

Digital hypermediation platform to support territorial innovation

Fernando Ramos¹, Margarida Pisco Almeida¹, Luís Pedro¹, Maria João Antunes¹, Oksana Tymoshchuk, Eliza Oliveira¹, Daniel Carvalho¹, Paula Silva¹, Denis Renó

Community-led initiatives have an essential role in fostering the social, cultural, and economic dynamics of a territory. Community-based networks strengthen ties among stakeholders, promoting knowledge sharing and the emergence of synergies that may generate territory-led innovation, benefiting local communities. Studies carried under the CeENTER program identified the lack of dedicated digital platforms enabling citizens and community groups to collaborate, share resources, mediate experiences, be inspired, and learn from projects developed by other community members.

The aim of this research was to study, design and validate a mediation platform for territorial innovation in the context of the Centro region of Portugal. For this purpose, a mobile application was designed and prototyped aiming to promote collaboration between all agents involved in the territory's development process, encourage voluntary work, promote community-led initiatives, and the valorization of endogenous material and immaterial assets in the region.

The app CeENTER has a simple but innovative user interface with a card-based design, allowing the registration of data and an intuitive and quick access to different features (figure 1). One key feature is the geolocation of initiatives and events, which allows the user to search for places and points of interest and receive notifications about events in a specific location or territory (figure 2). The prototype of the CeENTER platform underwent extensive validation by experts and users, including usability and accessibility aspects.

The app CeENTER will help develop a large diversity of activities including the creation, mediation and sharing of ideas, organization of events, and many other specific activities relevant to the development of community-led initiatives, contributing to the sustainability of the territory, based on the active promotion of the potential of local communities and the valorization of local endogenous resources.

1 — Department of Communication and Art & DigiMedia, University of Aveiro

FIGURE 1
Sample of screens from the CeENTER app: (from left to right) main menu and details of an event.

FIGURE 2
Sample of screens from the CeENTER app: (from left to right) main menu with map peek and map.

