experience, knowledge and expertise and, through training, mentoring practices and social innovation activity, empower ordinary citizens to identify future risk, monitor local environmental conditions and build campaigning coalitions.

Predicated on the needs of the communities it is designed to serve, LID will offer innovative approaches to technology co-design, participatory research methodologies and conceptions of DPS. The project will demonstrate the potential of collaborative social endeavour, the inherent power residing within communities and the value of critical thinking beyond the academy.

Objectives

Goals/Specific objectives:

The LID project will develop a pilot experience centred on an ICT (Information Communications Technology) platform built on existing open source tools and newly designed and integrated technologies for achieving the following specific objectives:

Objective A

To gather and publish ordinary citizen’s experiences of industrial disaster and consequential risk from 4 carefully selected communities from different parts of the world and use them to foster participation, at both individual and collective levels, in the creation of an open Digital Public Space platform. By integrating existing, and developing new, participatory ICT tools based on open-source software, the LID platform will then allow users to develop collaborative bottom-up policies and agendas (vertical advocacy) related to industrial risk, that will become a vital resource for users and citizens in their activist and lobbying campaigns.

Objective B

To allow for the mutual support of users in relation to the problems they face in situations of industrial disaster and risk through the development of tools for reciprocal mentorship and

consultancy (horizontal support and advocacy).

Objective C

To embed, distribute and make useful sets of data (including: both officially and institutionally generated; self-generated by communities; and, through the deployment of community focussed sensors and open technologies) and make them available for the creation of hypermedia second-level narratives and multimedia objects. These second level connections, termed Complex Documents (see [Section 1.3.4. Activity 3](#) for a detailed description), will further spread awareness and allow communities to draw on data sets, produced both bottom up and top down, to develop on the ground, autonomous means of understanding past and present events and real or future risk.

Objective D

To analyse user behaviour in order to measure adaptations and impact that have occurred in communities involved in the project. Such analysis will provide evidence of change and allow a better understanding of the processes entailed in collective awareness activities. Crucially, it will be used to define new bottom-up participatory innovation paradigms for raising awareness and developing truly collaborative and effective efforts toward the development of shared policies and agendas.

Objective E

To foster positive models of behaviour for the prevention and/or management of industrial risk and disaster through the analysis and re-elaboration of people's experiences, the elaboration of behavioural checklists and precision teaching tools. By sharing stories and common experiences citizens can form bridges of support between geographically and socially remote communities and develop the capacity to better understand their situation, the risks they face and the best ways to address them.

Objective F

To ensure the onsite re-materialization of LID platform progress and results through the circulation of hardcopy newsletters and second level documents, through local presentation of LID content. This will also involve the local and interlocal circulation of DVDs and artworks created by artists and citizens involved in the project through exhibitions and other forms of public display. This will enhance user participation and allow everyone, regardless of digital accessibility, to see what is being produced and how the network, the atomic content and the Complex Documents could help their community.

Concept and approach

The Overall Concept: the chosen sustainability challenge.

LID targets industrial risk as one of the key societal challenges for contemporary society. Indeed, industrial disasters have become a recurrent feature of contemporary existence and a challenge that the EU, as one of the main global institutional and political actors, has to address. Tragic, critical and global events such as Bhopal, Chernobyl, and to a lesser extent Minimata and Seveso (place names now synonymous with different poisons), have become monuments to our age. Therefore, the threat to sustainability that LID challenges and impacts is twofold: it is both environmental and social. It is environmental because pollution and accidents destroy nature and impede the natural processes of life. It is social because these events destroy social cohesion and damage people's wealth, health and relationships.

At the same time, the issue raised by the project has both global and local impacts. It has global

impacts because it focuses on facts and processes that interest the entire planet. The role of industrialisation and the impact of heavy industries on the climate and general environment are of paramount importance to all citizens. The threat is a growing one as older technologies fail and issues of maintenance and modernization are ignored. It has local impacts because our project targets and involves specific real communities in a co-produced enquiry aimed at developing a sustainable response.

As with natural disasters, industrial leaks and spills are moments when a society rethinks itself, as values are called to account, risks are re-evaluated, and the construction of citizenship and state activity are brought into stark relief (we could think for instance of the philosophical debate on the 'Enlightenment' that the 1755 Lisbon earthquake triggered in contemporary European societies). The people and the state are brought into close and unusual proximity, and questions of trust, transparency, knowledge and uncertainty dominate (Oliver-Smith 1996; Petryna 2002). Furthermore, Button (2010), drawing on the work of scholars like Beck (1986) and Giddens (1999), has promoted the idea of a transformation from an industrial to a risk-based society in which environmental hazards caused by human activity have become the principal product, rather than an unwanted side-effect, of our economy. According to Button, the knowledge necessary to assess risk is often deficient to the extent that uncertainty, rather than risk, has become the central strategy for understanding disasters.

Industrial risk seems to be a common feature of our contemporary world. The relevance of current global agreements like the Tokyo Protocol, not to mention the challenge posed by climate change, global warming, and fracking, demonstrate that the "industrial factor" is still heavily shaping our lives and future. The ever-growing global spread of fossil fuel extraction further confirms that we have not yet reached the age of industrial sunset (Klein, 2014). We need to raise consciousness and to foster an active, positive involvement of ordinary citizens and communities, along with their representatives and institutions, in order to create the conditions for proposing and circulating innovative solutions (locally informed as well as transmissible and adaptable to different contexts). As such, there is a need for new and innovative, participatory, horizontal approaches informed by multidisciplinary research, to which we propose to side instruments like ICT and social media tools. This is particularly relevant since shocks and accidents caused by industrial disasters have increasingly produced long term negative consequences on societies and the environment. Although local situations of actual or potential risks caused by heavy industries are often accompanied by a huge and active awareness and collective participation, we still miss a common "digital public space" (DPS) for sharing, exchanging and circulating different experiences, knowledge, struggles and collective modalities of participation among the different "levels" of our societies (civil society, public institutions, private actors, universities and intellectuals, legal and medical systems, and so forth).

LID recognises this gap and the need to bridge it. The principal aim is in fact to create an experimental environment through which processes of creation of collective awareness can be observed and new bottom-up participatory paradigms in the development of new policies, lifestyles and behaviours can be defined by drawing on the activism and expertise of involved communities.

What is LID?

LID will comprise communities of individuals and communities of communities. It will be a network and a digital repository for archival materials. LID will represent both a virtual and physical hub where individuals and communities can participate in sharing life-experiences, stories, backgrounds and important data. The focus will be on storytelling, a traditional way of communicating that is common to all user communities involved and most people since the evolution of complex language. It will be a place where a circular process will start, where sharing and circulating knowledge will determine the generation of ideas, actions, and good practices to be further shared. The possibility of producing and collaboratively supporting new policies and agendas on industrial disasters will create opportunities to influence policy makers and disseminate

the value of a networked knowledge society. It will be a unique resource because it will be co-designed by the communities who will make use of it, the content will be owned and populated by those communities, it will avoid corporate and institutional governance and target multiple literacies and levels of digital enfranchisement.

LID will allow users to testify to their experiences, and will encourage them to narrate the stories and experiences of others. It will provide information harvested from the Internet on companies and environmental issues all over the world and it will offer tools allowing users to cooperate in environmental data collection and monitoring through an ad-hoc social sensing paradigm. It will allow users to connect with each other to harness a plurality of perspectives, and produce scalable approaches and resources for the “world out there”. By fostering open dialogue, linked global activity and public dissemination of materials, LID will allow communities to hold organisations, companies and governments to account and act as a hub for the building of global coalitions of activism and political lobbying.

Conceptually, LID addresses a complex set of problems whose reformulations lie at the core of its visions and which can be grouped into three main nexuses:

- A- the oral/writing nexus;
- B- the knowledge/power nexus, and
- C- the real/virtual nexus.

The WP titles are the following:

WP1 - Understanding Community Needs & Defining Technological Innovation Strategies

WP2 - Open Softwares and Open Hardwares for Industrial disaster and Risk Management

WP3 - Piloting: user cases & Community engagement

WP4 - Analysing and fostering collective awareness and behavioural patterns: impact assessment

WP5 - Dissemination, Exploitation, Communication

WP6 - Coordination & Project Management

