WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

REVALORISE + SYNTHESIS REPORT

5 STEPS TO MAKE YOUR RESEARCH MORE VISIBLE

HACKATHON A TOOL TO SUPPORT VALORISATION

www.revalorise.eu
WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT TO FIND IN THIS ISSUE?

The second issue of the REVALORISE+ e-zine focuses on summarising the main findings of the research phase of the project (p. 5) and a detailed look at the Synthesis Report on the field of valorisation. Throughout its pages, you will discover how researchers make their research publicly available with a detailed look at Memorandum Unlimited (p. 10) and #YoxTleO (p. 13).

Looking ahead we look at helping researchers to create impact beyond publications and share insights from our research activities that will help the development of two training programmes focused on Social Science & Humanities researchers and another for intermediary professionals (p. 15).

Project partner, University of Vienna shares insights on using a Hackathon as a tool to support valorisation in SSH (p. 16). Their example is of a recent Digital Solutions for Societal Challenges Hackathon where interdisciplinary teams worked on concepts for (participatory) digital solutions to current societal challenges with a focus on the topics of the environment and mobility.

The last section of the e-zine is where you can meet three more of our project partners, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, University Carlos III of Madrid, and Momentum (p. 22).

Happy New Year to our Readers
Here we outline our main learnings so that they might support us in the next phases of our project.

The Synthesis Report highlights opportunities to increase the valorisation of Social Science and Humanities research projects and shows various ways to enhance social, economic, or political impact within SSH research.

What were the most important steps to make things happen? Juha shares the story of Memorandum Unlimited with us.

Traditional approaches to research often inhibit finding interdisciplinary solutions.
What we have learned so far.....

Our investigation phase saw us identify and describe the skill needs of researchers and knowledge/technology transfer (KT/TT) professionals regarding their valorisation activities, efforts, and intentions. Here we outline our main learnings so that they might support us in the next phases of our project, including the training programme, and inform future social science and humanities (SSH) valorisation research.

REVALORISE+ gained insights not only from the final deliverables but also throughout the investigation and planning process. To find specific literature and professionals dedicated to the SSH valorisation field proved to be more difficult than expected. The SSH valorisation field is still in its infancy and that must be taken into consideration for future research, as well as for the next steps of this project and how we allocate resources. The SSH academic community does not have great knowledge about valorisation and is not very familiar with it yet.
Main Learnings

LITERATURE REVIEW

Valorisation proved to be a broad concept and difficult to define, which may lead to confusion and the lack of familiarity between SSH academics.

Literature gaps: How do different groups of researchers deal with valorisation? What are the differences between researchers with different backgrounds and interests when performing valorisation activities? At what stage in the project to start discussing valorisation? So far, we could only pinpoint general traits of SSH researchers towards valorisation.

When performing our training, we can map groups to understand how to best support them.

SURVEY

The Literature Review report on valorisation in SSH was followed by surveys of SSH researchers and KT/TT professionals. It found:

‘Lack of familiarity’ and ‘confusion’ are still the words of the day: among many factors, it was suggested that respondents did not feel interested in the topic.

Researchers performing valorisation activities and using supporting mechanisms are not aware that those activities are connected to valorisation.

KT/TTs might not recognise themselves as valorisation actors nor name themselves as KT/TTs.

The results indicate that training must show researchers the possible valorisation activities that may be undertaken.

When promoting the training programmes, we must show researchers that some of them are already valorising their work and would benefit greatly from the training.
Training for SSH researchers is still in its infancy. Training developers acknowledge that SSH researchers have other needs. However, what these needs specifically are, and how to address them requires further exploration.

SSH training is largely based on existing STEM valorisation training programmes.

Developing training that is aimed at specific types of professionals or testing the same training with different groups of professionals, instead of having general training for SSH researchers might help us to understand the different needs of participants.
The training programme should focus on raising awareness and clarifying valorisation possibilities in SSH. For example, by connecting examples to something that researchers can relate to in their academic life and background.

Addressing motivations and mindset: training should not only focus on developing new skills, but also on changing attitudes. Researchers do not need to become businesspeople, as valorisation is also about social impact.

The role of KT/TTs: It was possible to understand the support that researchers need from KT/TTs, but not if the KT/TTs have the resources to provide it. Further research is needed with a sharper focus on KT/TT professionals.

As we enter the next phase of the project, these insights will inform and support our work to develop training programmes for both SSH researchers and intermediary professionals.
We shed light on various pathways to stimulate entrepreneurial skills and grow market knowledge of a new generation of entrepreneurial and socially engaged researchers. Additionally, we show ways to professionalise SSH-related valorisation activities by training Knowledge Transfer and Technology Transfer staff with a specific focus on the Social Sciences and Humanities.

FOCUSING ON RESEARCHERS AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PROFESSIONALS

The Synthesis Report highlights opportunities to increase the valorisation of Social Science and Humanities research projects and shows various ways to enhance social, economic, or political impact within SSH-research. Looking at a variety of topics, the report addresses the valorisation skills gaps of Social Sciences and Humanities researchers and Knowledge Transfer and Technology Transfer professionals – who generally act as the first point of contact for research valorisation. Roles and responsibilities are sometimes a rather ‘grey area’, as it is not always clear which actor is responsible for which aspects of valorisation or how stakeholders can help each other. For this reason, we also explored mechanisms within universities and opportunities: which factors support which processes or maybe there are even inhibiting factors that are a barrier to valorisation happening?
RESHAPING ACADEMIC MINDSETS

Valorisation of Social Science and Humanities research is not a theme that universities deal with daily, as the findings show. This can be related to a rather traditional academic focus in these fields, where often-called entrepreneurial projects are seen as an extra task, not as a core responsibility of academic roles. Valorisation activities are mostly stimulated by a personal, intrinsic motivation to create societal impact, not because it is stimulated by the universities. Since there seems to be a mismatch between professional goals and expectations on the one hand and personal motivations on the other, reshaping academic attitudes and mindsets seems therefore highly important.

We see many opportunities for the academic environment to bring research of the Social Sciences and Humanities to society, by developing supportive mechanisms and offering specialized training programmes. Curious about the lessons learned?

Download the full Synthesis Report for more insights.
Juha Laakkonen and Elina Rauhala wanted to popularise history and bring it to a broader audience ever since they met in 2000. Eighteen years later, as PhD students of Finnish history and ethnology at University of Jyväskylä, they proceeded with valorising their research by utilising digital technology and augmented reality and established a company Memorandum Unlimited.

What were the most important steps to make things happen? Juha shares advice from Memorandum Unlimited with us.

Author: Katerina Salmi

based on a Lighthouse Story interview with Juha Laakkonen
The science popularisation course Juha attended at his university played an important role in understanding why and how he should valorise his history research. Juha came up with an idea to use augmented reality (AR) to visualize history through a mobile application. Utilising old photographs became the heart of the idea execution. At a time when the AR technology was already widely accessible to the IT sector, however the usage of AR in mobile applications was rather new.

According to Juha, having the guts to establish a business was crucial.

“Talk to as many people as possible, even strangers. You never know who you are speaking to and what can come from it. Test your idea, evaluate the feedback. Don’t spend too much time alone developing the idea. Have a courageous mind and implement.”
3 GROWING A DIVERSE NETWORK

Juha and Elina quickly understood that to succeed they needed to build a diverse network of ambassadors for their idea as well as business partners. They actively scanned the market and contacted different stakeholders. As a history and ethnology research was only part of the actual business idea – the other part being augmented reality in a mobile application – Memorandum Unlimited subcontracted a software development company to help them to implement the idea.

4 ACQUIRE BUSINESS KNOWLEDGE

In order to acquire business knowledge Memorandum Unlimited took part in two accelerator programmes. The first one – run by Helsinki based xEdu – focused on teaching and technology. Memorandum Unlimited utilised xEdu’s network and received coaching for the educational part of their business idea. The second one – run by Jyväskylä based Startup Factory – focused on general business development and offered various types of coaching.

5 UNDERSTANDING THE CUSTOMERS

Selling and marketing is everything and you have to do it every day – explaining the added value as well as showcasing the tangible outcomes.

says Juha. However, only by understanding the customer’s needs can one acquire a long customer relationship.

For more information about our LightHouse series please visit our website resources: Resources – Revalorise
BOOKS THAT SAVE LIVES: AN INITIATIVE TO ENCOURAGE READING AND ONLINE BIBLIOTHERAPY

Verónica Sierra Blas and María de la Hoz Bermejo Martínez
University of Alcalá; LEA–SIECE introduce the story of #YOXTILEO

That books can change our lives is something that has been proven. The benefits of reading for our health and for our life, in general, have been backed up by science in a multitude of studies. If we read, we keep our brains young, we reduce stress levels, we focus and learn more and in a better way. We become more empathetic and creative. In short, we are happier.

During the COVID-19 health crisis, reading became an important activity in many people’s daily lives: reading helped them during the lockdown, as it continues to help them now, to feel less lonely, to escape, to find comfort and fight sadness, to recognize fears, to channel anger, and relieve pain, both physical and psychological during difficult times.

Having this awareness of the therapeutic function of reading, the Reading, Writing, Literacy (LEA) Research Group and the Interdisciplinary Seminar for Studies on Written Culture (SIECE) of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Alcalá (Spain) launched the #Yoxtileo (#Iread4u) initiative in April 2020. Students and professors chose their favourite books and recorded themselves reading a passage to share on Instagram and Twitter.

Following this model, they sent messages of encouragement, gratitude, and hope through books to those people the pandemic hit hardest or who were working on the front line. The initiative spread beyond virtual classrooms and was joined by more readers. Today it continues to demonstrate how sharing our readings with others is a powerful strategy for resilience in challenging times.

For more information about our LightHouse series please visit our website resources:
Resources – Revalorise

“Whenever you read a good book, somewhere in the world a door opens to allow in more light”

Author Vera Nazarian
HELPING RESEARCHERS CREATE IMPACT BEYOND PUBLICATIONS

Our activities over the last few months have provided us with many novel insights into valorisation. Through the extensive research that the REVALORISE+ team has conducted, important gaps in Social Science and Humanities (SSH) researchers’ valorisation knowledge were identified, as well as gaps in current valorisation training programmes.

Our research has brought us into contact with many stakeholders in the Social Science and Humanities fields. In fact, over 400 stakeholders working with SSH valorisation have contributed to our research and development. Allowing us to have a better understanding of the needs of SSH researchers.

We have been able to recognise barriers, opportunities, supporting mechanisms and resource needs that affect SSH researchers who want to create impact from their work. Furthermore, we have identified the skills and knowledge required by intermediary professionals to best support SSH researchers in their valorisation journeys.

The insights from these activities have been compiled and analysed to aid in the development of two training programmes: one for SSH researchers and another for intermediary professionals.

SSH VALORISATION PROGRAMME FOR INTERMEDIARY PROFESSIONALS

This programme is focused on raising awareness on the importance of valorisation amongst intermediary professionals at higher education institutions. Participants will also learn to map the internal assets within their university, extend their networks with external partners and be able to train SSH research staff in SSH valorisation.

Participating intermediary professionals will go on to support participants of the Valorisation Training Programme.

VALORISATION TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR SSH RESEARCHERS

Aimed at developing SSH researchers’ entrepreneurial and valorisation skills, as well as their commercial awareness and networking abilities, the HackTheResearch Valorisation Training Programme looks to inform a new generation of impactful SSH researchers. The programme will cover topics such as entrepreneurship, collaboration with external partners and knowledge transfer. Training will take place at 5 universities across Europe: University of Applied Sciences Amsterdam, University of Copenhagen, University Carlos III de Madrid, University of Vienna, and Institut Mines-Télécom Business School.

These training programmes will create new opportunities for researchers to learn how to create impact beyond academia and allow them to put their new knowledge and skills into practice.
Students and early career researchers are experts in their field, but rarely utilise methods and theories from other disciplines. Traditional approaches to research often inhibit finding interdisciplinary solutions. This is where we wanted to pick up and why we organised hackathons since 2020.

WHAT IS A HACKATHON?

Briefly explained, a hackathon is a challenge where people come together in a limited amount of time to create experimental, creative solutions for specific problems. Although its origins lie in software and hardware development, it can be quite flexible in terms of duration, topics, or the level of focus on technological/digital solutions. A hackathon can be a great format to expose students and researchers to interdisciplinary environments for a limited time. New communities with new perspectives can be involved, networks get extended, and innovative ideas are created, often resulting in prototypes.
At the “Digital Solutions for Societal Challenges Hackathon” (#WTZHackathon) in Vienna, interdisciplinary teams worked on concepts for (participatory) digital solutions to current societal challenges. The focus of this hackathon in September 2021 was on the topics environment and mobility. Students and early career researchers from all disciplines could apply for this two and a half-day event either in teams or individually. The aim was to enable interdisciplinary teams to develop ideas that improve living conditions in sustainable cities and communities and to apply their theoretical knowledge to the development of solutions for current societal challenges.

19 students and early career researchers, coming from a broad field of disciplines such as architecture, social design, computer science, business administration, healthcare, comparative literature, biology, or social and cultural anthropology, formed five teams.

During the event, experts from the City of Vienna presented background information on the challenges and provided relevant data. Additionally, SDG Watch Austria provided information on the Agenda 2030. Mentors from the City of Vienna, the start-up Cortecs and the Coding School UpLeveled were present throughout the whole event to support all teams.
WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN ORGANISING A HACKATHON

Our takeaways after organising several hackathons are:

A skilled host, guiding the participants and later the teams and mentors through a multi-day event is of utmost importance.

The support by mentors from different areas of expertise in every step of project development was essential to pushing the emerging projects further. As the schedule was tight, the mentors were moving between the teams to give input, help them to develop and narrow down their ideas and to stay focussed. Technical support was given by cooperation partners throughout the event to specify requirements in implementing a digital solution and to make sure the task could be accomplished within the timeframe set.

Cooperation partners are a key factor in organising such an event. We intensified the cooperation with the City of Vienna, as they are familiar with existing challenges within the city and have appropriate data. For the topic “Digital Solutions for Societal Challenges – Environment & Mobility” the City of Vienna provided nine concrete challenges they are facing, such as online shopping and climate, or tools for identifying potential areas for roadside planting.

It’s great when, apart from prize money, one can offer the winning team something that goes beyond the event itself. In our case, the winners could present their idea at other multi-stakeholder events. Our cooperation partners at the City of Vienna are also still interested in pushing the outcomes of the hackathon further, e.g. they have helped the winners find the right people within the City of Vienna to explore the possibilities of further developing their ideas.
THE WINNING TEAMS OF 2020 AND 2021:

Winning team in 2020: Greenovation

“Greenovation brings together stakeholders involved in urban renovation – citizens, private enterprises, and the municipality. It uses cutting edge technology to help citizens visualize and preview their ideas, using georeferenced data and a custom rendered online map.

Greenovation offers tools to publish ideas and to discuss them with both interested and opposed parties. A simple voting system allows garnering the support of a critical mass and helps to constitute a lobby more powerful than the voice of an individual. The aim is to identify in an early phase the ideas with the greatest acceptance and with the most benefits, in the hope of getting officials of the municipality involved. At the same time, such ideas provide various research opportunities by generating anonymous data that can be used by the municipality, sociologists and political scientists to conduct studies on urbanism and development.”

The winning team of 2020, Greenovation, was given the opportunity to present their project at the 6th Austrian Citizen Science online conference.

Winning team in 2021: Treehopper

The City of Vienna’s climate strategy involves planting 25,000 new trees. Toward that goal, we were posed with the challenge of creating a participatory digital solution that considers important criteria such as parking spaces, heat islands, etc. Our solution, Treehopper, aims to foster citizen engagement and empower their participation through the combination of AR and DL-powered microclimate prediction models, with the help of embedded expert knowledge and codified regulations. This makes finding optimal tree placements a process that can be well-considered, data-driven, and minimally detrimental to the individual.

The team around the project Treehopper presented their project at the Digital Days 2021 event, an initiative by the City of Vienna.
WHAT DID THE PARTICIPANTS SAY?

“These intensive two days have been a great opportunity to develop ideas and to work with people from very different backgrounds, in our case ranging from Science to humanities. The importance of developing these diverging views on a joint idea was intrinsic to making this project a success. We have learnt to work effectively in a team of complete strangers, and we profited greatly from all the support offered by the hackathon, from the expertise and perspectives provided by experts to the round the clock support for our physical well-being. The event was well organised and took great strides to conform and even surpass the current COVID-standards for such events.

Team Greenovation”

“Taking part in the Hackathon was a great opportunity to reflect upon all those important problems we never take the time to think about.

Team Sharing Mobility”

The hackathons took place within the project “Knowledge Transfer Center East”, coordinated by the University of Vienna. This project is supported by the Austria Wirtschaftsservice, with funds from the Nationalstiftung für Forschung, Technologie und Entwicklung (Österreich-Fonds), with the aim to support all aspects of knowledge and technology transfer from all disciplines, including the social sciences, humanities, and the arts. The center brings together a consortium of nine universities as well as three universities of applied sciences and approximately 20 external partners.
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MEET THE PARTNERS:

AppliNG KNOWLEDGE, CREATING SOLUTIONS FOR TOMORROW

At the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (AUAS) every single day is dedicated to creating solutions for tomorrow. What does this mean? In a nutshell: together, we focus on sustainability, digitalization and diversity. These are the pillars of a well-balanced future to include everyone and to promote sustainable growth. Of our people – students and staff – and everything on which we are working. As applied science is our middle name, the goal of our organisation is to apply science in practice: to make things work in and for society. We make sure knowledge is continuously exchanged between education, research, and professional practice – as an ongoing cycle. This way, we keep learning from each other and we grow together.

CONNECTING EDUCATION, RESEARCH & PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

AUAS is a knowledge institution where the connection between education, research and professional practice forms the common thread in all of our curricula and research. We invest in our students and staff: nurturing the development of their talents, stimulating entrepreneurial mindsets, nourishing personal growth, and helping students shape their professional identity. Hereby, we seek the connection with society and the professional practice continuously. This way, the benefits of our research grow, our research gains value, and importantly: we prepare students to kickstart their careers.

PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

The AUAS team comes from a variety of backgrounds and stems from the combined strengths of the professorship Entrepreneurship and Innovation Exchange Amsterdam (IXA). Whereas the professorship Entrepreneurship is responsible for the research and education program on Entrepreneurship at AUAS, IXA was born out of the combined Knowledge Transfer Offices of the University of Amsterdam, the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and the Amsterdam UMC. The blend of the team shows the effect of combined strengths to create substantial value, which is exactly what we aim to achieve with the REVALORISE+ project.
MEET THE PARTNERS:

UC3M is a public, young (founded in 1989), medium size (22,000 students in four campuses) university, international oriented, committed to innovation and excellence in all its missions: teaching, research, and entrepreneurial university.

Regarding teaching, as a generalist university, related disciplines are distributed in 26 departments among the following Schools: a) Law and Social Sciences, b) Humanities, Communication and Documentation and c) Engineering. UC3M is among the 150 top universities in the world in terms of graduates’ employability (QS Graduate Employability Ranking).

All UC3M courses are divided into three groups, (bachelor’s, master’s, and doctorate degrees), with the following programs:

- 45 bachelor’s courses: 17 in Social Sciences and Law, 1 in Humanities, 14 in Engineering, 2 in Guardia Civil University Centre; and 11 combined degree courses.

- 77 official master’s courses: 24 in Law, 16 in Economics and Business, 10 in Humanities, Communication, Information and Social Sciences and 27 in Engineering and Basic Sciences, plus 31 private master courses.

- 19 doctorate courses in the varying fields of investigative research ongoing at the university.

“Knowledge should bring new and better opportunities for everyone. Responsible research, innovation and entrepreneurship are core drivers at UC3M of which we are very proud. With these accreditations the motivation is even stronger.”

Professor Juan José Vaquero López.

Vice Rector for Scientific Policy
About research and knowledge transfer function, the following figures show the University effort and commitment: 2,009 teachers and researchers organized in 131 research groups, UC3M leads 15% of the Spanish universities’ projects in Horizon 2020, and there are more than 230 industrial partnerships.

Additionally, UC3M is a key agent in the regional ecosystem. It was awarded with dual accreditation for “Entrepreneurial & Engaged University” of the ACEEU. The Universidad Carlos III de Madrid is the first European university to achieve ACEEU accreditation both in Entrepreneurship and Engagement, showing the institution’s commitment to excellence in multiple aspects of third mission. This is also the second institution in the world to achieve such dual recognition by ACEEU.

“We are deeply honoured to receive these awards that we share with our community, internal and external, for its commitment hoisting the flag of the SDGs to shape a better world.”

Professor Mª Luisa González-Cuéllar Serrano.

Vice Rector for Institutional Relations and Sustainable Development
Momentum is one of Ireland’s leading innovation and entrepreneurship specialists, recognised as thought-leading strategists, facilitators, and educators in transformation through innovation.

Founded in 2003, Momentum’s team spans 24 staff and specialists who deliver over 50 innovation and entrepreneurship programmes per annum, through in-person training, facilitation, mentoring and web-enabled distance learning, specifically webinars and e-learning environment. Each year they equip over six hundred learners through their sought-after classroom training courses and thousands of others through Momentum’s blended learning and online courses.

As the lead dissemination partner on the REVALORISE+ project, Momentum brings forth its expertise in generating the best possible impact on national/regional/ international levels. With marketing at its core, Momentum operates an in-house marketing division specialising in brand development, content generation, communication, and public relations strategies, digital media, and social media development of high-impact promotional campaigns.

Sharing and promoting are integral components of the REVALORISE+ project. Through a carefully crafted Dissemination Plan, Momentum has put in place the best channels to promote the project and to achieve targets set by the consortium. Samantha Carty, Project Lead shares, “For us, it is about creating a strong and clear visual identity for REVALORISE+ to engage with our target audience through carefully crafted interesting content with high impact designs on blogs, promotional materials, the dedicated website, and multiple social media channels.”

Momentum is therefore very excited to be the brand and communication architect behind the REVALORISE+ project. Make sure to visit the REVALORISE+ website for more information on the project and follow us for updates!
WHO WE ARE?

Led by University Industry Innovation Network (UIIN), the REVALORISE project team includes nine partners spanning seven European countries.

We are innovators and capacity builders in the HEI field and work across and with a variety of institutions – Traditional Universities, Applied Sciences, Business Schools – as well as Industry expert...