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# Community empowerment through the management of intangible cultural heritage in the Isle of Jura, Scotland

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**Abstract:** *The number of digital projects aimed at documenting and preserving communities' intangible cultural heritage (ICH) has grown considerably in recent years. These projects take advantage of the advancement of digital technologies to enable local communities to manage their ICH, in tune with the deprofessionalisation of heritage practices. This paper follows the progress of a case study that used a wiki to enable participation in the documentation of cultural heritage in the Isle of Jura, Scotland. Using a mix of action research and ethnography, the main argument of the paper is that involvement in digital cultural heritage can enhance community empowerment, but that this depends upon social dimensions of community cohesion and engagement as well as technical knowledge of the software and technologies involved.*

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the importance of cultural heritage has greatly increased for social [8, 32, 54], political [3, 25-26, 32, 61], and economic reasons [24-25]. As a natural consequence, increasing efforts are being directed towards its safeguarding and preservation by governments, organisations, and the academic sector.

As interest grew, we see also the growth of different approaches to, conceptualisations of and accounts about cultural heritage. Taken together, these represent a paradigmatic shift away from the professional domination of heritage management [4-5, 46, 48]. A primary consequence of this shift has been a gradually increasing acknowledgement of the importance of an active participation of communities in the management of cultural heritage, especially regarding intangible cultural heritage because of its locally rooted relevance [2, 23, 39]. This process is being helped by the advancement of digital technologies, leading to a new era of cultural heritage digitisation. Digitisation brings about novel possibilities in the heritage sector, having opened the door to new opportunities in terms of heritage preservation, dissemination and access, involvement of local and diasporic communities, and the inclusion

of traditionally marginalised voices [1, 9, 10, 19-20, 29, 31, 39, 52, 56, 58].

If we think of the discovery of local cultural heritage as a phase one of the process, digitisation serves as a phase two of cultural heritage production, collection and preservation. We have now entered a third phase in this process which supports the facilitation of user-generated content, and it is to this latest development that this work aims to contribute. This has been done through the creation of Jurapedia, a wiki based on the free software MediaWiki, which serves the purpose of allowing people to link with the Isle of Jura and to build a digital body of knowledge about the ICH of the island. The project has so far gathered 23 heritage articles through the work of 16 users.

This research is also interested in another scholarly progression concerning the concept of empowerment. In recent years, the ways in which the concept of empowerment has been treated by the academic literature suggests a broadening of its domain. In fact, we see a movement away from the one-dimensional economic or institutional characterisations suggested by classical sociological approaches, towards approaches more concerned with culture. This work aims to connect with the new approaches involving the preservation of heritage [17, 31, 34, 37, 39, 55] and the involvement in tourism management activities [21, 27, 39, 53] as good practices through which to pursue community development and empowerment. Thus, this article aims at engaging and bringing forward the discussion of community empowerment as linked to the involvement of communities in their cultural heritage management.

## 2. An island of deer

*Island of deer* is the subheading of perhaps the most famous book on Jura, a 600-page tome by Peter Youngson published in 2001 that covers – among other things – the geology, geography, history, folklore, and wildlife of the island [62].

Jura really is an island of deer. They welcome you when getting off the little ferry and have plenty of untouched land for roaming and breeding. They are a constant part of the landscape and greatly outnumber the people. But Jura is an island of humans, too: 196<sup>i</sup> people who may appear stubborn and tenacious to many eyes. Living on Jura is a compromise. People trade the common conveniences and services of the mainland – such as ease of mobility, strong Internet connections, and job opportunities – for the wild<sup>ii</sup> beauty of a bare and infertile island. In fact, the representations of the place provided by the residents can be contradictory, one moment emphasising the beauty of the island in romantic and abstract terms (“Jura is the most incredible place”), the other dwelling upon the hardship of everyday life (“It is a tough life and it is not for everybody”).

Jura has always been inhabited<sup>iii</sup>, but has more recently become an attractive destination for retirement age or work-at-home people seeking a quiet and unhurried place to live surrounded by natural and sometimes wild landscapes. These categories inflate the population beyond the capacity of the labour market. In fact, the job opportunities on the island are meagre and mostly concentrate around the distillery (the main employer), the hotel and the several estates, although many people have found jobs in the nearby and much more populated island of Islay. The population is fairly stable, but older on average than on the mainland, mostly because of the lack of a secondary school. In fact, 108 people – which represent 55% of the population – are over 45 years old, while the same cohort of the rest of Scotland (including the other numerous inhabited Scottish islands) corresponds to a significantly lower 44% [38].

What makes Jura peculiar, however, is its remoteness<sup>iv</sup>. George Orwell – who lived on Jura from 1946 to 1950 and completed his masterpiece *1984* whilst living there – was not pretending when he defined the island as “an extremely unget-at-able place”. But this ‘ungettability’ counts both ways, and the remoteness leads to a feeling of isolation that can be perceived as either desirable by some or disadvantageous by others, but that undoubtedly influences the behaviour of everyone.

Even if there is a low level of animosity among the islanders – mostly related to the role of the Jura Development Trust<sup>v</sup> (JDT) and a few lost competitions for one of the few job vacancies on the island – people are very generous to each other as every person sees the other islanders as the first and only source of many kinds of resources as well as the first call in case of an emergency. People on Jura seldom turn their backs on one another. A convenient analogy identified by one of the residents to explain this apparent paradox is that of a family (“I always think that Jura is a bit like a family in the sense that you fight with one another, and you might really

despair with one another, [...] but I do not think they really wish each other any harm”).

This sort of intimacy is also illustrated by the fact that everyone knows everyone else on the island and many landline numbers are known by heart (there is no mobile signal). The indispensableness of the others for each resident makes rather difficult to reflect on the actual cohesiveness of the community. However, one of the aims of this research is to analyse the impact of an additional layer for networking and collaborating – Jurapedia – on the current level of community cohesion.

One of the purposes of Youngson’s book was to inform the diasporic community of Jura – whose members are mostly living in North Carolina<sup>vi</sup> but also Nova Scotia and Ontario – about their origins. Jura’s current residents share with those second-generation emigrants the same passionate interest in their genealogy and family histories. People on Jura describe themselves as instinctively interested in family history and very proud of their heritage. Above all, many admitted that they get irritated when mistakes about their family history in books and other sources are found. And it is here where the difference between digital crowdsourcing projects and finite products such as Youngson’s book emerge in relation with heritage themes and family histories. The latter are not amendable or updatable (though arguably more accurate historically), and do not allow the living gatekeepers of those family histories the chance of formalising their knowledge or even correcting what has been reported erroneously. The strength of Jurapedia is exactly the fact that it can be dynamic and evolving; therefore, it can potentially be more updated than any finished piece of work. While this characteristic represents one core reason for implementing Jurapedia, several further reasons have been identified from the perception of the islanders, such as establishing an anti-authoritative view of ICH, bypassing the tourism rhetoric, and enhancing the set of computer skills on the island.

### 3. Methodology

The methodology related to the study of Jurapedia has been broadly ethnographic, mostly consisting of the use of participant observation and semi-structured in-depth interviews. The reason of this choice lies in the fact that ethnography represents a useful tool to identify barriers to engagement [56], the overcoming of which represented one of the starting points of the reflection towards the deployment of a wiki in a community heritage endeavour in the first place.

Considering that the original hypothesis of this research concerned an increase of the community empowerment through an active participation to Jurapedia stemming from the enhancement of a few identified sub-dimensions such as access to

knowledge, ownership of cultural heritage, self-esteem, and social cohesion, a flexible tool such as semi-structured interviews would be required. Given the multifaceted essence of the concept of empowerment, the researcher wanted the interviewees to speak to an extent freely to identify further potential sub-dimensions of the concept from the perspective of the population. This stage has not been flawless, however, because not all the people that contributed to Jurapedia had an opinion about it or had the time or the willingness to sit for a certain amount of time and answer to several questions while being recorded. Thus, five in-depth interviews have been carried out with people which represented an enough varied sample (see Table 1): two English short-term (less than 5 years) residents, two English medium-term (from 5 to 10 years) residents, and one Scottish long-term (more than 10 years) resident.

**Table 1. Data collection**

Person	In-depth interview
English medium-term resident	
English medium-term resident	X
English short-term resident	X
English medium-term resident	X
Scottish long-term resident	
Scottish long-term resident	
English resident	
Mainland resident	
Scottish long-term resident	
Scottish long-term resident	
Mainland resident	
Mainland resident	
Mainland resident	
Scottish long-term resident	X
Scottish long-term resident	
Scottish long-term resident	
English medium-term resident	
English medium-term resident	X
English medium-term resident	

Much of the collected data has also come from the participating observation performed in the place, following three different trips to the island<sup>vii</sup>. The presenter of this research has been involved in a high number of random conversations which have intentionally touched or deeply regarded themes useful for the findings of this research, such as the attitude of the population towards heritage activities, the social cohesion, the keenness on computers, the discretion of some locals, the role of the JDT, the usefulness of a digital heritage wiki, the impact of Jurapedia, the opinions on the Jura Lives projects and many more. These conversations have taken the form of ‘ethnographic interviews’ as conceptualized by Cohen [14]. Nineteen of these conversations with people<sup>viii</sup>, which represents the 10% of the population, have been written down in the form of

field notes and coded as interviews, alongside with the creation of a digital log/diary, which has guided the creation of an ethnography of the place useful to contextualize the present endeavour. This stage – which has been consistent with the idea that in ethnography every observation can be treated as data [57] – has helped in compensating the lack of availability or willingness of people that did not want to formalize their interviews, but were willing to informally share their views and opinions while not minding the note-taking activity.

A final form of data collection has been represented by almost 300 emails (including sent and received), be them for recruiting people living in very remote places on the island or for asking feedback about the project. This method has represented a necessary facilitating step considering the time-consuming travels to a remote place like Jura and the amount of money that would have been required for a continuous sojourn on the island. This data – altogether with the data deriving from interviews/conversations and the field notes – has been treated with content analysis. This methodology has allowed the researcher to interpret and code a large amount of text into themes, which have been then clustered into conceptual categories. In doing so, a coding scheme which was consistent with the sub-dimensions identified for analysing the impact on contributors in terms of community empowerment could be created.

#### 4. Benefits of contributions and limitations

The main purpose of this article is to investigate the enhancement of the conceptual dimensions associated by the literature with bottom-up approaches in community heritage projects [39-40, 55] stemming from allowing non-professionals in the field of heritage to input ICH records on Jurapedia. These are: increased access to historical and heritage-related knowledge otherwise unknown, increased sense of ownership and custodianship of the cultural heritage of the place, enhanced self-esteem deriving from participating in a new collective endeavour such as digitally collecting and protecting cultural heritage as well as from acquiring of a new set of computing skills, and enhanced social cohesion and inclusion thanks to a more digitally connected community and the openness of the project. Besides being drawn from the literature, these sub-concepts of community empowerment have also been partly brought by the investigated population in relation to their perceptions of the benefits of Jurapedia.

##### 4.1. Access to knowledge

In recent years, the Internet has started to be considered as an empowering tool because of the amount of information it gives access to [42]. If we can consider knowledge empowering, being part of a knowledge-building process – where people are required to take care of that knowledge through an action of systematisation and formalisation – cannot be any less empowering. This syllogism is made possible by imagining that allowing someone to formalise his/her own knowledge by making it available for a wide audience is an educational effort by itself. This outcome is consistent with the knowledge building theory and the concept of ‘conscientisation’. The first treats knowledge created within knowledge building communities as an artefact leading the creators to improve their own knowledge as they try to make it usable for others [49]. The second refers to an empowerment process deriving from the dialogues in such participatory environments [51]. Both sustain the idea that participating in the build of a body of knowledge enhances knowledge itself and, therefore, leads to empowerment. Besides, the collateral computer knowledge that can be acquired during the process deserves to be mentioned here, too.

When asked about whether Jurapedia could lead people to access knowledge otherwise unknown and whether they would consider this something valuable, Jura residents firmly agreed to both points almost unanimously. In fact, the surveyed sample thinks of Jurapedia as a potential platform that can use knowledge to emphasise the peculiar and wild character of the island for both visitors and the pride of the locals. Although this outcome can be considered a work in progress, the potentiality of hosting currently unpublished detail about the distinctive, if not arcane, practises which keep the land somewhat ‘wild’ is undeniable. This seems to be particularly true when Jurapedia will include information on, among others, the stalking/deer management, the maintenance of wells, or the act of burning the hill. For now, the wilderness of the island is shown through a couple of articles highlighting how the establishment of common services – such as a system of landlines or a postal service system – has been rather complicated on Jura.

Most the interviewees believe that to benefit from more access to knowledge would be first and foremost off-island people. This position is reasonable and, most likely, true. For these people, particularly the descendants of whom have emigrated at some point in the last 250 years, or who have worked on/visited the island for a finite period, Jurapedia is a unique opportunity to acquire evolving impressions of the island. Nonetheless, also several residents have already experienced gaining new knowledge on the ICH of Jura, and it is here that lays the community empowerment. Since the very early

contributions, evidence suggests that residents have had the chance to learn new interesting facts and stories, particularly regarding details of Orwell’s permanence at Barnhill, a few tales such as the *Tale of Mrs Starling*, and the geographical location of *Sodor* (appearing only in ancient maps).

Those who have created those articles have inevitably enhanced their own knowledge on these heritage topics. Other studies have confirmed that the act of writing forces to find a logic and cover the related unknown parts of what it is often known partially [22]. Writing (especially for a potentially wide audience as in Jurapedia) forced the contributors to research first and, thus, know more than before. For this reason, Jurapedia has represented for its contributors an opportunity to put in practice a process of learning by writing, which should be added up with the knowledge acquired by the readers in relation to the themes mentioned above.

#### **4.1.1. Limitation: The risk of divisiveness**

Although people interested in knowing more have already had the chance to do so, it may be argued that there is still not enough content to make learning from Jurapedia a systematic occurrence. While this limitation is likely to be temporary, there are more serious issues related to the management of knowledge on the island. Not all the islanders share the enthusiasm for wider knowledge about the island from outside the real-world sphere of its influence. There is a perception that visitors and ‘incomers’ are responsible for bringing change, whether in the form of new authorities such as the JDT or ‘progress’. These changes upset a strong inertia within, created by the quantity of hard work required just to live there, and the futility of trying to do certain things in the face of the weather, the elements, the infertile land, or the sea.

Being democratic about where contributions come from may have a rebalancing effect on the received history of the island. Even though this might be a healthy exercise in a theoretical environment, in an atmosphere where some people feel their actual heritage is fragile, and under threat from the outside when not from modernity in general, the intrinsic openness of Jurapedia might result in the resource becoming controversial. For some, knowledge on Jura is not an automatically egalitarian thing, it should be earned, perhaps as a reward for longevity. What interestingly emerges here is that such a situation has an established cultural justification in the minds of the islanders, which see the reluctance for outward-oriented projects as an inheritance from the natural reserve of Gaelic culture versus the more individually-assertive, more acquisitive, English-speaking other.

In this scenario, the Jurapedia endeavour could become somewhat pernicious if in the long-run

authorship were to be confined to those residents (or off-island individuals) with the most technological competence, or those who have had access to educational opportunities denied to most of the islanders over 40, ending up to exclude those who have worked the land all their lives. It would be of maximum importance to the success of the resource and public opinion about it to facilitate and court the contributions of older residents and those who might not by their character put themselves forward as sources. For example, by teaming up with a member of a younger generation, or someone in their family who had a sense of duty, almost, to ensure that the family name or their ancestors' anecdotes and testimonies were 'given their place' in the digital domain, as much as they are in real island society. Unfortunately, working towards a perfect inclusiveness of the project is a matter for future work.

#### 4.2. Ownership and custodianship

Ownership and custodianship are by now two buzzwords of the thoughtful request for bottom-up approaches in the community cultural heritage collection and preservation movement [9, 18, 33, 50]. Ownership and custodianship of the cultural heritage's representation are praised as natural consequences of an enhanced involvement of communities in cultural heritage projects. The new intellectual movements towards the acknowledgement of the invaluable nature of heritage from below stem from the willingness of the establishment of a virtuous circle: the more perceived ownership of heritage from communities, the more valorised heritage becomes the more commitment of communities towards their involvement in its custodianship. While participation and ownership feed one another, in turn, the sense of ownership becomes a crucial factor in strengthening the suitability of community-based projects as it fosters voluntarism, longevity and commitment.

The analysis of the perceptions of an enhanced sense of ownership thanks to contributing to Jurapedia has given, however, mixed results, which once again are interwoven with the social reality and the demography of the place, this time in addition to the specific technical features of the provided software. Ownership of the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills is something that needs firstly to be increased among the island's teenagers for two very practical reasons. First, the youngsters are set to become the new gatekeepers of ICH on the island, a process that has not started yet and no one knows if it ever will. Secondly, their digital literacy will be paramount for the long-term survival of Jurapedia as a collection platform of ICH which, in turn, might mean the survival of ICH records otherwise lost. Establishing a

systematic involvement of the youngsters can establish a positive dynamic of ownership towards a never lived past and of custodianship for the future.

While this transition has not yet occurred, the current question of ownership for the adults is already a complex matter. When asking people around to provide their knowledge and memories for Jurapedia, a polarised situation tended to emerge. People who had moved to Jura in the last few years tended to delegate an ownership of the sense of the place to the 'gurus' of the island and, thus, the right to provide representations of it.

This hesitant group of people – who tend to define themselves as 'incomers' – were the easiest to approach for the present investigation as they appear as the most active and interested in new things because of their willingness to improve their quality of lives on the island after the move, often from very urbanised areas. On the contrary, the 'gurus' – who were sometimes defined as 'indigenous' – were, with very few exceptions, seemingly unapproachable when the pretext was Jurapedia, confirming a reluctance towards the idea of increasing the global fame of Jura.

On the one hand, the analysis confirms that ownership feeds up the willingness to participate. On the other hand, this positive dynamic is disrupted when people do not feel entitled to offer their visions of something that they feel does not pertain to them; conversely, most of the long-term dwellers – who feel or would feel entitled – do not generally perceive the necessity for heritage projects able to enhance the visibility of the place. One would think that the openness of the software – the 'anyone-can-edit' approach – could mitigate this polarisation. In reality, it exacerbated it. The openness of the software, which could have encouraged a bolder attitude and incentivised people to take care of as many themes as they were willing to, pushed some in the opposite direction. Several residents frowned on the possibility that someone could edit his/her contributions or contradict him/her on a given article. The importance of not confusing ownership with stewardship in that no one 'owns' any article was a message that did not get across, with several detrimental consequences. In the Jurapedia contribution scenario of complete openness, too much freedom became no freedom at all for some. A few residents seemed to even use the fear of their article being at the mercy of other users as a justification not to be involved, in an attempt to avoid from the start any potential controversy and leave to the surely more digitally confident next generation the burden to do it all. It is interesting to note that although the 'anyone-can-edit' approach has elsewhere proven to be an efficient way of negotiating versions and/or getting a kaleidoscope of viewpoints, it does not seem to fit Jura's micro-society.

Making anyone's contribution as much valuable as anyone else's is a risky business on Jura. If the uptake keeps being only partial, it might look or feel like the ownership/custodianship is being taken away from some people to give it to others. It might be to an extent reasonable to see the newcomers feeling like walking on eggshells when appointed with the "right to tell" about heritage and encouraged towards getting more ownership of part of it that they feel as not belonging or pertaining to them. Jurapedia is not a tool powerful enough by itself to attempt a redistribution of the sense of ownership. What it can do is to enhance the ownership on what it is already perceived as something towards which people think to have the right to tell *a priori*. The risk is to reach a fragmentation of contributions, where people write only about something they feel somewhat 'expert', contradicting the deprofessionalising approach that was supposed to be undertaken here. The prospect of compartmentalised contributions is real and was in some way guiltily perpetuated when – following a suggestion from the community during a late stage of the engagement phase – the researcher decided to make a list of potential heritage themes and invited people to pick the ones they were the most comfortable with. This decision had an immediate follow-up with people picking themes which regarded them personally, and not based on interest, knowledge, or memory. The hope is that once people will be done with writing the articles that make them comfortable based on the fear of external interference, they will get passionate about this exercise to the point of extending their contributions outside of what they consider their sphere of 'competence'.

### 4.3. Self-esteem

The concept of self-esteem – the enhancement of which is here hypothesised as associated with contributing to Jurapedia – draws from Bandura's work in the field of social cognition [7]. In his work, self-efficacy – which is strongly related to the concept of self-esteem [28] – refers to people's beliefs about their capabilities to accomplish a task or succeed in specific situations. Given the practical interchangeability of the two concepts, during the administration of interviews I have preferred to use the word 'self-esteem' as believed to be more common and understandable.

The use of self-esteem as a sub-dimension of the proposed concept of 'community cultural heritage empowerment' stems from evidences related to two sets of assumptions which are necessary for the realisation of the premises of the present research. First is the link between psychological empowerment and self-esteem. Studies suggest that self-esteem is a component of psychological empowerment [15, 41], and, at the same time, feelings of powerlessness can

be associated with the lack of self-esteem [13]. Secondly, this link is being studied within online environments, too. Many scholars argue that enhanced self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-image are positive effects of users' generation of online content [12, 16, 30, 43-44]. What remains to be seen is whether the positive effects on self-esteem deriving from generating content online is transferable to the generation of cultural heritage content.

The enhancement of self-esteem on Jura has been analysed in relation to two main factors. The first is the participation in a heritage digitisation project assigning responsibility to the residents. The management of cultural heritage on Jura has usually been exclusive to either far designated institutions, the intellectual efforts of a few individuals, or funded local organisations. All the other residents have never been directly involved in the management of the cultural heritage of the island. Because of this, the first hypothesised enhancing factor of self-esteem was the participation in such an endeavour, where ordinary people are asked for the first time in their lives to convert some of their spare time in the act of digitising their memories and knowledge. In doing so, people were believed to potentially acquire confidence about their capabilities to accomplish an important task which is usually believed to require expertise and/or money to get done. The second investigated factor was instead strictly focusing on the confidence stemming from acquiring new computer knowledge and its potential positive implications.

While the investigation into the first has not given relevant results, perhaps because Jurapedia is still too young and is yet to receive any external acknowledgement to increase the self-importance that people could attribute to their contributions, the second factor has had a positive impact on the community's digital confidence. For instance, a Scottish long-term resident learnt about Internet accounts and password management (skills that became useful for a better Internet experience overall), while an English medium-term resident learnt about image repositories while uploading a photo for Jurapedia.

To better contextualise such an outcome, we first need to discuss the state-of-art of the Internet on the island. The establishment of the Internet broadband<sup>ix</sup> is a more recent phenomenon than in the more urbanised areas of the mainland, while the mobile broadband has not yet been developed. Besides, the fact that there have never been office jobs on the island has not provided a convincing reason to accelerate the process of modernisation of the broadband infrastructure. As there is a lack of fast Internet, many islanders have a shallow knowledge of the possibilities that may come with it. To give an idea of the different penetration that the Internet has

been having on Jura compared to the mainland, it might be sufficient to say that many pre-adolescents have never streamed a video in their life.

Several residents have been lamenting that the lack of fast broadband is becoming a real problem in that sometimes it feels like the only way to be connected to the world is through computers. In the last few years, many adults have been asking other younger or more digitally literate residents to teach them how to use social networks, especially Facebook. An increasing sympathy towards the new digital technologies can clearly be noted and many were longing to be getting the superfast broadband via fibre (superfast satellite broadband for most of the households outside of Craighouse) which a British Internet service provider promised to install a few months after the fieldwork for this research.

Many of the people that are discovering this new interest have been struggling to accomplish the simplest tasks, for instance understanding the concept of registering and logging on to a website. As a result, the digital confidence of a large portion of the inhabitants is extremely low. Although the speed of the broadband available during the fieldwork was not enough to stream videos, it was enough to browse and edit Jurapedia in every geographical area tested. Therefore, while explaining Jurapedia, the researcher could teach a certain range of tasks such as the basic functioning of tags in a text editor, password management, bookmark creation, use of the browser, and file uploading, by using Jurapedia itself to accomplish some of these tasks.

The users of Jurapedia are being able to use it for enhancing their computer knowledge while contributing with the cultural heritage entries, resulting in an enhancement of people's beliefs about their capabilities to accomplish a digital task or succeed in specific situations in a virtual environment, with benefits that can be crucial even for the future of the island. However, a limit that can be identified with this self-esteem enhancing practice is that as it requires people to keep being proactive towards the platforms to avoid the potential ephemerality of the acquired skills.

To conclude this section, the analysis suggests that the self-esteem of users is not enhanced by digitally collecting and preserving the ICH of the island. This is probably due to the fact that Jurapedia has not yet grown enough to the point of making the islanders seeing themselves reflected on a public platform that would make them feel proud. It remains to be seen whether this sort of feeling would change if Jurapedia received an external acknowledgement that could change the perception of the users towards the importance of their activity itself. On the contrary, Jurapedia represents an important source of digital skills enhancing the self-esteem of users. However, this outcome is possible provided that users keep using Jurapedia by creating

or expanding the articles. In doing so, they would also indirectly use the Internet more frequently and become more digitally literate.

#### 4.4. Community cohesion and inclusion

The significance of community cohesion in the process of empowerment here proposed is to be meant as an attempt to include the bottom-up management of cultural heritage as an encouraging factor towards community and social empowerment, similarly to what happened with community participation in tourism management in other studies [15, 34]. The Internet represents a strong ingredient facilitating the takeover of cultural heritage management by local communities. Furthermore, ITC in general can also help to strengthen the community cohesion of geographically-based communities if there is the local commitment to do so [60]. Further studies within the cultural heritage hub at the University of Aberdeen show how the use of community information networks by local communities fosters community cohesion and sense of belonging while encouraging the creation of a collective memory [9, 58-59].

The enhancement of social cohesion stemming from contributing to Jurapedia has been analysed with regards to the hypothesis of an extension of the community members' interactions with each other thanks to a new collective and inclusive task built around a new topic of interest. These new interactions, which lay parallel to the ones occurring in the physical space, could have been facilitated in the virtual environment of Jurapedia by the talk pages which allow every user to discuss every entry. The feeling of Jura's residents suggests an appreciation of the open-source foundations and ethics Jurapedia is being built upon. Notwithstanding, cohesion and inclusion are seen as practical factors coming out of the upskilling aspects and the potential multi-generational outreach strategy with it that could enfranchise more people digitally. The first, by including people usually out of the digital networks in some way pertaining to the island because of their lack of computer skills; the second, by putting together the younger and the older generation through the shared task.

However, a proper discourse of cohesiveness is much more complicated. Jura's residents are aware that interpersonal politics can be very intense in such a small place, and because they have no choice but to live side by side with one another, open debate or confrontation are uncommon, whereas long grudges and well-established social coldness between parties can be very common. Although ICT could in principle bridge social divisions when deployed to establish collaborative work in non-contentious matters [6], we have seen throughout this article how cultural heritage on Jura is far from being non-



contentious. In this scenario, the risk is that Jurapedia would create divisions instead, or exacerbate the divisions that already exist, mainly the one between people who were born and brought up there, and people who have come there from elsewhere. While the residents' sense of belonging is generally proudly affirmed, a factual process of community cohesion – where people better their relationship with the wider community – seems not to be achievable at this point and by this means. The fact that Jurapedia's talk pages have been only sparingly used and exclusively to communicate with the researcher suggests that the platform is not ready to turn into a discussion forum where users could connect to each other in a local collective endeavour.

On the one hand, all these limitations advise that a different and, perhaps, more specific approach is needed to engage the island in a cohesiveness enhancing process. On the other hand, Jurapedia is believed to be useful instead for restoring the sense of belonging of those who have left the island and extend a sense of community to those who have a link with it, while not adding much in the networking possibilities of the island itself.

The analysis on community cohesion reveals that the implementation of an additional heritage-oriented layer of ICT aiming at achieving a far-reaching inclusiveness is not a powerful enough a tool to intervene on the community cohesion of the Isle of Jura. The ineffectiveness is due to the fact that the profound geographical isolation and the small size of the local community ensures that each of the residents is already included in a set of meaningful – pleasant or unpleasant – relationship with the wider community in a way that make Jurapedia redundant as a framework in which to establish a cohesiveness enhancing process. The social reality on Jura is complex and requires additional and precise work to be fully understood. It remains to be seen whether – as suggested by the residents themselves – Jurapedia can act to the benefit of the sense of belonging of off-island people to expand the boundaries of the perceived Jura's community. Although Jurapedia has attracted interest overseas, this new potential group of contributors will need to be interviewed and represents an asset which provides an interesting ground for future work.

## 5. Conclusions

This research experience suggests that while the aspect of preservation was almost unanimously positively judged by the residents of Jura, the same could not be applied to the aspect of publication. People are interested in Jura's heritage, knowledge of the place, their family histories and connection to the island, which are like a currency providing an estimation of their appropriateness of holding a sense of the place. Therefore, heritage is valuable, but what

about 'heritage projects'? Not quite as much. The more public they are, the more the perception that the currency is being devalued. People have criticised books being published with mistakes in them, or the 'wrong' sources being consulted for information. The appeal of a devolved collaborative resource like Jurapedia mostly lies in the fact that it incorporates a multitude of perspectives and provide composite answers, but this outcome can also be very threatening. If someone has spent his/her whole life on Jura, then the history of the place is his/her life. Hence, it is not surprising to understand that people would or could a) not want to part with their reminiscences lightly or outside of a face-to-face situation/transaction, and b) be hostile towards alternative versions. A position that was uncovered remarks that the memories of Jura's residents should only be preserved for themselves, not advertised and published. This is an attitude that sees the publication of ICH information as somehow intruding or exposing. Everything seems consistent with the fact that many of the Jura's residents are just used to minding their own business, which might have led to something of a cultural clash about whether people's life stories are private matters. Apparently, this has to do with the fact that the minute something is re-told it has become more of a public story, and what remains for debate is how that story is used; and, naturally, people do not want to be used.

Publication also means digitality, and here might lie another problem in a remote and small community like Jura's. Swapping stories face-to-face makes people feel very good about themselves, and has resonance, and it remains to be seen whether the status of offering this interaction in a digital framework could match that in the long run. Furthermore, being active digitally might keep being appealing only to the 'wrong' people, for instance, exactly those who are not active in the real-world exchange of memories or knowledge for whichever of the reasons identified throughout this article. These barriers have so far prevented the creation of a fully engaged community of practice, which remains aspirational at the moment of writing.

The developed concept of 'community cultural heritage empowerment' – based on the dimensions of access to knowledge, ownership and custodianship, self-esteem, and community cohesion – and its analysis through the deployment of Jurapedia and fieldwork on the Isle of Jura have given mixed results. These mixed results are consistent with the complex dynamics related to the 'right to tell' about heritage on the island, which has been described using an ethnographic approach. To conclude, this research suggests the importance of carrying out additional research to both perfecting the empowering process here designed and attempting a generalisation of the findings outside the peculiar Isle of Jura.

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<sup>i</sup> According to the National Records of Scotland's for the 2011 Scotland's Census, there are 196 people living on Jura, with the following breakdown by country of birth: 124 Scotland (63.27%), 55 England (28.06%), 16 non-UK (8.16%), and 1 Northern Ireland (0.51%). Jura is also one of the 50 (out of 93) inhabited Scottish islands that has seen an increase of population between the 2001 and the 2011 Census. In fact, its population has risen by 4.25%, from 188 to 196.

<sup>ii</sup> The population density of Jura is only 0.5 people/km<sup>2</sup>, consisting of 196 people in 366.92 km<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>iii</sup> Seemingly, Jura has been inhabited since around 10,500 BC, when the melting of the ice made the Southern Hebrides warm enough to be occupied [35, 62]. Although sources are scarce, the original presence of human-gatherers settlements – turning to farmers during the Neolithic era – seem established [35].

<sup>iv</sup> If someone wants to get to Glasgow (the closest City) using public transport, he/she would need to get to Feolin first (13 miles from the main village) by school bus, take the 5-minute long Jura ferry to Islay, take the 3-hour long Calmac ferry to Kennacraig, and finally the 3.5-hour long bus journey to Glasgow, a total time of approximately 7-hour long even without taking into account waiting times.

<sup>v</sup> The Jura Development Trust is a community company dealing with the social and economic development of the island.

<sup>vi</sup> During the 18th century, a wide emigration from the Scottish Highlands to the North America took place because of the generalized poverty affecting Scotland [11]. This phenomenon did not spare Jura. North Carolina is the geographic area where the Jura's emigrants – the first wave consisting of about 350 people – ended up the most [36], most likely because of a Scot named Gabriel Johnston being appointed as Governor of North Carolina in 1734. This event probably facilitated the flow of migrants to concentrate on that specific area [62].

<sup>vii</sup> The trips were dated March 2015 (one week), May 2015 (one week) and October 2015 (one month). The first trip was attempted on October 2014, but it failed because of a missed connection due to a delay caused by bad weather. The actual first trip was arranged in March following a recommendation from the residents to avoid the grim winter. The dates in May were co-decided with the JDT to find a suitable time in which to carry out the wiki workshop. October was chosen after the busy Summer period to finalise the data collection. No further trips were possible because the travel budget provided was limited in time due to the dot.rural hub being shut down at the end of 2015.

<sup>viii</sup> Some of these conversations have occurred during several occasions over time. This has allowed to obtain a better appreciation of their commitment as well as the benefits stemming from contributing to the wiki, consistently with the idea of empowerment as a process [45, 47].

<sup>ix</sup> At the time of this research, the Internet broadband could only be found in Craighouse, while the more remote areas had to use expensive and slow satellite connections which provided a finite amount of data allowance.