

TOPIC 10: PLATFORM ARCHITECTURE AND TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

Platforms need to be user-friendly to ensure the wide range of users can navigate the website, access relevant information in an appropriate format and understand how they can apply it to their own decision-making context. Underpinning this is the technical design and development of the CAP including the platform architecture, the user interface and any integrated features and functionality. The availability of data and information is not a limitation, but streamlining access to it, including issues such as supporting dynamic integration and interoperability with other systems, is a key task.

KEY MESSAGES

Current practices

- **User testing and co-design.** To be as user-friendly to use as possible, platforms commonly take an iterative approach to development typically employing a range of co-design and user testing approaches to ensure the technical architecture and features are fit for purpose.
- **Diverse content types.** Most platforms contain diverse types of data and information, and the use of innovative approaches to data visualisations is a particular focus for supporting knowledge brokering and translation.
- **Platform integration and interoperability.** The issues of integration and interoperability are becoming increasingly important. Such networking, underpinned by technical developments, adds value by consolidating and broadening access to information, avoiding duplication of effort and limiting any unnecessary proliferation of platforms.

Selected innovations

Intact Centre (Canada). The 'smart' features used by this platform - actively tailoring the content being provided to users according to their input to the platform - is a valuable innovation and one that can really improve users' experience and thus uptake of information.

A-PLAT (Japan). Multiple entry-points, including for citizens, local government and the private sector, are designed to meet the specific needs of these disparate groups through providing tailored, user-friendly experiences, relevant knowledge and accessible resources.

Philippines. As a new suite of platforms, the issue of interoperability has been at the forefront of development. All three platforms (climate knowledge portal, the eCCET helper for risk-based approaches, Project Upturn for adaptation solutions) will be fully integrated and internally consistent, and such learning used to inform possible regional collaboration. CSIRO (Australia).

The INDRA-Pacific platform was built to meet a specific need, but the structure was kept deliberately flexible and versatile so open-source aspects of it can be developed further by other users, thus helping to leverage developments across platforms.

Shared challenges

- Keeping pace with technological advances is needed to ensure that users have access to the sophisticated level of interface and features they have come to expect from websites.
- User consultation and testing at all stages of platform development can take considerable time and resources, as does identifying representative cohorts of users and implementing the resulting platform updates. Such activities need to be planned and budgeted in advance.
- Developing and integrating greater interactive functionality and new social communication strategies can promote accessibility and contribute to finding a balance between digital and in-person engagement particularly in areas with poor IT infrastructure and connectivity.