▸D3.1 Specification of Quarterly Priorities – The Whistle

A schedule of themed huddles and its frame of the development of ChainReact's reporting platform

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Abtract

To ensure coordination across the ChainReact project, design and development priorities of The Whistle are mapped to the project's quarterly priorities via "Schedule of Huddles". Huddles are quarterly consortium meetings, and their themes have been designed to support achievement of project objectives.

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History

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0.1	29/03/2016	Initial draft	Ethan McCutchen
0.2	30/03/2016	Revisions	Richard Mills
1.0	04/04/2016	Abstract, Executive Summary, Intro, and Conclusion	Ethan McCutchen

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Executive Summary

For ChainReact to thrive, design and development of its three main struts – The Whistle[1], OpenCorporates, and WikiRate – must be well coordinated. The grant's five milestones provide an overarching strategic roadmap, but to achieve more consistent alignment throughout the course of the project, the ChainReact Consortium has also embraced a schedule of quarterly meetings (called "Huddles") through which the project will support reaching our milestones and ultimately achieving our project objectives.

The present document outlines the themes of those quarterly meetings, which will support all partners in setting resonant quarterly priorities for their respective work. It then presents rationales for those themes, both in terms of how they support project objectives, and why they were chosen for the specific quarters to which they were assigned.

For each theme, we also consider the specific ramifications for Work Package 3: *The Whistle Design and Development*. Because The Whistle is the only one of the three struts that is not starting from an existing site, its development will be heavily frontloaded before ChainReact Alpha (MS2), which is organized around proof-of-concept demos. The coordinated development schedule articulated here sets forth a path in which The Whistle will be ready for public release in time for ChainReacts's pilot projects, beginning with our beta launch (MS3). It also anticipates the need for time after the pilot campaigns to respond to community feedback and make the necessary adjustments in time for our full launch (MS4) and media challenge (MS5).

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[1] As noted in recent correspondence, *The Whistle* has replaced the provisional name *TalkFree* as the title of ChainReact's citizen reporting platform. To minimize confusion, we will use the name *The Whistle* in place of *TalkFree* in the names of work projects, tasks, and deliverables, including the name of the present deliverable.

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1 Introduction

Every quarter, the ChainReact Consortium will convene a *Huddle* during which we assemble (alternately online and offline) to assess progress, align priorities, and tackle the most significant conceptual, practical, and strategic challenges we're facing.

Each huddle will have a *theme* intended to reflect and focus the most important priorities of the quarter ahead. The theme is meant to be integrative, not constrictive; many topics outside of the theme will be discussed at each huddle. But there will be a major push to explore the theme thoroughly and with the participation of all partners.

By the end of a huddle, each consortium partner should clear on their current responsibilities to the project, their deliverables due, the collaborators they will be working with, and the process by which the ends will be achieved.

This deliverable presents a *Schedule of Huddles* (Section 2) that includes a proposed theme for each huddle. The purpose of the Schedule is to insure regularly timed huddles with thematic material driven by and supportive of the high-level objectives of the project. The canonical version of this schedule will reside at our shared documentation website and will be updated as dates and locations are determined and as themes are updated to reflect any changes in the strategic course of the project.

The document explores each huddle theme, its rationale, and how it will advance the project's core objectives. It will also give a high-level view of how these project priorities might translate into work priorities for tasks associated with Work Package 3: *The Whistle Design and Development*. This document does *not* seek to prescribe low-level development specifications for each quarter; that level of detail is to happen at the huddles themselves.

Note that a similar deliverable, D5.1 (Specification of Quarterly priorities – wikirate.org), will be submitted as part of Work Package 5 (Corporate Network Mapping – Design and Development). Because there will be just one consortium huddle per quarter, both deliverables will, naturally, have the same schedule, same themes, same theme rationales, and same connections to project objectives. The primary difference between D3.1 and D5.1 will be in the implications subsections of Section 4, which explore the implications of the quarterly priorities for the respective work package.

2 Schedule of Huddles

Quarter	Year	Month	Theme[2]	Location
I	**2016**	Jan 14-15	Kickoff	Cambridge, UK
II		June 15-16	Definitions	*Online*
III		Jul-Sep[3]	Proof of Concept	Cambridge, UK
IV		Oct-Dec	Usability	*Online*
V	**2017**	Jan-Mar	Pilot Campaign Design	TBD
VI		Apr-Jun	Pilot Campaign Execution	*Online*
VII		Jul-Sep	Pilot Feedback	TBD
VIII		Oct-Dec	Data Needs	*Online*
IX	**2018**	Jan-Mar	Scalability	TBD
X		Apr-Jun	Media Challenge	*Online*
XI		Jul-Sep	Adaptation	*Online*[4]
XII		Oct-Dec	Future Directions	TBD

Table 2.1 Huddle Date, Theme, and Location

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[2] The proposed themes are explained in more detail in section 4
[3] Exact huddle dates are set one huddle in advance.
[4] A second consecutive online huddle is scheduled here so that the final huddle can be in person.

3. Project Objectives

The Huddle Schedule was designed in support the following project objectives and project tasks (as articulated in the Technical Annex to the grant proposal, section 1.1.1)

3.1 Objective 1: Reporting

Identify irresponsible corporate activity.

This core objective is central to our system design, and the citizen reporting platform (The Whistle) is integrated within the ChainReact ecosystem to serve this end. Therefore it will be a focus of every huddle, broken down as follows:

3.1.1 Subgoal A:

Create a multilingual reporting platform to solicit reports about corporate behavior (The Whistle).

The alpha launch of The Whistle is the centerpiece of milestone two in M9 (ChainReact Alpha) and will therefore be focal in the initial huddles as we define, design, implement and hone its initial functionality.

Huddles: I-IV

3.1.2 Subgoal B

Run at least three reporting campaigns sponsored by international advocacy groups to drive participation on The Whistle.

Subgoal B can be broken down further into pilot campaigns and subsequent full campaigns.

Pilot Campaign

The first pilot reporting campaign is part of milestone 3 in M18 (ChainReact Beta), and the surrounding huddles are organized around preparing for and learning from the pilot campaign.

Huddles: V-VII

Full campaigns

Our full campaigns, which kick off with milestone 5 (ChainReact Media Challenge) will, naturally, respond to the lessons learned in the pilot campaign and will be considerably more extensive in reach. The surrounding huddles are designed to ensure success in these campaigns and proactive development of all required technical structures.

Huddles: VIII-XII

3.2 Objective 2: Mapping

Connect issues at corporate networks' edges to network drivers.

This objective requires the integration of all three ChainReact "struts": The Whistle, OpenCorporates, and WikiRate. The huddles are therefore critical to its success, because they bring the full team together.

3.2.1 Subgoal A

Seed and make navigable ChainReact's corporate relationship mapping data by automated processing of official public documents and cross-platform integrations.

Huddle II, which focuses on *Definitions*, will be especially critical to defining the best connection and integration points for the three struts. Honing and deepening the integration will be a recurring theme at each huddle in the first two years of the project.

Huddles: I-VII

3.2.2 Subgoal B

Deepen and improve corporate network maps by engaging corporations and their stakeholders via disclosure outreach.

While we will be building relationships with representatives of transparency-minded corporations as early as M7, we expect engagement of corporations and their stakeholders with the technical platform to begin as part of the pilot campaign (milestone 3). Therefore community engagement will become a focal topic of discussion at Huddle V (Pilot Campaign Design).

Huddles: V-XII

3.3 Objective 3: Responsiveness

Incentivize companies to address network issues.

The core of our strategy for effecting positive change in corporate behavior is:

1. Distill complex issues into something tractable: responsive ratings of known brands
2. Make companies care enough about those ratings to want to improve them by improving their behavior.

Objective 1 and 2 above will serve to generate the necessary data, but to have an impact it must be distilled and used.

While this objective will seem distant in the initial huddles when the focus is on data generation and mapping, incentive structures will be increasingly central to later huddles, beginning with the pilot campaign.

3.3.1 Subgoal A

Support community development of network-aware corporate metrics on WikiRate.org.

These metrics represent the guiding end goal for ChainReact in data terms; to achieve these metrics on WikiRate we must combine reports from The Whistle with mapping from OpenCorporates and interpret both on WikiRate.org.

This objective will therefore be directly revisited at every huddle.

Huddles: I-XII

3.3.2 Subgoal B

Conduct integrated issue-focused ChainReact media campaigns that celebrate best- and denounce worst- performing companies

While the pilot campaigns will pave the way, they will not have a best- and worst- performance focus, because they will by definition be dealing with less comprehensive data that will make it difficult to make superlative claims. Therefore this particular subgoal really begins to receive full focus at Huddle VIII (Data Needs), at which point we will begin laying a path towards ensuring that our data can support bold claims of this nature.

Huddles: VIII-XII

4. Huddle Themes: Rationale and WP3 implications

Each of the following sections explores a Huddle theme, the reason the huddle theme was chosen, and anticipated consequences for the design and development of The Whistle (WP3).

4.1 Q1 Kickoff

Huddle I, held in Cambridge, UK on January 14-15, 2016, provided the first opportunity for the ChainReact consortium to assemble as a coherent legal whole.

4.1.1 Rationale

We scheduled this "Kickoff" huddle as early as participants could make it in order to get the ChainReact project off to a strong start.

4.1.2 WP3 Implications

The Kickoff Huddle had very strong implications for The Whistle. The participants grappled immediately with the issue of whether Decko was the best fit as a development framework and how The Whistle's reports could best be integrated into the ChainReact ecosystem. The results of this conversation have been communicated to the European Commission in separate correspondence, but key decision points include:

1. Because of its strong focus on security and its lack of need for collaborative editing, The Whistle will not be built using Decko but with a privacy-oriented development framework.
2. Decko Commons will no longer lead design and development work on The Whistle; this work will instead be transferred to DELAB

4.2. Q2 Definitions

"Definitions" here refers to concrete, actionable, functional definitions of key terms, particularly those used at integration points between the different struts of the ChainReact platform.

4.2.1 Rationale

In Huddle I, we began tackling questions of definitions, many of which on the surface appear trivial, eg "what exactly is a company" or "what does a report contain". Successfully integrating The Whistle, OpenCorporates, and ChainReact will depend upon great clarity (and strategic wisdom) in defining these terms. Therefore we think it wise to make "Definitions" the focus of our second huddle, with a mind to ensuring that all integration points are well defined from very early on in the project.

4.2.2 WP3 Implications

The primary implication for The Whistle of this "Definitions" focus will be clarity around the integration points with WikiRate.org and the OpenCorporates strut. In Diagram 4.2.2.1 below, this integration point is labeled as "Whistle-integrated publication tool". The phrase "publication tool" refers to the notion that aspects of a report associated with a campaign will be submitted from The Whistle to WikiRate when an authorized NGO user that has verified the report opts to "publish" it. When a reporting campaign is

configured on The Whistle, this will involve defining outputs of the campaign that are appropriate for display on Wikirate.org. When an NGO user verifies a report, those outputs will be automatically piped to WikiRate.

ChainReact

consortium roles and data flows

Cambridge, DELAB, and WalkFree

The Whistle

[NGO interface]

Whistle-integrated publication tool

Citizen Reporters

NGOs

Public

Identify Companies not on WikiRate

Metrics, Values, Notes (Tagged and Anonymized)

Mapping: Company Group to Company

Metrics and Values (Industries, Relationships, etc.)

Links to Low-Level Data

Open Corporates

WikiRate

Open Corporates and CERTH
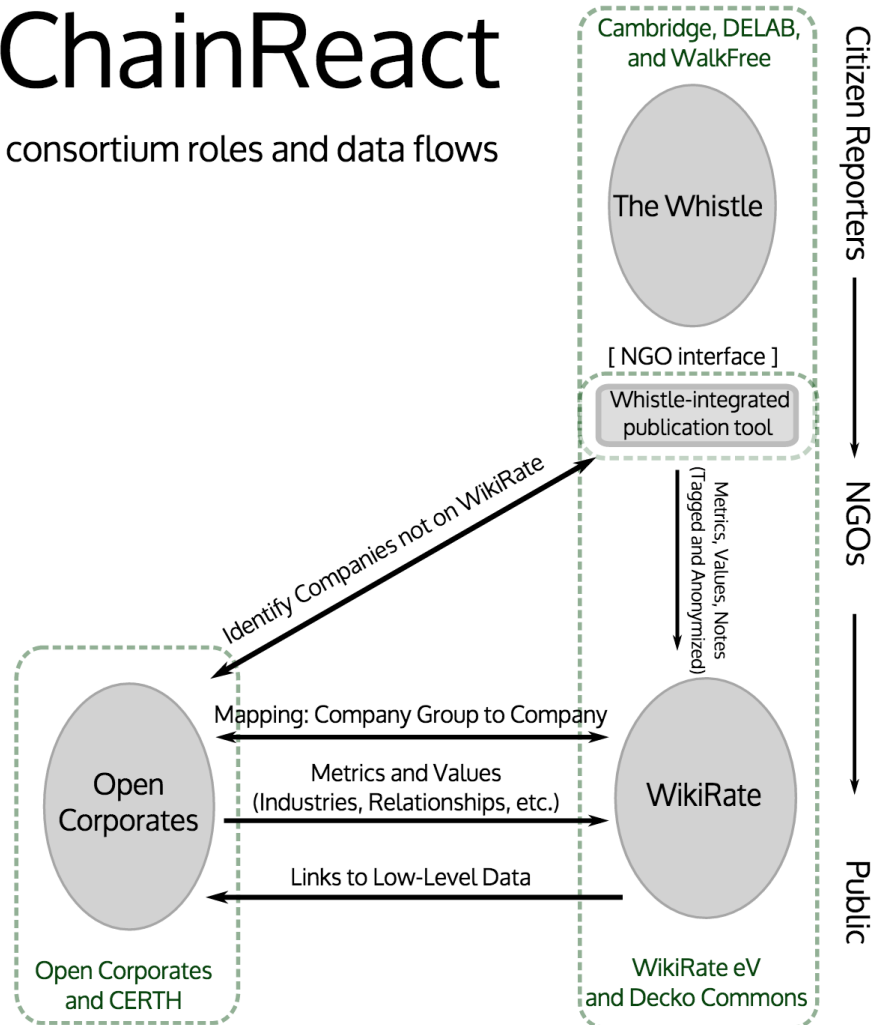
WikiRate eV and Decko Commons

Figure 4.2.2.1

Note that the publication tool is an integration point between The Whistle and both OpenCorporates and WikiRate – specifically, some campaigns will make direct contributions to the mapping of corporate networks by providing evidence of a link between two entities.

Development on the Whistle will be in early prototyping at this point, and its design concepts will need to fit within the broader ChainReact scheme being defined in greater detail.

4.3 Q3 Proof of Concept

Huddle III will focus on an end-to-end demonstration of the ChainReact concept, including report generation, data mapping, and interpretation within the WikiRate Ratings framework.

4.3.1 Rationale

A proof of concept implementation will not only help the developers and designers test the feasibility of their conceptual architecture, it will also help provide the marketing teams with materials that can be used moving forward to plan and support their outreach. It is to be expected that a proof of concept phase will also flesh out some needs for deeper conceptual design, and the earlier these needs are identified, the better.

4.3.2 WP3 Implications

Q3 will see intensive development on the core features of The Whistle in advance of ChainReact Alpha. The huddle will be an opportunity to test what has been developed to date and gain clarity about prioritization for the next phase of development. Specifically, a proof-of-concept implementation of The Whistle will include the capacity to submit reports, enhance reports through the integration of automated API-based verification services, and review these reports through a web-based front end. It will also include a rudimentary implementation of the "publication" tool described in Section 4.2.2.

4.4 Q4 Usability

At Huddle IV we will focus on ensuring that our data-intensive project is retaining a human-friendly face.

4.4.1 Rationale

Proof-of-concept implementations almost always involve rapid development at the expense of usability. This is in many ways desirable, because it can be costly to optimize interfaces before implementation strategies are sufficiently mature. However, as a structured data project driven by non-technical contributors, it will be vital for ChainReact to revisit usability at regular intervals. Moreover, this early huddle in particular will focus on ensuring the emerging data plan is compatible with the emerging community plan.

4.4.2 WP3 Implications

During Q4, The Whistle will be engaging prospective users for feedback, the same prospective users who are being interviewed and observed to refine the high-level design of the platform. The aim at this stage will be to ascertain how The Whistle integrates with these users' existing workflow, and whether features like automated calls to API services that aid verification are user-friendly enough to motivate adoption of The Whistle by these users.

4.5 Q5 Pilot Campaign Design

Our first pilot reporting campaign is scheduled to launch in M18; Huddle V will ensure that all consortium partners are aligned on the framing of the launch and their role within it.

4.5.1 Rationale

Three consecutive huddles will focus on the Pilot: two to prepare and one to digest. This scheme was designed to ensure that the pilot campaign is given every chance of success and that the consortium learns as much as possible from its shortcomings.

4.5.2 WP3 Implications

By this quarter, The Whistle will have received significant early feedback from test users. Though the tests will be outside of the scope of an actual campaign with real data, artificial use cases will help lay the groundwork for real ones. Where the previous quarter focused on usability in a general sense, this quarter will see a shift to working closely with initial NGO users to ensure that the platform serves their particular campaigns as well as possible. The capacity to tailor reporting campaigns is important to The Whistle's success and this quarter should see significant advances in our understanding of how to approach customization.

4.6 Q6 Pilot Campaign Execution

Huddle VI, an online huddle, will focus on completing preparations for the pilot reporting campaign and ensuring deep alignment among all consortium partners.

4.6.1 Rationale

Designs for the ChainReact Beta Launch in M18 should be well settled by this huddle, but it will be an ideal time for the team to gather and ensure that all the pieces of the puzzle are fitting together as planned.

4.6.2 WP3 Implications

Whereas OpenCorporates and WikiRate have existing sites, the ChainReact Beta Launch will be more of a genuine launch for The Whistle. It will be the first time it is genuinely opened to public report submission, and therefore the technical focus will be on ensuring a smooth and uneventful deployment. This will also be the point at which the data pipeline connecting The Whistle to the other ChainReact struts needs to be operational and configured appropriately for each pilot campaign.

4.7 Q7 Pilot Feedback

At Huddle VII we will focus on processing feedback about our pilot launch from various constituents, including citizen reporters, NGOs, and WikiRate community members.

4.7.1 Rationale

This "halfway" huddle will provide a space for the consortium to take stock of what is working and what is not, particularly with respect to functionality introduced as part of the pilot reporting campaign. It is not unlikely that this huddle will be a time for the consortium to consider strategic shifts, if necessary.

4.7.2 WP3 Implications

Q7 will provide our first clear glimpse into how The Whistle is received and used in practice, and the huddle will be an excellent time to explore how best to grow its usage. We foresee opportunities to improve usability and expand the feature-set at this stage.

4.8 Q8 Data Needs

Here we will assess whether the scope and quality of our data is progressing at a rate sufficient for us to achieve our project objectives and to make any needed adjustments.

4.8.1 Rationale

There is little need to explain the need for abundant, high quality data; if the data are either too sparse or too poor, the project cannot achieve its objectives. The rationale for the timing, here, is that two quarters after our pilot campaign we should have a fairly clear idea of the quality and quantity of data coming in and to form an updated data roadmap, which should be well clarified in advance of ChainReact 1.0. Though technical-sounding in nature, "data needs" is a full consortium topic, because it affects outreach, community building, and development alike.

4.8.2 WP3 Implications

By the end of Y2, we expect that the most important need from The Whistle will be, to be concise: more reports. Recruitment of NGO users will be operating at full speed, and from a development perspective the priority is likely to be providing the tailoring and input versatility needed for new campaigns to be conducted effectively. In this quarter we will be preparing to increase the flow of data through The Whistle into the ChainReact ecosystem.

4.9 Q9 Scalability

Scalability of the ChainReact community and all its technical support systems will be a recurring topic of discussion throughout the project, but it will be a particular focus in Q9.

4.9.1 Rationale

In advance of ChainReact 1.0 (M27) and ChainReact Media Challenge (M30) it will be appropriate to focus on readiness to scale. By this time, we should be deploying relatively few new features for ChainReact but rather mostly fine tuning existing ones, including with performance optimizations and hardware readiness for rapid scaling.

4.9.2 WP3 Implications

Because The Whistle will not have a public-facing site for processing reports, it is not expected that it will need to support very high traffic for its core services. That said, it is likely that at this phase it will need to be stress tested to ensure high submission capacity, because it is especially critical that no report submissions are lost due to scaling issues.

4.10 Q10 Media Challenge

MS5 (ChainReact Media Challenge) is scheduled for M10 and will be the focus of the tenth huddle.

4.10.1 Rationale

Full-scale media engagement of the full scope of the ChainReact pipeline will require full-scale consortium engagement, so this was one of the easiest themes to plan.

4.10.2 WP3 Implications

We are unlikely to want to deploy major new functionality in advance of a major media push, so development time will likely be divided between small tweaks and longer-term projects.

4.11 Q11 Adaptation

Huddle XI will be organized around learning everything we can from the Media Challenge and making the necessary adjustments.

4.11.1 Rationale

While it's difficult to make any concrete predictions about what kind of adjustments will be necessary in a given quarter over two years away, we can confidently predict that we will want to continue to adapt.

4.11.2 WP3 Implications

As with all components of the project, the design and development team for The Whistle will be adapting to the needs of the project at this phase.

4.12 Q12 Future Directions

Our finale huddle will focus on the long-term vision for ChainReact.

4.12.1 Rationale

We want ChainReact to have a powerful positive impact for many years. Sustainability will be a point of discussion at every huddle, but the final huddle of the grant will provide an opportunity to really focus on the long-term perspective.

4.12.2 WP3 Implications

Similarly, we will do everything possible throughout the project to ensure that The Whistle is built to last. Our hope is that the final huddle will entail discussing a host of possibilities for bringing even more problematic corporate behavior to the attention of stakeholders positioned to incent greater corporate responsiveness.

5 Conclusion

ChainReact is an integrated system, and the successful integration of its parts will hinge in part upon the successful integration of their strategic timelines. The Schedule of Huddles presented here has been developed with a mind to reaching project milestones and achieving project objectives while creating space for dynamically responding to feedback.

Effective design and development of The Whistle will play a central role in the success of the project, and the present document outlines a clear roadmap for its implementation and integration into ChainReact.