HEIDI website launch

Our HEIDI project now has a new website! Check it out here: https://heidiproject.eu/ All the info about our project will be posted there in the future, do check it out!

HEIDI short publication

What forms of social participation university staff and students are involved in during the pandemic? What examples of initiatives led by volunteers and academic staff and students together do we have? Check out HEIDI's first short report with a few examples of digital action inside and beyond universities during the pandemic

HEIDI - First phase roundtables

During October and November, HEIDI academic partners (University College London, University of Paris and University of Malta) held a series of roundtables (15 in total) to learn more about the drivers and barriers of Higher Education Engagement in Digital Action as a catalyst for social change during the COVID-19 crisis. In the roundtable events academic partners, invited Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) stakeholders (i.e. decision makers, researchers and academic staff, librarians, support staff and students) to talk about their own experiences with citizen science, maker movements, and hackathons, how they formed relations with the local and global community, the limits and barriers to participating in digital action, and whether they felt that these forms of digital action in HEIs could be an effective catalyst for social change.

In the discussion groups stakeholders spoke at length and shared views and opinions around digital action. The event format allowed attendees to participate by writing or speaking, and the HEIDI team to gather significant amounts of ideas and experiences.

Following our discussions on what digital action is and the unique qualities of participating in digital action at HEIs, our questions focused on understanding participants' perspectives on the drivers and barriers of digital action in these contexts. Discussions emphasised the accessibility and benefits of engaging with digital action (i.e. opportunities for training, funding, access to resources) as key drivers. Ideas about accessibility followed on into the discussions

around barriers to engaging with digital action, with participants emphasising the potential lack of digital and technological tools, and relevant skills as a key barrier to engagement. We further discussed how HEIs can raise awareness of digital action and here conversations focused on how HEIs should emphasise and promote the benefits of these activities and the need to address community and institutional challenges that still prevent from realising their full potential.

Academic partners at the University of Malta are further analysing the results from all 15 roundtables in the UK, France and Malta. A full report will be published at the end of December, which will be available through our website https://heidiproject.eu.

HEIDI - What's next

In the coming months, HEIDI activities will really speed up as we start working implementing lessons learned during the roundtables. We will introduce the concept of digital actions to all higher education stakeholders and offer training opportunities on how to create digital projects with citizen-generated data. By the summer, we expect to be really busy designing, implementing and executing hands-on digital actions across Europe. All of us at HEIDI are excited to see all the exciting hackathons, games, devices, or art installations that will be created!

Let's not forget that equal emphasis will be given in offering opportunities to grassroot communities for upskilling their technical skills and capacities as a response to the pandemic. Beyond the lessons learned via the already made roundtables and webinars, more efforts will be done in a bottom-up approach, via targeted round table discussions with the target group. This will help us offer customized training opportunities to these communities. A kick start will be made from the very beginning of the new Year 2022 to set maker spaces as training opportunities. This time the emphasis will be both on HE communities and communities with no prior knowledge in Digital Actions. The framework and guidelines have already been set, so partners from around Europe can take the appropriate actions.