



Knowledge Graphs at Scale
Innovative Training Network (ITN)

Project Number: 860801

Start Date of Project: 2019/10/01

Duration: 48 months

Deliverable 6.3 Dissemination Training for ESRs

Dissemination Level	Public
Due Date of Deliverable	Month 21, 30/06/2021
Actual Submission Date	Month 21, 30/06/2021
Work Package	WP6 – Dissemination and Impact
Deliverable	D6.3
Type	Report
Approval Status	Draft
Version	1.0
Number of Pages	10

Abstract: This deliverable reports on the research dissemination training offered to ESRs within the KNOWGRAPHS ITN.

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This project has received funding from the European Commission's H2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie work programme under grant agreement No 860801.

History

Version	Date	Reason	Revised by
0.0	04/04/2021	First draft created	Jeanne Mifsud Bonnici
0.1	15/06/2021	First draft revised	Jeanne Mifsud Bonnici
0.2	28/06/2021	Second draft created	Jeanne Mifsud Bonnici
0.3	29/06/2021	Peer feedback provided	Nadine Jochimsen, Michael Röder
0.4	29/06/2021	Updates based on feedback	Jeanne Mifsud Bonnici, Michael Röder
1.0	30/06/2021	Final version created	Heidi Douglas
1.0	01/07/2021	Final version submitted	Nadine Jochimsen

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ESR Early Stage Researcher

ESRs Early Stage Researchers

ITN International Training Network

MSCA Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

UG University of Groningen

Executive Summary

This deliverable reports on the activities carried out in the KNOWGRAPHS project (as part of Task 6.4) to assist ESRs in planning the dissemination of their individual research and activities.

Dissemination of an ESR's work is important to increase the visibility of the KNOWGRAPHS project and is essential for the development of the ESR's academic career. The research and activities of an ESR, when properly disseminated, act as a public portfolio of the ESR's achievements. Based on this portfolio, the work of the ESR is then shared with relevant stakeholders, who in turn can help the ESR find future direction in research or in their career development.

Based on this understanding, the KNOWGRAPHS project has taken a triple approach in the dissemination training of ESRs:

- a. discussion of the aims and methods of disseminating research during every project activity;
- b. organisation of a workshop in January 2021 during which ESRs actively reflected on innovative ways to disseminate their research;
- c. participation in dedicated dissemination training at host institutions.

This deliverable reports primarily on the workshop activities.

Awareness of the importance of publicly sharing the research and results does not stop with the approaches taken so far. The KNOWGRAPHS consortium is committed to working with and supporting ESRs in disseminating their work throughout the project's duration.

Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms	3
Executive Summary	4
1 Introduction	6
1.1 The Importance of Dissemination for ESR Career Development	6
1.2 Task 6.4	6
2 Dissemination Training for ESRs Workshop	7
2.1 Aims of the Workshop	7
2.1.1 Preparatory Work	7
2.2 Themes Covered in the Workshop	7
2.3 Tangible Follow-ups	8
2.4 Next Steps	8
3 Guidelines for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows	10

1 Introduction

1.1 The Importance of Dissemination for ESR Career Development

The term ‘dissemination’ is used in a variety of contexts. It is generally understood to refer to some form of publicity of one’s work or activities. For the Dissemination Training Workshop for ESRs, reported below in Section 2, we have used the following definition of dissemination as our guide: dissemination refers to “a planned process that involves consideration of target audiences and the settings in which research findings are to be received” (Wilson, Petticrew, Calnan, & Natareth, 2010, p. 91)¹. It is important to reflect on the two aspects of this definition: careful planning, thought, and consideration of target audiences, and communication with those audiences.

The KNOWGRAPHS project has its own dissemination and communications strategy (deliverable D6.2). This plan includes the dissemination of the project’s research and activities. This is different from, though complementary to, the dissemination of the research and activities of individual ESRs. Reflecting on and planning the dissemination of the ESRs’ individual work is not only a requirement, expected of every researcher, but is also beneficial for the exposure of the ESRs’ work and the building of research networks. Furthermore, it is an important contributor to the ESRs’ future academic or professional plans and development. As all experienced researchers and professionals know, visibility of one’s work and activities takes place over time and requires planning and coordinate actions. In addition, it is important to add that given that the ESRs’ research is publically funded, ESRs have a moral obligation to make the findings of their research available to as wide an audience as possible. Ideally, the fruits of the research should benefit society as a whole.

1.2 Task 6.4

In Task 6.4, the KNOWGRAPHS consortium committed to: “Working with Fellows on the dissemination of their work (Leader: RUG). A workshop will be organised for ESRs to work on a dissemination plan for their research and activities within KNOWGRAPHS. Each ESR can ask for the assistance of the dissemination team: this may include help on preparing advanced presentations of the research, identification of networks for the presentation of research, etc.”.

A dissemination workshop was organised and held online on 12th January 2021. Originally, all ESRs would have progressed significantly to have had their first papers published by the time this workshop took place. However, because of the pandemic and some late recruitment, not all ESRs were as far advanced in their research activities. One positive aspect is that almost all ESRs had been recruited prior to the workshop and hence could participate in the discussion. The aims, structure, and themes covered in the workshop are described in Section 2 below.

Awareness of the importance of dissemination is not only a matter of one workshop; hence KNOWGRAPHS has adopted the following tripartite strategy:

- a. Continued discussion of opportunities for dissemination of research during bimonthly research events, biannual project meetings, and KNOWGRAPHS workshop(s);
- b. Training related to different aspects of dissemination of research, e.g., elevator pitch training, social media exposure training, etc. (offered by hosting organisations);
- c. Providing assistance to ESRs in the dissemination of their work (headed by RUG, KNOWGRAPHS’ dissemination partner).

¹ Wilson, P. M., Petticrew, M., Calnan, M. W., & Natareth, I. (2010). Disseminating research findings: What should researchers do? A systematic scoping review of conceptual frameworks. *Implementation Science*, 5, 91

2 Dissemination Training for ESRs Workshop

2.1 Aims of the Workshop

The Dissemination Training for ESRs Workshop was held online on 12th January 2021. In preparation for the workshop, the RUG team set the following three main aims for the workshop:

- a. Setting an environment of open discussion on the value and responsibilities of research dissemination;
- b. Reflecting on what can be disseminated;
- c. Planning for dissemination.

From a pedagogical perspective, the idea was to set up a workshop with active and shared learning. While an online environment has several challenges, the ESRs were willing to engage actively throughout the workshop, and they worked around technical challenges when a colleague's connection fell through.

2.1.1 Preparatory Work

In the weeks leading to the workshop, the ESRs were asked to reflect on the following questions:

- What should be disseminated?
- Why should it be disseminated?
- Whom do we want to reach?
- When do we want to disseminate it, i.e., with what frequency?
- Where do we want to disseminate?
- How do we want to disseminate it?
- How should we share the dissemination responsibility?

The ESRs shared and discussed their independent reflections during the workshop. (The ESRs were not expected to write up their reflections on these questions before the workshop.)

2.2 Themes Covered in the Workshop

The workshop covered the following themes:

Block A – Reflection on dissemination

- What is dissemination?
- Is there an ethical responsibility to share results and activities?
- Is dissemination just another obligation for an already busy ESR?

Block B – Dissemination: a planned process – target audience

- Who are your audiences?
- Academic, industry, policy context, the general public – all or only one group?

Block C – Dissemination: a planned process – the setting of dissemination

- Different disciplines, different settings
- Is interdisciplinary work more 'difficult' to disseminate?
- What are the different dissemination channels per discipline?
- Choosing open access – FAIR research outputs
- Professional vs. personal social media profiles

Block D – Additional aspects

- Language matters
- How to write a short blog
- How to write a good tweet
- Scientific networking
- Review
- Acknowledge the funding of your work (see Section 3 for the guidelines shared with the ESRs)
- Respecting intellectual property/confidential nature of industry partners

2.3 Tangible Follow-ups

The ESRs agreed to three tangible follow-ups after the meeting:

- a. Each ESR would create professional social media accounts on social media platforms that they deemed popular in their field. By the end of February 2021, all ESRs had set up their professional profiles; each ESR had created a LinkedIn profile and a Twitter account. Most ESRs did not consider Facebook as an appropriate medium for their research.
- b. Each ESR would contribute to a short blog to disseminate their research and activities. This blog post could be posted on the KNOWGRAPHS website and/or websites of host institutions. By March 2021, the ESRs had organised who would write and who would review the blogs. By June 2021, the ESRs published nine blog posts on the KNOWGRAPHS website focusing on different papers and research topics discussed within their regular research colloquium.²
- c. Each ESR would reflect on what skills, training, and tools they needed to better disseminate their work and send their ideas to the RUG team. The following suggestions for training resulted from their reflections:
 - Elevator pitch training
 - Review of ESR dissemination plans
 - Writing training – creative writing
 - Oral presentation tips and tricks
 - Producing an animated video about their research

With respect to the dissemination activities carried out by the ESRs so far, it must be taken into account that most ESRs started their work later than expected due to the pandemic and related travel restrictions. Hence, the majority of ESRs has not yet created enough content that could be disseminated. It is expected that the dissemination activities of the ESRs will increase during the coming months.

2.4 Next Steps

Awareness of the importance of publicly sharing the research results will not end with the approaches taken so far. A plan for the coming year has been drawn up to support ESR efforts in dissemination. Each suggestion and request for training, listed in Section 2.3(c), will be addressed in the coming months.

Additionally, all supervisors have committed to sharing their experience as well as the tips and tricks they

² <https://knowgraphs.eu/news/>

have learnt in their careers to increase the dissemination and outreach of their research. This will take the form of pre-recorded short interviews.

The project will report on its commitment to ESR Dissemination Training in the Final Report of the project. Meanwhile, the KNOWGRAPHS consortium remains committed to supporting ESRs in disseminating their work throughout the project's duration.

3 Guidelines for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows

The ESRs were advised that it is important to ensure visibility and recognition of received EU funding in all communications, publications and patent applications. For all communication relating to the project, including publications and presentations, ESRs are requested to ensure the visibility of the EU emblem and to acknowledge EU funding by including the following text: “This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 860801”.

Moreover, ESRs have been advised that the MSCA explicitly support open access to research results. This means that the peer-reviewed scientific publications resulting from MSCA funding will have to be deposited in repositories and available online free of charge. To further support this, the KNOWGRAPHS website lists all publications created throughout the project with links to publicly accessible files.³ This allows the ESRs to easily check whether their publications are publicly available.

³ <https://knowgraphs.eu/publications/>