Public summary

RiverCare storylines – Improving storylines to better support discussions about application of research

RiverCare is a research group that does research into new methods and prototype tools for more sustainable river management in the Netherlands, that could also be applicable abroad. They are also focused on making research findings more accessible and usable for project managers and advisors in governments and consultancies. To make research more accessible and usable, RiverCare prepares their own storylines. The storylines help the project managers and advisors to easier understand research findings and determine whether it is possible to put the research into practice.

The editorial team consists of the storyline coordinator, the researcher and the visual designer. The storyline coordinator is Juliette Cortes, she is the person who does research into storylines within RiverCare. Students of the university of Twente are the visual designers. The researcher is a researcher from RiverCare who is done, or almost done with research into a specific topic. This research will be transformed into a storyline.

RiverCare wants to use the storylines in discussions about the application of the research with project managers and advisors. Therefore, the research question is "How can RiverCare improve their storylines to better support discussions about the applicability of the research?".

To answer the research question, a thorough evaluation has been done. The storyline preparation process is analyzed by 1) making storylines from the perspective of the researcher and 2) from the perspective of part of the editorial team. From the perspective of the researcher, the need for me to put in all aspects of the research was high. However, not all aspects are equally necessary or relevant for a project manager or advisor to read at first. From the perspective of the visual designer part of the editorial team, inspiration pictures or ideas should be provided to prepare the visuals of the storyline. It does not matter whether those inspiration pictures are provided by the storyline coordinator or the researcher.

There came to attention that it is hard to not make a visual summary of the research. Next to preparing storylines, a set-up for workshops is created. In the workshops, researchers, project managers, and advisors use and reflect on current storylines from RiverCare. After executing a trial workshop, the set-up has been improved and two more workshops are executed. The results of the workshop are divided into three aspects of usability, the effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction. Lastly, the results have been transformed into requirements for future storylines. The most important storyline requirements that currently are not always met are:

- The storyline should be understandable by people whom do not work in the same specific discipline
- The storyline should not be a summary of the research.
    - The storyline should state what project managers and advisors can use from the research or at least answer the question; What does the researcher want people to use from his/her research?
    - The storyline should have at least one personal element in the form of a picture, video, personal experience or character.

- The storyline should have an introduction that catches the attention of the reader and state the problem that may be solved.
- The content of the storyline should be supported by the visuals and the other way around
- The visuals should have the same style.

The requirements are used to make a recommendation protocol for RiverCare to prepare future storylines. In the protocol important changes like using the practitioner and questions that the researcher needs to answer are mentioned. The practitioner should be involved from the beginning to make the storyline less like a summary and more about the application of the research. He or she can for example share its ideas about: "What would you think can be applied in practice from the research?" The questions that the researcher will have to answer for example are: "What would you say if a journalist calls you about your research and asks the following questions?" and "What was your experience with doing the research?" Next to these changes, checklists are made to make sure that everything that is put into the storyline is right and the tasks of the different people working on the storylines are clear.

All these changes will make sure that the requirements are met, towards more effective, efficient and satisfactory interaction with the storyline to ultimately support discussions about the applicability of the research behind the storyline.