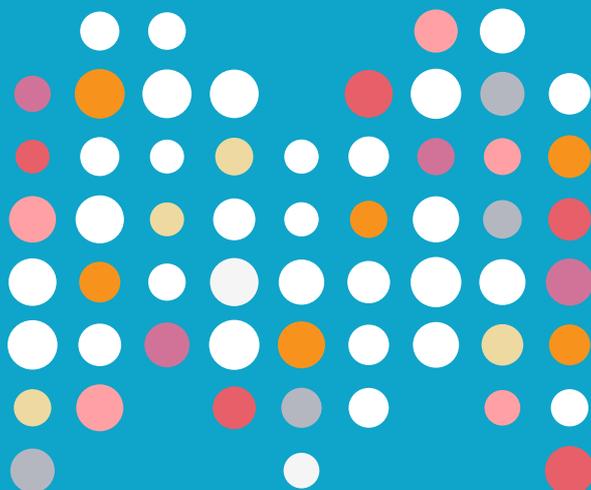


Project Final Summary Report



Project title

Book Sprints for ICT Research – Testing the practice of Book Sprints as a new paradigm of collaborative writing for ICT researchers and innovators.

Project acronym

BS4ICTSRCH

Reference number

323988

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Coordinator

FLOSS Manuals Foundation

Project website

<http://booksprints-for-ict-research.eu>

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Book Sprints for ICT Research – BS4ICTRSRCH, Testing the practice of Book Sprints as a new paradigm of collaborative writing for ICT researchers and innovators, is a Coordination and Support action funded under the FP7-ICT Work Programme 2013 – Future and Emerging Technologies Open scheme of the European Commission. Project reference: 323988. The project is coordinated by FLOSS Manuals Foundation.

Executive Summary

The Book Sprint methodology was created by Adam Hyde and FLOSS Manuals to dramatically accelerate the production of manuals for open source software. A Book Sprint is a collaborative process that brings together a group of 5 to 12 people to produce a book in five days or less. Book Sprints not only enable the production of high quality paper and electronic books, they are also an extremely efficient way to capture the knowledge of a group of experts, and at the same time build very strong teams and communities.

To test the relevancy of this methodology for capturing knowledge in the field of ICT research and innovation, FLOSS Manuals Foundation (FMF) initiated the “Book Sprints for ICT Research” project with the support of the European Commission and established partnerships with other projects funded by the European Commission’s Future and Emerging Technologies Open scheme of the FP7-ICT Work Programme 2013. FMF offered its partners the opportunity to benefit from the Book Sprints collaborative writing methodology by organising and facilitating the production of publications related to the partner projects’ objectives and agenda.

Five Book Sprints writing sessions were organised in collaboration with the representatives of the projects UrbanxD, FoCAS, SCNII and CAPS2020 in the period June 2013–May 2014. These resulted in the production of five books on diverse innovative subjects by multidisciplinary groups of researchers:

- I. Helgason, M. Smyth, N. Wouters, O. Surawska, L. Skrinjar, L. Jensen, S. Rosenbak, A. Streinzer, From Urban Space to Future Place: The UrbanxD Summer School 2013. Amsterdam, 2013
- S. Anderson, N. Bredeche, A.E. Eiben, G. Kampis, M. van Steen, Adaptive Collective Systems: Herding Black Sheep. Amsterdam, 2013
- M. Brynskov, J.C.C. Bermúdez, M. Fernández, H. Korsgaard, I. Mulder, K. Piskorek, L. Rekow, M. de Waal, Urban Interaction Design: Towards City Making. Amsterdam, 2014
- P. Verschure & A. Duff (Eds.), I. Herreros, S. Lallée, E. Marcos, A. Mura, T. Prescott, R. Zucca, DAC—Distributed Adaptive Control: Theory and Practice. (Forthcoming)
- M. Arniani, A. Badii, A. De Liddo, S. Georgi, A. Passani, L.S.G. Piccolo, M. Teli, Collective Awareness Platforms for Sustainability and Social Innovation: An Introduction. Amsterdam, 2014

The Book Sprints methodology was an object of evaluative research within BS4ICTRSRCH project. It examined different aspects of Book Sprints, including facilitation approach, structure, collaboration and writing processes, social dynamics, software tools, book post-production and overall organisation. The materials and conclusions of the research provide a valuable contribution to the practice and theory of collaborative writing and collaborative knowledge production.

The outcomes and resources of the project are made publicly available at the project website and via other channels. They will be further disseminated and used for the improvement of the Book Sprints methods and tools as well as for propagation of their use.

Project Context and Objectives

The Book Sprints methodology was developed by Adam Hyde with FLOSS Manuals, which is a network of communities involved in the production of free and high quality documentation and manuals about Free Software in their own languages. The purpose of Book Sprints is to assist writers groups in quick and efficient production of high quality papers which can be made available for the public in the form of both paper and electronic books. As the demand for the Book Sprints methodology is increasing, particularly within the ICT context, FLOSS Manual Foundation, which coordinates and provides support for FM communities, has initiated the "Book Sprints for ICT Research project" with the support of the European Commission in order to explore possibilities of its use and at the same time assess its applicability within the ICT research context.

The main objective of the BS4ICTRSRCH project is formulated as testing the relevancy of an innovative collaborative writing methodology, the Book Sprint, in the context of the composition of scientific papers and books in the field of ICT research and innovation, and to assess the benefits and shortcomings of this methodology in comparison with traditional writing practices of the sector.

In order to realise this objective, partnership with four other projects, which were initiated through the same FP7-ICT/FET-Open scheme of the European Commission, was established by the BS4ICTRSRCH management team and agreements were reached to co-organise five Book Sprints according to the established BS methodology. This included full organisation and support of Book Sprints by the coordinator—the BS4ICTRSRCH project team. The venue, facilities, logistics, accommodation, meals, and other practical details had to be arranged in such a way that participants of Book Sprints could comfortably be immersed into the intense work process without disturbances. On their part, the partner coordinators were responsible for initiation of the writing projects, selection of topics and invitation of participants. Book Sprints events were led by experienced facilitators whose approach was based on the developed and tested methods and techniques of Book Sprints, with the main focus on enhancing productive collaboration, creating a sense of co-ownership of the work, enabling rapid and consistent progress with the established tasks, and securing the integrity and qualitative consistency of the multi-authored texts. In the process of writing, editing, reviewing and composing the final papers, the software applications for collaborative writing and production of books Booktype and PubSweet were used.

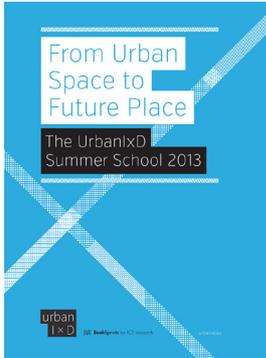
The ultimate aim of Book Sprints is the production of ready to be published papers in the form of complete books. Therefore, the texts resulting from the Book Sprints events had to be fully prepared for public release as quality books, which involved proof editing, illustrating and book design, proofreading, and export of the final documents into electronic reading formats as well as printable files.

The evaluative research conducted within the BS4ICTRSRCH project aimed at the assessment of the use value of the Book Sprints methodology for the production of ICT research papers through identification, examination and evaluation of its structural elements. Book Sprint is a practice-based innovative method still in the process of development. Therefore the evaluative research into its applicability and usefulness for ICT research programmes required a methodology that would adequately integrate comprehensive examination of the Book Sprints methods, techniques and tools, as well as the practice of their use, in relation to the objectives of collaborative writing projects within the given project context.

Project Results

Five Book Sprints collaborative writing events were organised by the BS4ICTSRCH project team in partnership with four FP7-ICT/FET-Open projects. These resulted in the production of five books, four of which were publicly released upon completion. Details about each Book Sprint and its result are provided below.

— Book Sprint 1



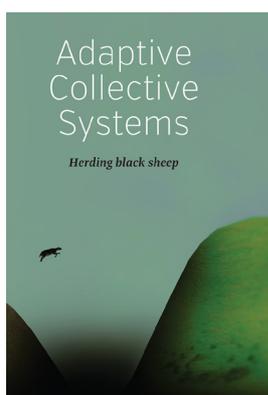
BS1 was organised in partnership with UrbanxD: Designing Human Interactions in the Networked City on October 8-10, 2013, at Aldeia da Mata Pequena in Portugal. It gathered eight scholars, mostly PhD students, working on themes associated with urban interactive design from different disciplinary perspectives. Within three days they have produced the 78-page paper reflecting on the experience and outcomes of UrbanxD Summer School. The Book Sprint was facilitated by Adam Hyde with the support of the BS4ICTSRCH project team: coordinator Tania Goryucheva, project associate Donna Metzlar, editor Sandra Sarala, designer Henrik van Leeuwen, and software developer responsible for technical support Joanna Paulger.

Despite the challenge, which the innovative and interdisciplinary subject of the paper posed, with the help of the facilitator the group of writers managed to progress rapidly from what began as general ideas and concepts through first imperfect drafts to a well structured and articulated final text. However, the time constraints and pressure to deliver the paper from scratch within just three days were experienced by some participants as too demanding. Among important outcomes of the Book Sprint the coordinators of UrbanxD project indicated that Book Sprint provided young researchers with extra training in direct collaboration with colleagues and working on co-authored texts, strengthening their professional relations as well as writing skills. It was also noted that the BS collaborative writing experience resulted in a greater feeling of co-ownership of the text and its perception as a group work rather than an assemblage of individually written pieces which often happens with co-authored papers. The detailed evaluation of the process, methods, tools and outcomes of BS1 is provided in the evaluative report resulted from the research of the project associate researcher Rachel Baker.

The paper collaboratively written by the group was made into the original publication by efforts of the BS4ICTSRCH team and made available online for free download under Creative Commons license at <http://booksprints-for-ict-research.eu/books> and other websites.

Ingi Helgason, Michael Smyth, Niels Wouters, Olga Surawska, Lea Skrinjar, Louise Jensen, Søren Rosenbak, Andreas Streinzer, *From Urban Space to Future Place: The UrbanxD Summer School 2013*, Amsterdam, 2013.

— Book Sprint 2



BS2 was organised in partnership with FoCAS: Coordinating research into the Fundamentals of Collective Adaptive Systems. It took place on November 4–8, 2013, in St. Julians, Malta. The international contributors group consisted of five senior academics, one of which participated in the event remotely. The task at hand was to produce a comprehensive, accessible introduction to an innovative field of interdisciplinary scientific research “collective adaptive systems”. The target readership of the publication was identified as primarily students as well as professionals who might be interested in the topic and related issues.

The BS requirement that no preparatory work should be done prior to the sprint, so that all content decisions and writing can be part of the face-to-face BS collaborative process, was used by the group as an advantage. This allowed participants to engage openly and without prejudice into the exploration of each other’s stand points and arguments assisted by the BS method, with regard to their disciplinary backgrounds and methodologies and to progress comprehensively with composing the book. While it was admitted that the accomplished text would not satisfy the academic standard of a peer-reviewed publication, which was not the ambition of the group in this case, the experience of the Book Sprint and its result were valued positively and seen as a rewarding achievement by the participants.

The 72-page book that resulted from BS2 is released as an originally designed electronic publication under Creative Commons licence and available for free download from different websites, including <http://booksprints-for-ict-research.eu/books/>

[Stuart Anderson, Nicolas Bredeche, A.E. Eiben, George Kampis, Maarten van Steen, Adaptive Collective Systems. Herding Black Sheep, Amsterdam, 2013.](#)

— Book Sprint 3



This was the second Book Sprint with the partner project UrbanIXD: Designing Human Interactions in the Networked City. BS3 was held in Schlöss Neuhausen in Germany on March 24–28, 2014. The participant group comprised eight researchers representing different organisations and projects from several countries. The aim of the writing project was established as defining the research area of interactive urban design, as well as its emergent and future trends. The readers of the book were characterised as professional academic communities interested in urban studies, design and interactive technologies. This and the following Book Sprint sessions were led by the facilitator Barbara Rühling.

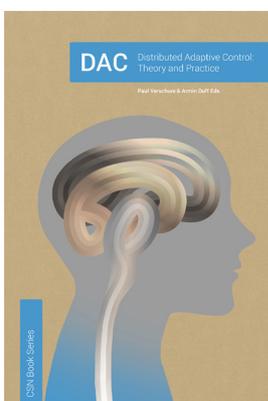
The novelty and breadth of the subject on the one hand, and the diversity of participants’ backgrounds on the other, together with an absence of prior knowledge about each other, posed a challenge for

productive collaboration. Therefore it was important in the process of the BS facilitation to make sure that participants were able to use the group's joint capacity efficiently, build upon collective knowledge and experience, and progress consistently together through all stages of the BS process towards the goal, to which everybody committed. As a result, most of the authors found BS a good way to initiate a collaborative exploration of a new research area and propagate development and dissemination of ideas. As with other Book Sprints, participants provided diverse feedback on their experience, which included both positive and critical opinions about different elements of the Book Sprints methodology, representing an invaluable information source for the BS4ICTSRCH evaluative research.

On the fifth day of the Book Sprint the multi-authored pamphlet was ready and after subsequent editing by Rachel Somers Miles and finishing design by Henrik van Leeuwen was released as an 87-page electronic book freely available under Creative Commons licence: <http://booksprints-for-ict-research.eu/books/>

[Martin Brynskov](#), [Juan Carlos Carvajal Bermúdez](#), [Manu Fernández](#), [Henrik Korsgaard](#), [Ingrid Mulder](#), [Katarzyna Piskorek](#), [Lea Rekow](#), [Martijn de Waal](#), *Urban Interaction Design: Towards City Making*, Amsterdam, 2014.

— Book Sprint 4



BS4 with the partner project CSNII - Convergent Science Network of Neurotechnology and Biomimetic Systems took place on April 23-27, 2014, at a hotel in St. Feliu de Guíxols, Spain. The aim of the writing project, on which a group of eight researchers decided to work using the Book Sprint method, was to produce the 2nd book of the CSN book series on the Distributed Adaptive Control theory (DAC) which would include teaching material. The group had already been engaged with the theme, the material and shared a common understanding and approach to DAC theory.

The CSNII group's writing project probably benefitted the least from the Book Sprints methodology among five Book Sprints executed within the BS4ICTSRCH series. While the participants did progress with the established plan significantly during the Book Sprint session, the paper was not completed by the end and the assembled book was considered to be a draft of the forthcoming publication by CSNII project. It was concluded that in order for the Book Sprints methods and tools to be applied successfully by scientific writers groups, openness towards the overall plan and commitment to collaboration at all stages of the BS on the side of all participants are necessary.

[Paul Verschure and Armin Duff \(Eds.\)](#); [Ivan Herreros](#), [Stephane Lallée](#), [Encarni Marcos](#), [Anna Mura](#), [Tony Prescott](#), [Riccardo Zucca](#), *DAC— Distributed Adaptive Control: Theory and Practice*.

— Book Sprint 5



The fifth and final Book Sprint in the BS4ICTRSRCH projects series was organised in partnership with CAPS2020 – Collective Awareness Platforms for Sustainability on May 5–7, 2014, in Nice, France. The participant group consisted of seven researchers representing different projects of the CAPS2020 network. The objective of BS5 was to produce a publication that would provide an entry point both to the ongoing EC funded CAPS projects and to the main nodes of a CAPS initiative.

Given the diversity of the projects involved in CAPS and the richness of related materials, it was important for the facilitator to make sure that the integrity and coherence of the book's content was achieved. Therefore, systematic communication between participants about the structure and content development were integral. Within just three days the CAPS group managed to produce a 75-page document which was made into an originally designed book. It was presented at the CAPS2014 Conference and later made available for free public access under a Creative Commons licence on different websites, including: <http://booksprints-for-ict-research.eu/books/>

[Marta Arniani](#), [Atta Badii](#), [Anna De Liddo](#), [Silke Georgi](#), [Antonella Passani](#), [Lara S.G. Piccolo](#), [Maurizo Teli](#), *Collective Awareness Platforms for Sustainability and Social Innovation: An Introduction*, Amsterdam, 2014

Evaluative Report

The evaluative research into the applicability and usefulness of the Book Sprints methodology for the production of ICT research papers has been implemented by Rachel Baker, the project associate researcher, over the course of this project. Case studies of the Book Sprints provide detailed description and assessment of the Book Sprints methodology and its structural elements as it was implemented within the BS4ICTRSRCH project. It is based on the documentation, observational and feedback data collected by the researcher and its analysis according to the approach and tools defined in the Methodology of the Evaluative Research. The conclusive part of the research includes the evaluation summary based on a comparative analysis of the data from each case study, and recommendations with regards to further use and development of Book Sprints methods, software tools, and formation of facilitators.

Impact and Exploitation of the Results

The BS4ICTRSRCH project has recognised and addressed the need of ICT research and development communities, which increasingly work in interdisciplinary international network environments, to have access to efficient methods and tools which can help to successfully transform multiple and diverse expertise into co-authored quality publications.

In pursuit of fulfilling this need BS4ICTRSRCH in collaboration with the partners has delivered two types of significant contributions to the area of innovative forms of collaborative knowledge production and dissemination:

- Five books which introduce broad audiences to subjects of future and emergent technologies research, which were produced with the use of Book Sprints collaborative writing method and tools.
- A body of knowledge about the use and impact of the collaborative writing methodology Book Sprints within the context of academic ICT research, which is based on the evaluative study conducted throughout the project.

Key insights and refinements of the Book Sprints method gained in the Book Sprints for ICT Research project will be disseminated to wider professional communities through a structural co-operation between FLOSS Manuals Foundation and two partner organisations: Book Sprints, the new organisation that has evolved from FLOSS Manuals and is led by FLOSS Manuals founder Adam Hyde, and Sourcefabric, the developer of Booktype platform for collaborative writing and publishing.

Each of these three organisations will use the method in their respective professional context and specific areas of expertise. FLOSS Manuals will use the Book Sprint methodology in furthering its mission to produce high quality documentation for Free and Open Source Software as well as documentation resources on closely related areas such as internet security and Free Culture (cultural production using alternative and more open intellectual property rights arrangements).

The new Book Sprints organisation, set up as a spin-off from FLOSS Manuals by Adam Hyde, will develop the Book Sprints methodology further for other professional target audiences. The new organisation provides facilitation for NGOs, academic and governmental organisations, as well as companies and cultural organisations.

<http://www.booksprints.net>

Sourcefabric is an independent organisation with headquarters in Prague and offices in Berlin and Toronto devoted to providing news organisations with the software, expertise and support to produce quality publications online, in print and on air. Sourcefabric and FLOSS Manuals originally developed the Booktype open source publishing platform for print and digital books together, and will now co-operate on developing the 2.0 version of the platform.

<http://www.sourcefabric.org>

The project resources and information, which can be used by individuals and groups interested in Book Sprints, are made freely available at the project website. They include:

- the results of the BS4ICTSRCH evaluative research presented in the report by Rachel Baker, Project Associate Researcher, which provides rich information and exhaustive analysis of Book Sprints methods and practice of their use;
- reflective insights into the Book Sprints philosophy and approach to collaborative writing and publishing in the "On Book Sprints" publication produced by Book Sprints: Rachel Baker, David Berry, Mark Brokering, Michael Dieter, Amanda French, and Barbara Rühling. Adam Hyde (Facilitator), On Book Sprints v1.1., May 17, 2014;
- information and access details with regards to the use of the collaborative writing platforms Booktype and PubSweet;
- Information about Book Sprints organisation and facilitation services.

It is important for the project agenda to publicise its results as widely as possible as they can contribute to further research into and development of collaborative methods and tools for content production. Resulting collaborative publications and evaluative research will be made publicly available and disseminated through the large network of FM members and contributors, the FET associated projects, and relevant scientific ICT communities and organisations, through various communication channels—websites, newsletters, social media, etc. FLOSS Manuals members will make the most of their regular participation at conferences, symposiums and workshops to communicate the results of the project. FMF encourages the participants of the five Book Sprints to communicate with their peers on their experience and on the main learning they take out of their participation in these events.

Project website: <http://booksprints-for-ict-research.eu>

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