TRUCE

Training and Research in Unconventional Computation in

FP7 – ICT:
Coordinating Communities, Identifying new research topics for the FET Proactive Initiatives and Fostering Networking of National and Regional Programmes

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Work Package 4
Outreach and Advocacy

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Outreach and advocacy strategy

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TRUCE outreach and advocacy strategy

The TRUCE strategy for outreach and advocacy describes *priorities, stakeholders* and *channels of communication*.

From the original proposal:

The twin objectives of this work package are to

- Engage a wider public, beyond the immediate scientific community.

- Promote the general field of UCOMP, and the contribution of TRUCE to its development.

Project outreach/advocacy will involve coordination and discussion with other related networks/initiatives, industry groups and other interested parties, with the aim of maximising the cross-sector and cross-disciplinary impact of the project. The first stage of this involves the development of an outreach/advocacy strategy: once TRUCE members have agreed on key priorities, we identify key stakeholders (e.g., professional communities, advocacy groups, NGOs) for involvement in awareness-raising and consensus building activities. From this we naturally derive a set of communication channels/instruments, as well as individuals with whom we might liaise. The work package leader (Rasmussen) is extremely well-placed to lead these activities. As well as being a recognized in the fields of artificial life and complex systems, he is the founder of the Initiative for Science, Society and Policy (ISSP), which "...aims to help make science and technology integral components of societal planning and public discourse.

Effective collaboration of science and technology in societal planning is a complex process, and public discourse plays a central role. Society should maximally benefit from the scientific expertise at its universities, and scientists should reflect on their role in society and their professional responsibility to participate in civic processes. Scientists' involvement outside the academy can take many forms, including interacting with businesses, the arts, the political community, and those crafting public policy. Through specific projects, the Initiative aims to catalyze progressive and sustainable social change, through constructive engagement and public discourse involving scientists and stakeholders, powerbrokers, and the general public."

TRUCE will naturally contribute to the existing ISSP project on Living Technology, and this participation will also contribute to the roadmap development for UCOMP. In addition, we plan several specific public engagement actions, including the construction of a website, participation in Science Festivals (the TRUCE coordinator has organized several events for the Manchester Science Festival, for example), ongoing media contacts and Science Meets the Press events (Rasmussen has been a key participant in such events at the Museum Experimentariet in Copenhagen), a novel UCOMP-themed exhibition, and an art/UCOMP workshop.

The exhibition will showcase demonstrations and implementations of non-classical computers and related effects (such as demonstrations of the Belousov-Zhabotinsky (BZ) reaction and other complex chemical processes, slime-mould controlled robots, liquid-crystal in materio computers, cellular automata computers, and so on). Member of the public will be specifically invited, and project participants will be available for

discussion. Videos, photos, and executable software demos will be made available on the public TRUCE website. Project members have a substantial track record in this area, as theme leader

Adamatzky holds a collection of related artefacts, and the FP7 BACTOCOM project (led by Amos, the TRUCE coordinator) is featured in a permanent exhibition at the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry. Rasmussen has organized similar public events at the Louisiana Museum for Modern Art in Denmark in 2009. Project members will continue to play a key role in consulation exercises (such as those run by the European Commission), write accessible articles for newspapers and magazines, make broadcast media appearances, post to a dedicated project blog, and so on. All of these contributions will be captured by the project website, which will serve as a "living archive" of our outreach and advocacy activities.

The Arts and Unconventional Computing workshop (around M18) will offer academics and the general public the opportunity to engage with scientific research via creative media and artworks. This will uncover novel opportunities for the arts to be engaged in ground-breaking scientific research, and also help scientists to see things from a range of unorthodox viewpoints. The patterns of physically-embedded unconventional computing media require new modes of design thinking, arising from the work of trans-disciplinary teams from art, science and engineering. This represents an enormous potential for inspiring academic art and scientific research communities through sheer breadth of creativity. We plan to engage a substantial number of leading UK and international scientists. Participation of both PhD students and school-age children will be particular encouraged."

1. Priorities

Any time-limited coordination action must be *realistic* in terms of the outreach and advocacy activities that it can successfully execute. We cannot be "all things to all people", and attempting to do too much would be counter-productive. We have therefore identified the following key priorities for our outreach and advocacy activities, from which we believe we might obtain the maximum possible added value, based on our existing expertise and planned activities:

1. Promote UCOMP science to a *broad public* (beyond academia), and make specific attempts to engage young (school age) people.

2. Facilitate discussion of the *wider implications* of UCOMP-research (eg., legal, ethical, social aspects).

3. Encourage the participation of *early career researchers* in UCOMP research. The idea is that these researchers then become ambassadors for UCOMP.

2. Key stakeholders

The key stakeholders in this WP will be

1. UCOMP researchers themselves (in particular, early career researchers) – both core *producers*, and core *audience*

2. The general public – the core *non-academic audience*.

3. Practitioners, artists, ethicists, and the media (e.g., Manchester Science and Literature Festivals) – core *partners*.

3. Channels of communication (the outreach *programme*)

The main channels of communication between stakeholders will be:

1. Public events, such as the Arts and Unconventional Computing Workshop.

2. Appearances in the media (print and broadcast).

3. The main TRUCE website.

4. The collection of "science into fiction" short stories, and associated press and events (e.g., Manchester Literature Festival).

5. The TRUCE summer school for early career researchers.

6. Theme-specific events (such as the Hackademia retreat, which includes non-academic researchers as well as "traditional" UCOMP scientists).

In the table below, we list specific additional actions that we will undertake:

Channel	Description	Benefits
Project website	Online presence for project – public access to results and progress. RSS links for rapid and wide dissemination of news items. Online forum to foster discussion of UCOMP. Online repository of documents.	Key method to establish visibility of the project. Search engine optimization will drive queries related to UCOMP towards the site. Facilitates easy online discussion of key issues; rapid capture and analysis. Easy, transparent distribution of project outputs.
Social media	Use social media networking tools (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) to raise awareness of project, and create "sticky" engagement.	Fast, low cost channels of communication that can potentially reach a huge audience. Allows the project to contact individuals and communities that would not otherwise be engaged.
Workshops	Events/stands at conferences and trade fairs (eg. FET2013).	Central to dissemination of fundamental concepts and plans. Also useful for gathering feedback and ideas.

Publications	General articles about the background to UCOMP, analysis of project findings, technical reports describing the electronic survey infrastructure.	Regular publications help to validate the findings of the project, and to raise its profile.
Publicity material	Creation of a strong project brand, including logo.	Allows "takeaway" message to be easily distributed, with a strong underlying identity.
Newsletter	Regular online newsletter, highlighting project findings and flagging future events.	If sent on a regular basis to all stakeholders, this can keep them informed of progress, retain engagement and keep interest levels high.
Press releases	Press releases sent to mainstream and specialist media ahead of main project milestones and events.	Can target specific stakeholders by attracting their attention through high-profile announcements.
Presentations	Attend relevant conferences and present the project. Distribute publicity materials,	Essential for dissemination and validation of project results. Creates two-way dialogue between the project

	set project stand to generate discussion and gather feedback.	and the communities it serves. Offers a way of attracting new stakeholders to the project.
Linkage with other projects	Connect the project to other relevant activities in Europe and beyond (e.g., EVLIT.)	Liaising with ongoing projects in Europe and elsewhere can maximize project reach and impact.