

Evaluating online storylines to increase the accessibility, transparency and potential use of RiverCare knowledge

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Researchers are required to improve their communication efforts to increase the usefulness and societal impact of their work. Science communication is particularly important for river management due to the multiple stakeholders involved and the socio-technical complexity. RiverCare, is a multi-disciplinary research program studying the consequences of river measures implemented in the Netherlands. As part of the RiverCare communication strategy, we are designing a knowledge-base to communicate the context of the program, its projects, outputs and updates while linking to existing platforms to reach a wide water professional audience. We are exploring the usefulness of online storylines as main component of such knowledge-base to improve the accessibility, transparency and potential usefulness of RiverCare knowledge. To evaluate the storylines, we created examples for the three available publications within the disciplines of environmental management, river dynamics and geomorphology. We followed a five-step approach to co-create and to integrate the storylines into the RiverCare knowledge-base. Starting from the available publications, the RiverCare storylines outline the research context, collected datasets, example results and remaining challenges by translating them to a water professional audience from the river management perspective. In the storylines, we use narrative elements, interactive charts and images to increase user engagement and ease of understanding. First evaluation with participants (i.e. master students and RiverCare members) show the perceived usefulness to explain why the study was done and its potential use as communication method for its own project. To further evaluate the storylines, we are conducting a series of workshops with multi-disciplinary researchers and practitioners interested in our program. These workshops are an opportunity to reflect with participants about the message they took from the storylines and to co-create their own storylines about the potential use of RiverCare knowledge for participants' own work or interest.