



Grant Agreement N°857191

Distributed Digital Twins for industrial SMEs: a big-data platform

DELIVERABLE 8.9 – COMMUNICATION PLAN AND REPORT (II)



Document Identification

Project	IoTwinS
Project Full Title	Distributed Digital Twins for industrial SMEs: a big-data platform
Project Number	857191
Starting Date	September 1st, 2019
Duration	3 years
H2020 Programme	H2020-EU.2.1.1. - INDUSTRIAL LEADERSHIP - Leadership in enabling and industrial technologies - Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
Topic	ICT-11-2018-2019 - HPC and Big Data enabled Large-scale Test-beds and Applications
Call for proposal	H2020-ICT-2018-3
Type of Action	IA-Innovation Action
Website	iotwins.eu
Work Package	WP8 - Outreach activities – dissemination and communication
WP Leader	ART-ER
Responsible Partner	ART-ER
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File Name	D8.9 - Communication plan and report (II)
Contractual delivery date	M18 – 28 February 2021
Actual delivery date	M19 – 05 March 2021
Version	2.1
Status	Final
Type	R: Document, report
Dissemination level	PU: Public
Contact details of the coordinator	Francesco Millo, francesco.millo@bonfiglioli.com

Document log

Version	Date	Description of change
V1.0	12/02/2021	First draft sent to internal reviewer.
V2.0	25/02/2021	Second draft including internal reviewer inputs ready for partners' check.
V2.1	05/03/2021	Final version.

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Executive summary

The IoTwinS Communication Plan **undertakes the challenge of communicating IoTwinS project to a larger audience**, raising awareness about how EU supports Research and Innovation, how any advancement in technology can actually improve everyday life as a final outcome.

It includes the description of how IoTwinS Communication actions will be developed, towards which targets, through which channels and tools. It represents a Partners' support document for concrete communication actions towards projects stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The overall IoTwinS **communication objectives** are to:

- raise awareness about the project and its activities;
- inform the audience about the outcomes and results of the project;
- engage with partners and stakeholders to (continue to) collaborate with one another and to contribute to the project's goals and activities;
- elaborate and produce material for an effective communication strategy;
- produce specific tools for a better communication interaction among partners.

Internal and external **target groups** will be addressed, including both project partners and a wider innovation community made of: Policy makers, Local, regional development agencies, Entrepreneurial associations, SMEs, micro and large companies, start-ups, Innovation centres, Scientific community, European Commission, Regional Brussels Offices, European networks& initiatives, General public.

Internal communication channels and tools foresee:

- The IoTwinS outreach team, as described in the Deliverable 8.1
- A form for collecting all partners' communication tools
- A form to collect news and event to be published on the project website or on social media
- Partners' guidelines for news set up
- A shared calendar.

External communication digital brandbook foresees:

- A project Brandbook, as a communication guideline, including a visual and verbal identity of the project
- A set of digital communication channels: the project website, the social media, the project video
- Press office and Media relations
- Partners' guidelines for events organization/participation and the management of patronage requests.

1 Introduction

Communication is at the core of every project, from the smallest to the biggest one. It crosses with all project activities along its entire lifetime. Communication exists before the project starts, while it is active and running and after the project ends. This is the reason why it is something everyone should take care of since the very beginning.

When talking about European projects, communication is aimed at making a large audience understand the added value of innovation and its impact on everyday life, the importance of the EU support to research and innovation in facing societal challenges.

Communication and dissemination activities often overlap, so that is not always easy to separate the two levels, to trace a well-defined border between the two of them. They interact with each other, and the one feeds the other.

The IoTwinS communication plan aims at providing all partners with the proper tools, channels and actions to reach out to society and show impact of EU funded projects.

To avoid Covid-19 pandemic to become a bottleneck for the development of the communication plan, all necessary means are put in place by ART-ER, in order to implement the activities in a proactive approach, through the use of digital tools. Since 2020, ART-ER and partners have made all necessary preparations to switch from in-presence to online seminars/events (using Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Brella platforms). Although we do acknowledge that online seminars do not allow the same kind of benefits to partners and stakeholders as in-presence meetings (i.e. team-building, social networking, live experiences, etc.), on the other hand they make it possible to enlarge the number of participants from all over the world and to record the event and watch it later in case participation was not possible. This gives room to new exploitation possibilities.

2 Communication objectives

IoTwinS Communication Plan is conceived to provide due relevance to single actions and create pathways towards different target groups all along the project life.

It uses diverse communication tools that serve the specific goals, key messages and target groups.

The goal is therefore to elaborate an exhaustive Plan to successfully implement the IoTwinS communication strategy and provide Partners with a supportive document for concrete communication actions towards projects stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Given its flexible and adaptable nature, the communication plan is conceived as a living document, subject to revisions and adjustment during the entire duration of the project.

As mentioned in the Introduction, this characteristic of being a living and flexible document was challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, that lead ART-ER to rethink the strategy to some extent.

The primary goal of the communication strategy is to influence the knowledge, attitude and behavior of the defined target groups toward IoTwinS project and its activities. To reach this overall objective, the activities implemented within the strategy aim to:

- **raise awareness** about the project and its activities;
- **inform** the audience about the outcomes and results of the project;
- **engage** with partners and stakeholders to (continue to) collaborate with one another and to contribute to the project's goals and activities;
- **elaborate and produce** material for an effective communication strategy;
- **produce** specific tools for a better communication interaction among partners;

showing how

- European collaboration has achieved more than would have otherwise been possible, notably in achieving scientific excellence, contributing to competitiveness and solving societal challenges;
- the outcomes are relevant to our everyday lives, by creating jobs, introducing novel technologies, or making our lives more comfortable in other ways;
- making better use of the results, by making sure they are taken up by decision-makers to influence policy-making and by industry and the scientific community to ensure follow-up.

As a general rule, the **tone of voice** of all communication actions and materials will be **professional and informative, reliable and explicative**.

In order to assess the impact of all communication actions a set of KPI has been defined. Actual KPI values will be reported in the next update (Deliverable 8.13 - Communication plan and report (III)), while some values about web and social media are reported in Section 4.2.1.1.

Item	Related KPI(s)	Target
Web	IoTwins website statistics	
	users	2000
	sessions	5000
	bounce rate	45%
	pages visualisation	10000
Media coverage	Number of press releases	10
	Number of news and events published on IoTwins website	200
	Number of articles earned	40
Social media	Number of channels activated	1
	Number of posts	50
	Number of impressions	25000
	Number of RT/likes/mentions	1000
	Number of videos shared	10
Events	Number of events organized	15
	Open Days organised	10
	Open Days participants (total number)	150
	Technical workshops	3
	Training events	3
	Participation to events	20
	Project presentations	20
	Attendees to events	200
Brand identity	#project logo	1
	#brand guidelines	1
	#project website	1
	#leaflet produced	3
	#video	15
	#rollup	1
	#posters	2
	#template slides	1
	#template deliverables	1
	#digital and printed materials	20000
Meetings	#outreach team meetings	15
	#meetings with stakeholders	10

3 Target groups

To reach projects communication goals, **internal and external target groups** will be addressed in order to combine direct project communication actions, channels and tools with single partners' assets, so as to multiply the final impact and also capitalize on single partners' local contact networks and ecosystems.

3.1 Project partners

In order to attain projects aims, a smooth and effective internal communication should be encouraged for a quick and easy circulation of information.

Project partners are the first communication target: it is very important to engage them since the very beginning around communication issues, as communication runs in synergy with all project steps. It is important to spread the projects progress not only to the project staff, but to the entire organization.

To facilitate the exchange of project related documents, a common platform has been setup, EMDESK, and it has been described in the **Deliverable 8.2 – Online repository and collaboration tools**. Furthermore, a document sharing tool has been implemented through Microsoft Teams.

Partners can find relevant documentation there and use it as a common working space.

Internal communication should also consist of e-mails, phone calls, conference calls, regular Steering Group meetings.

Each partner has appointed a communication officer who will be the contact point for the project Outreach Team (OT). Details concerning the OT members are included in the **Deliverable 8.1 – IoTwinS Outreach Team**.

Outreach Team will meet regularly with WP8 staff in order to share needs and information about communication material and tools; regular calls for updating on communication activities by all partners will be organised.

3.2 Wider innovation community

A wider innovation community will be addressed to inform and raise awareness of the project locally and at EU level. It will help create further opportunities for the benefit of local stakeholders. Wider innovation community consists of:

- **Policy makers and EC Directorates:** direct contact and networking with relevant departments of the European Commission, such as DG ENER, DG DIGIT, DG RTD, DG MOVE, DG CLIMA, DG ENV, etc.
- **Local, regional development agencies, Innovation centres and industrial sector associations,** which happen to be among the reference points for most SMEs concerning innovation initiatives; they could be approached through national press releases, pilots' visits/workshops, summer schools, etc.
- **SMEs, micro and large companies, startups:** as one IoTwinS' primary focus is to democratise Industry 4.0 tools to all types of companies, SMEs will be approached not only through events, but also through SMEs incubators/accelerators and EC specific platforms such as I4MS (ICT Innovation for Manufacturing SMEs, a European initiative supporting manufacturing SMEs and mid-caps in the widespread use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in their business operations)

- **Broader Scientific community** (including universities' and R&D centres' R&D teams, Ph.D.s/post-doc candidates, etc.). The most important tools exploited in order to share knowledge and create awareness will be seminars/webinars within UNIBO, BSC, FOKUS, TUB, INFN and CINECA. Ph.D. and postdoc studies could be started during the project.
- **European networks and initiatives**, such as S3 Platforms (Industrial Modernisation Platform), Vanguard Initiative: IoTwinS will be disseminated through participation in key events (conferences, brokerage events etc.), encouragement of knowledge sharing in the platforms' communities and communication through partners already members of such platforms. Events related to the following bodies and initiatives could be selected:
 - **Big Data PPP (BDVA)**: with the following IoTwinS partners as members: CINECA, BSC, ESI, FOKUS, and UNIBO
 - **ETP4HPC**: with the following IoTwinS partners as members: CINECA, BSC, FOKUS, INFN and UNIBO
 - **FIWARE community**, a curated framework of open source platform components to accelerate the development of Smart Solutions
 - **Other EU projects funded under the ICT-11-2018-2019 calls and in other related calls** (e.g. Lexis, Cybele, Infinitech, Evolve, DeepHealth, ARTWIN)

These dissemination activities will also involve the platforms, I4MS, EOSC-Hub (European Open Science Cloud) and EGI Foundation (European Grid Infrastructure), from which most of the IoTwinS partners are members;

- **General public**, to disseminate information aimed at promoting results and data on the implementation of EU funded research and innovation actions in terms of development, potential employment, training, growth of skills and competitiveness, investments, development of new products and services, contribution to regional policies and growth programmes, improve citizens' awareness of the results of EU initiatives.

Direct, lean, useful and attractive information about the project will be shared to the wider innovation community to raise awareness of the project and its contribution to the development of innovation environment in partner areas and EU.

4 Communication channels and tools

4.1 Internal communication channels and tools

For mutual communication between partners, various communication channels will be used.

The everyday communication will be carried out by using e-mails, phone calls and bilateral, multilateral conference calls. To face travel restrictions related to COVID-19 emergency, the Project Coordinator has also set up on Lifesize a specific virtual meeting room dedicated exclusively to the project to be used by the consortium for periodic meetings.

A common platform, EMDESK, is used for project monitoring and internal reporting.

Moreover, have been implemented

- Microsoft Teams (hosted by UNIBO) for document sharing and task management
- GITLAB (hosted by CINECA) as a common software code repository.

Each partner has also appointed a communication officer who will be the contact point for the project Outreach Team, as described in the **Deliverable 8.1**.

In addition, a set of tools has been developed to help information circulate with ease among partners.

FORM FOR COLLECTING ALL PARTNERS' COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Being partners themselves, along with the networks and initiatives in which they are involved, the first project's communication channel, IoTwinS project will try to capitalize upon what is already available. This form helps in mapping all available channels so as to realize what actually is the project communication potential.

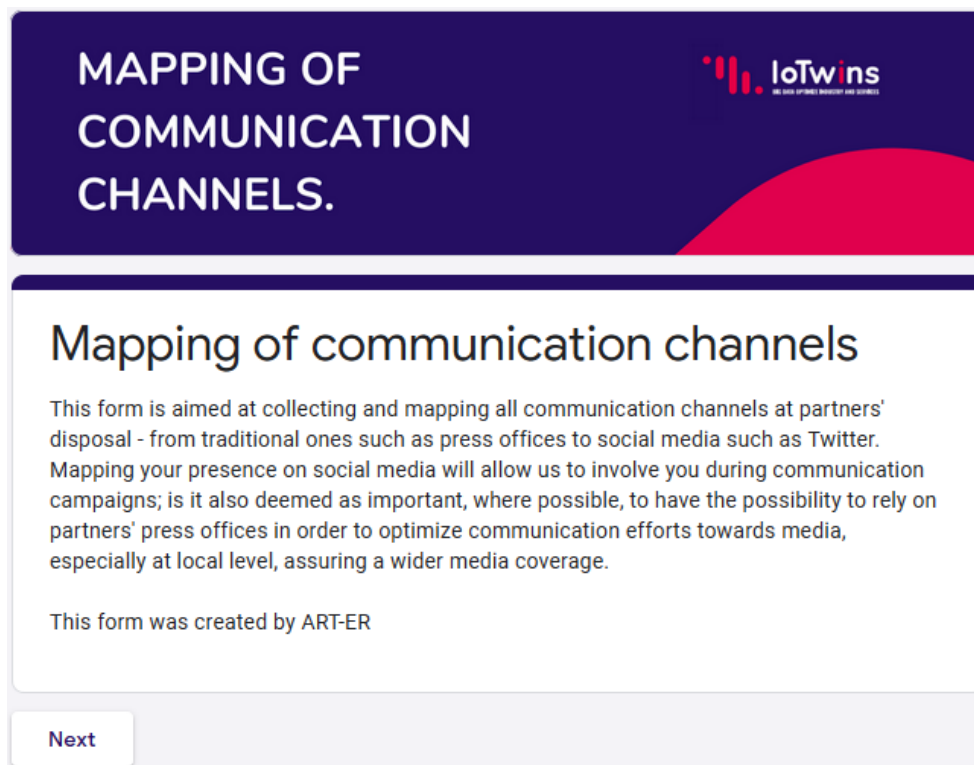


Figure 1 – Form to collect partners' communication channels

NEWS AND EVENT FORM

It has been developed to give partners the possibility to ask for the publication of a news or event on the project website. Using the form is also a way for informing WP8 Leader about project activities progresses and to plan actions in a more effective way.

The form was updated according to the new exigencies risen after the pandemic: as an example, partners should now indicate whether the events are held in an online mode or not and provide details about the platform to be used in case of online events.

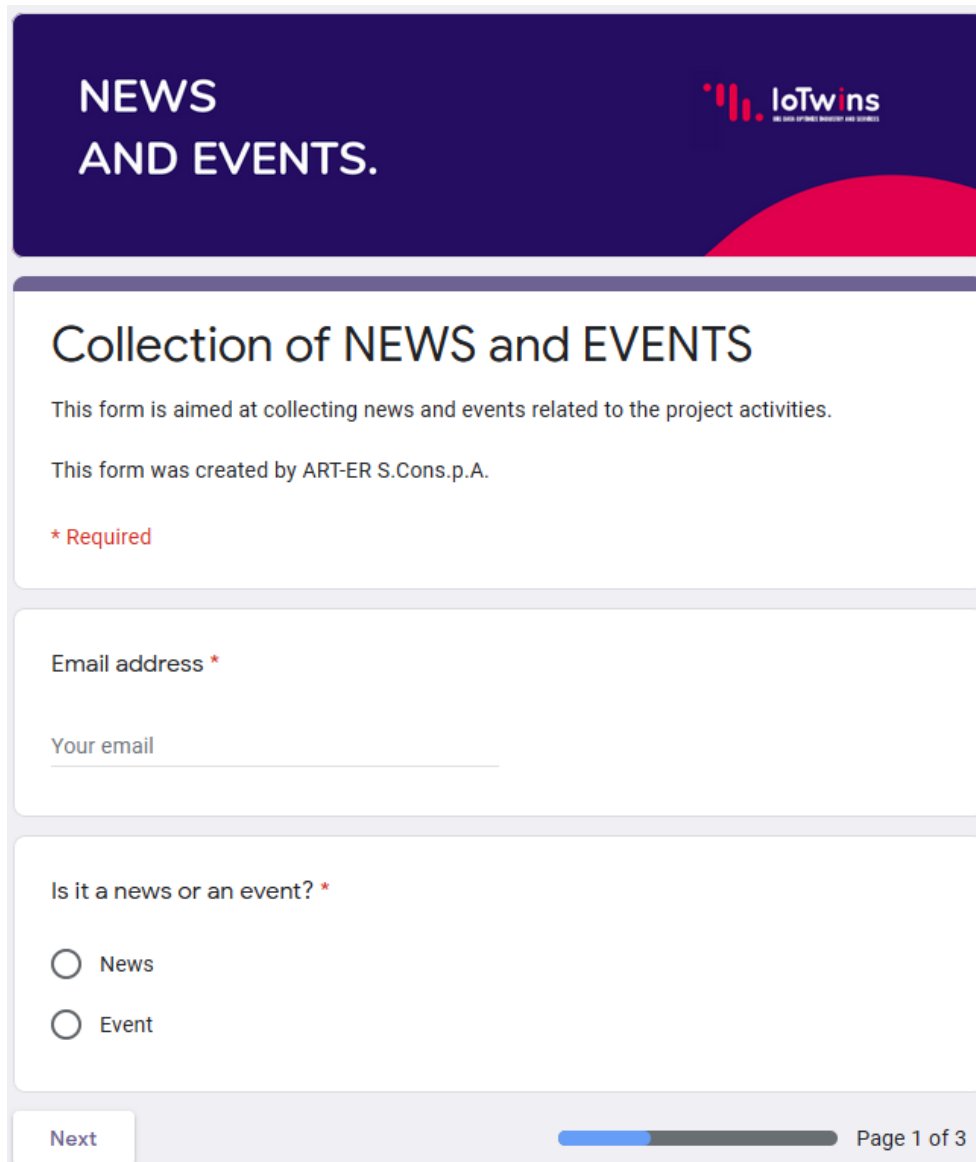


Figure 2 - Form to collect news and events

NEWS AND EVENTS GUIDELINES FOR IOTWINS PARTNERS

A **news** is something that is worth to be told, something that will be of interest of IoTwinS audience. In the IoTwinS context a news is a project achievement, an important acknowledgement, the winning of a particular award in the field of interest of the project.

IoTwinS partners will follow some tips when preparing a piece of news:

- To be brief: time is precious, it is important to be able to capture the audience attention with a catchy title;
- To go straight to the point: summarizing in 2/3 bullet points the news;
- To avoid jargon and acronyms: in European projects often there is an abuse of acronyms, which are not suited for media;
- To customize the news: stressing the impact of the news, as people are interested in what is going to affect their life somehow.

Concerning **events**, all IoTwinS partners will follow events guidelines which are extensively described in section 4.2.2 Events.

As above mentioned, due to the pandemic, new digital platforms are put in place to organise events in a digital mode. At the same time, ART-ER will scout new events and occasions of participation in virtual events to be proposed to IoTwinS partners, in order to guarantee diffusion to the project.

SHARED IOTWINS CALENDAR

In order to allow partners to have a full visibility on what is going on in the project and which public events are organized or participated by one or more partners, a shared Events calendar will be made available, using a built-in function of the EMDESK tool, the tool that the IoTwinS Coordination selected for the management of the project and the common shared file repository.

Partners can inform each other about upcoming events of interest: this will allow constantly updated concerning the most important initiatives for dissemination purposes, and at the same time it represents a strategic planning tool. It will be implemented as the project goes on: partners will indicate an event as worth to be added to the Calendar when filling in the “News and events online form”, presented before.

4.2 External communication

4.2.1 Brand, Visual and Verbal Identity

IoTwinS project visual identity will consist of a logo and a studied pay off; a series of monograms to identify the main projects testbeds' themes: facility management, manufacturing and replicability; a set of fonts and colours; a set of iconographies, along with indications on the projects' tone of voice and finally, example of applications on materials and socials.

A digital brandbook will be shared with the partners' as a communication guideline, it is also included in the **Deliverable 8.5 – Communication tools (I)** downloadable from the following [link](#).

4.2.1.1 Digital

IoTwinS digital strategy will be implemented during the project lifetime, using different tools.

PROJECT WEBSITE

A project website has been created with the following URL: <https://www.iotwins.eu/>

It has been framed to provide as visibility as possible to project benefits and results and includes the following sections:

- **Homepage**, with an immediate overview of the main website contents
- **About**, a page dedicated to describe the project and its main goals
- **Partnership**, with a brief description of all partners and their contacts
- **(NEW) Testbeds**, a section organized according the 3 categories: manufacturing, facility management and replicability
- **News and Events**, to be constantly updated about latest project's activities and achievements
- **Glossary**, a page including the definition for all technical term faced in IoTwinS project website
- **Media**, a section organized into 3 parts: Press Kit, Photos and Publications, that will include photos from events and other initiatives.
- **Reserved Area**, a link to the EMDESK platform.

A complete description of the website sections is included in **Deliverable 8.5: Communication Tools (I)**.

The website is being regularly updated, also with direct contributions by the partners. It is built with the aim of informing the general public on the project's activities and its topics, having in mind potential end users of the services that will be developed at the end of the project.

Partners have the possibility to contribute to the News and Events section of the website by using the online dedicated form, presented in section 4.1 Internal communication channels and tools.

ART-ER takes care of the publication of news and events on the website.

Moreover, in order to assure a constant flow of news and events, a sort of editorial calendar was put in place, where contents shared by partners are integrated with project's topics related contents found on the web. News is searched according to specific keywords, and a selection is made before the news go online so that only those coming from reliable and official sources are published.

The most important news is also promoted via Twitter.



Figure 3 – Example of Testbed page in the IoTwinS website (Testbed #1)

Since October 2020, the website has been monitored through Google Analytics. In the following image the main data on the website access are reported.

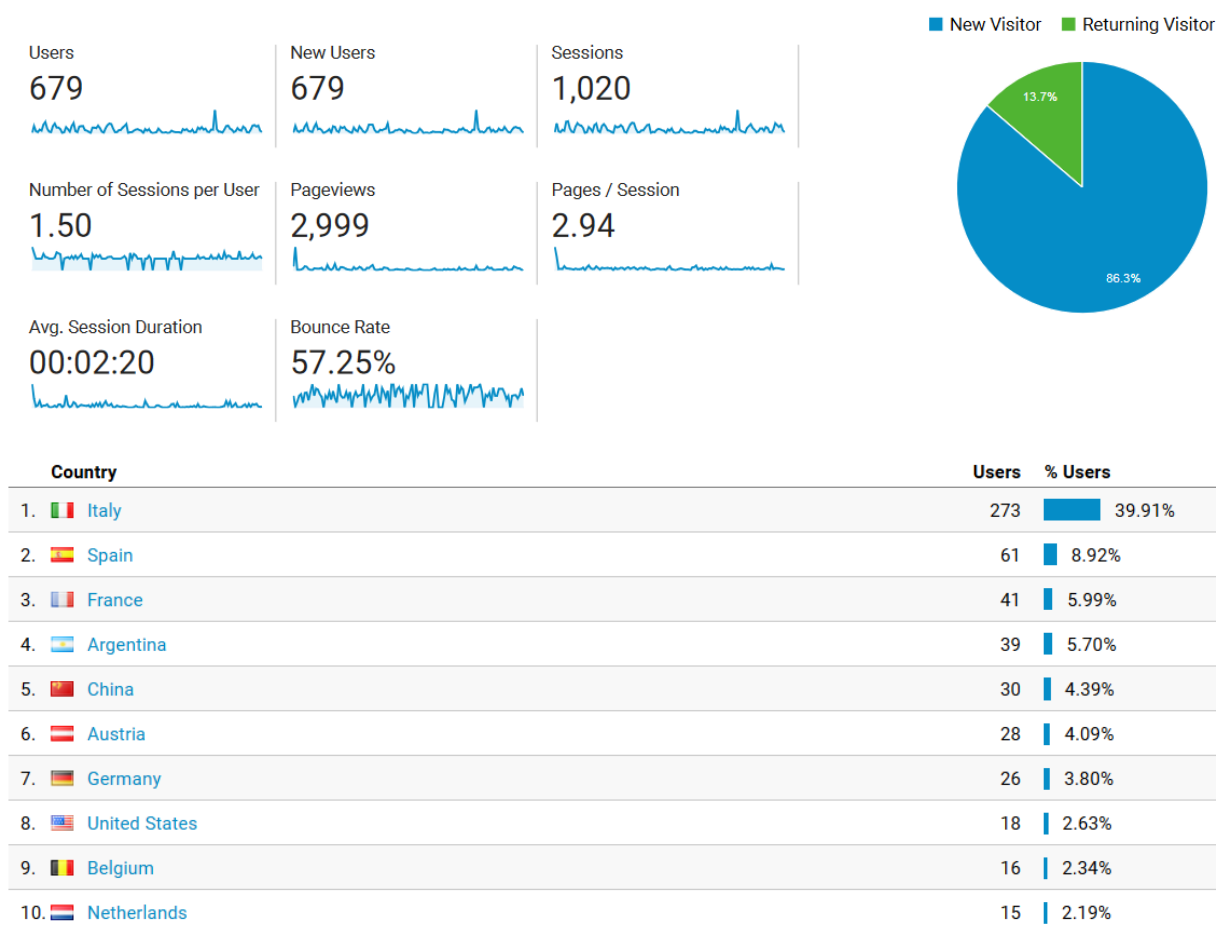


Figure 4 Analytics data of the IoTwinS website in the period 20/10/2020 – 20/02/2021

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media will be used to inform, involve and engage, to raise awareness and communicate about project's activities locally and at EU level.

IoTwinS project has a **Twitter profile** - [@iotwinS_EU](https://twitter.com/iotwinS_EU) – that is managed by ART-ER as main administrator, with inputs from all partners, to:

- give evidence of new contents that are published on the website: news about achievements, publications, promotion of events
- tell in real-time about important events (live tweeting).

Basically, it works according to a **social management plan**, that will be shared in the framework of the Outreach team in occasion of very important initiatives. Easily understandable language with visuals to inform stakeholders and general public about project activities and results will be adopted.

As a general rule, social networks should be used to drive traffic to the project website, to help building a strong brand and create and engage a community of followers.

Information in social network will only be in **English**. Partners can publish posts by adding a comment in their own language, according to the kind of audience they want to reach.

All partners have been invited to inform ART-ER about the existence of their organization social network accounts so that there can be interaction with reference to the project topics. The mapping has been done through the online form described in the section 4.1 Internal communication channels and tools and showed in **D8.8 – Dissemination plan and report (II)**, paragraph “5.1 Partners’ channels and tools”.

The project Twitter account will follow all most important pages that are relevant with respect to the project topics, i.e. Research Institutes, Universities, Companies, Magazines, experts, other important EU funded projects in the field of AI, Machine Learning, Big Data, and interaction with these influential actors will be pursued. Partners’ official accounts will also be followed, so as to maximize efforts, as already mentioned.

Relevant hashtags are used, or created, according to specific needs.

All partners are responsible for promoting the project profile and sharing its contents with relevant stakeholders in their territory.

Advertising campaigns (Twitter Ads) will also be activated whenever is deemed necessary. To promote important initiatives organized in the framework of the IoTwinS projects, such as upcoming events or achievements.

Concerning social media statistics: as per organic posts results, on Twitter 109 followers were gained since February 2020; 14.445 impressions and 116 retweets, likes and mentions of the hashtag #IoTwinS.

- On the occasion of IoTwinS participation to the Triple Helix Summit, an ADV campaign was also launched, with the following results:
 - On Facebook, 3 posts reached a coverage of 61.863 and 667 clicks on the links.
 - On Instagram, 2 posts reached 2.237 people; 411 of them interacted with the posts.
 - On LinkedIn, 5 posts reached 3121 visualizations and 50 click on the links.

PROJECT VIDEOS

A series of videos will be produced during the project. The first one is described in the **Deliverable 8.6 – Promotional Videos (I)** available at this [link](#). Each video will have specific communication and dissemination purposes and targets, taking also into consideration the stage of development of the project and the achievement of results.

The first IoTwinS video (developed in 2019, before the Covid pandemic) has been developed having in mind a general audience with the idea to provide a first insight about the project and the technologies involved along with its general objectives and benefits for companies.

The video belongs to the category of the “proximity videos” and has the objective to catch the attention of a public that doesn’t know anything about the project and in situations where a full listening is not possible (e.g. exhibition). The type of communication is only visual, and it acts on a specified delimited area, like a monitor close to an IoTwinS booth during an exhibition or at the opening in a conference.

More videos will be produced along the project lifetime, included a series of short video-interviews with project partners and some ones aimed at showcase project’s results.

4.2.1.2 Press office and Media relations

The mass media is one of the main communication channels to reach the general public on local and national level. Communication materials, mainly press releases, should be sent not only to common media, but also

to specialized business, innovation and research themes magazines. European channels are also available for this kind of activity, namely [Horizon, the Research and Innovation Magazine](#), just to mention one.

It is important to inform media about the newsworthy events and results. Special attention should be directed towards raising media awareness of the project activities and results, engaging their interest in the subject. Press releases will also be published on the project website and promoted through project social media accounts. Press releases should always include a link to the project website.

During the project, all partners' press offices will be involved in this activity, in order to assure a good coverage at local, national and European level.

4.2.2 Events

Due to the pandemic, new digital platforms are put in place to organise events in digitals.

To reach IoTwinS communication objectives, special events will be organised throughout the project. For improvement of internal communication, a project kick-off meeting, technical meetings and steering group meetings will be organised.

The term “event” refers to online and in presence events, private or public ones, scientific conferences and congresses, meetings, technical workshops, open days, political level events, events organized by the European Commission or its Directorates, trade fairs and exhibitions.

Events offer the possibility to get to know the audience: this allows for a more proper presentation and explanation of project results, and to go more in-depth on details. They represent a great networking opportunity.

When talking about events, it should always be considered that their lifetime also includes an amount of time before and one after.

Before an event, whether a technical workshop or a scientific conference, a promotion activity should be started: partners should work on selecting the proper audience, the message to be conveyed, the timing for sending invitations, and all other activities needed for the specific case, according with WP8 coordinator and Outreach team.

After the event, some follow-up actions should be undertaken, so as to keep the audience attention alive and to schedule any further contacts or meeting with people who showed interest in the project's activities.

In case of online events, some more aspects need to be taken into account: the choice of the right platform to be used, the presence of a control room, the possibility of direct interaction with the speakers and so on, the opportunity to record the meeting and making it available for further promotion.

The events that will be organized in the framework of the project, including the Dissemination events that are fully described in the related Event chapter of the **Deliverable 8.3 – Dissemination Plan and report (I)** ([link](#)), will be duly communicated to the larger public, in order to reach the goals described In the Objectives section of this document.

Integrated communication actions will be put in place: events will be extensively promoted via the website, the Twitter page and via mass mailing actions, where available. Press release will be prepared depending on the importance and the impact of the initiatives.

EVENTS GUIDELINES

Events can be online or in presence. Given the pandemic, they will be online. In any case, they can be:

- organized at **Consortium level**
- organized by **single partners**
- organized by **third parties**.

There can be different levels of participation:

- as a **speaker**:
 - in the event agenda, the person participating should indicate *Name and Surname, IoTwinS project partner*
 - a standard presentation of IoTwinS project is foreseen, using the official project template
 - if possible, ask event organizers to add project logo on event's related promotional materials, including website
 - if possible, for in presence events bring a project rollup or a poster
 - if in presence, bring some copies of the project's leaflet or a USB key that contains the leaflet in digital format plus other informative documents or let the public be able to download the leaflet
 - take some pictures, brief videos or screenshots during the presentation, where the project logo and the EU contribution logo is visible
 - publish some posts on social media, always mentioning @IoTwinS_EU and tagging project partners or relevant actors
 - write a news right during and/or after the event and use the online form to share it with project partners.
- as an **auditor**:
 - if in presence, partners attending the event should take some pictures and publish some posts on social media, always mentioning @IoTwinS_EU and tagging project partners or relevant actors

Partners could also decide not to take part to an event themselves, opting instead for a light promotion activity of it, by publishing a **news on the website** and spreading it through **social media by using the ad hoc online form**. Also, partners could decide to add a particular event to the **project events calendar**. In any case, partners should always make sure that the right visibility is given to the project activities and to the EU funds. This is the reason why all communication materials have been conceived to clearly convey the project values and the related EU contribution, and partners are invited to always use them when communicating about the project.

IoTWINS PATRONAGE REQUESTS

IoTwinS partners can be asked by third parties to grant free of charge patronage to an event or initiative. In such cases, the Governing Board has to be informed and takes decision on it. Partners can send an email to the project Lead partner and to ART-ER asking for permission.

Once a decision is taken, the concerned partner will share the IoTwinS logo with the event organizers.

This will be added to all communication and promotional materials with the label "Promoted by" or "In collaboration with".