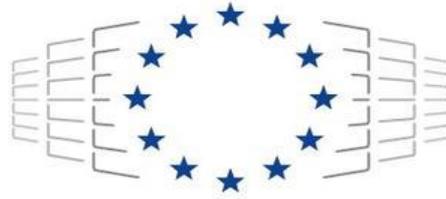# CASTIEL

**CASTIEL – Coordination & Support
for National Competence Centres on a European Level**

Project Number: 951740

D5.1

The CASTIEL Website

Deliverable D5.1 V1.0 is currently under review by the European funding agency and is therefore subject to change.

Work Package:	5	Awareness Creation, the CASTIEL Gate and Outreach	
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List of abbreviations

DoA   Description of Action

NCCs National Competence Centres

WP   Work package

CD   Corporate Design

UX   User experience

HPC   High-performance computing

Executive Summary

This document is the first deliverable of work package 5: Awareness Creation, the CASTIEL Gate and Outreach of the project. Since the website, subject of the deliverable, will be developed into the CASTIEL Gate later, this document is a stand-alone document.

The work package 5 has the aim to introduce effective communication and dissemination regarding the CASTIEL project as well as to implement the CASTIEL Gate. This will support the EuroCC project's efforts to consolidate National Competence Centres (NCCs) in high-performance computing.

In this deliverable 5.1, *The CASTIEL Website,* it is explained that WordPress was chosen as the content management system because of its availability and flexibility and that the website was set up according to common usability and user experience standards. While setting up the web presence, the work group focussed on the expandability towards the CASTIEL Gate, a platform that will provide an exchange of information, services or knowledge.

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

1 Introduction

CASTIEL, as a Coordination and Support Action, aims to contribute to the success of the 33 National Competence Centres (NCCs) taking part in the EuroCC project. The goal is to create the infrastructure necessary for strengthening and maintaining excellence in the broad spectrum of high-performance computing. The initial website, in project month four (M4) to be replaced by the CASTIEL Gate, is crucial for the required infrastructure to achieve the set objectives, since it will be the content hub for all information regarding the NCCs. As a single point of access, it will furthermore raise awareness about the services and knowledge of the NCCs.

This deliverable will provide information about the first design elements that were necessary for the creation of a web presence, and an in-depth presentation of technology, techniques and expertise used for the initial website, taking as a starting point the aims defined in the Description of Action (DoA). Furthermore, this document includes an outlook on the upcoming implementation of the CASTIEL Gate.

2 Objectives

Since the initial website will later on be expanded into the CASTIEL Gate, there were no aims explicitly set in the DoA other than it to be created. The working group from Work Package (WP) 5 defined its own goals for the website to be seamlessly integrated in the overall strategy of WP5. These objectives are:

- The website should be the single point of access (for all target groups) to all relevant information regarding the National Competence Centres (NCC) and the CASTIEL project itself. Thus, it will create awareness for the CASTIEL brand and the NCCs (external objective). A survey at the end of the project will determine the success of this goal.
- The technical realisation of the website will be flexible enough to expand it at a later point to create the CASTIEL Gate, rather than to replace it with a completely new website (internal objective).

As the website is going to be expanded instead of replaced, the look must be set up according to the Corporate Design (CD) and the technology used must be suitable (internal objective).

The first goals being set; the following information is relevant for the creation of an initial website strategy to achieve these aims:

2.1 Target Groups

The website should appeal to all stakeholders of the CASTIEL project, in order of priority:

- NCCs, who might seek information about the status of the project, as a possibility to contact the project management team etc.
- Industry (especially SMEs), who get access to information about the project and the NCCs in their countries and a first touch point with the topic of high-performance computing.
- Persons working in other (EU-funded) projects, who might be looking for possibilities regarding interaction and exchange of knowledge
- General public, that could get information about what the EU is funding and how the project is helping to develop the competencies in the participating states.

These definitions are essential for building the website, as every included element, ranging from design to user experience, is being conceptualised to match the target groups' needs and will be implemented accordingly.

2.2 KPIs

The DoA sets 2,000 annual unique visits as a goal for the CASTIEL Gate. A tracking mechanism to measure the unique visits will be technically implemented on the website in accordance with the European General Data Protection Regulation.

3 Corporate Design

Work package 5 will develop an extensive communication strategy (to be included in D5.2), which will be defined by a clear corporate identity throughout all channels. This will ensure the creation of a strong, recognisable brand. As the CASTIEL Gate should be associated with the project, it will be created in accordance with the corporate design. WP5 thus defined some basic elements to be used in the initial website.

3.1 Logo

The logo consists of a figurative "C" sign, created in the colour scheme of the Corporate Design, and the acronym CASTIEL, which is set below. The acronym CASTIEL stands for: Coordination and Support for National Competence Centres on a European Level. The "C" from CASTIEL was highlighted as an object in the logo. Since the letter is relatively simple, the swing on the left hand side of the "C" was integrated in order to create movement and peculiarity. A simple lettering in the font style "LexendGiga" was placed under the informative "C".

This composition needed a frame, as the two elements should be connected and thus recognised as an entity. However, this was only accentuated in the lower left and upper right corner in order not to give the logo too many "barriers" and to preserve its mobility and (symbolic) openness. The frame starts from the bottom left and continues in the top right, which gives the logo the effect of a positive curve.

Figure 1: The CASTIEL Logo

3.2 Colours

In order to create a unique look for the project that makes it distinguishable from other projects, WP5 developed a dedicated colour scheme (see Figure 2) for CASTIEL.

A warm colour was added to the cool, typical blue (for HPC projects) and thus a dark purple shade was created, which is innovative for EU-funded HPC projects.

Effects that are assigned to this hue include extraordinary, originality, magic, power, spirituality, luxury, spirit and intelligence, which is a good combination for the CASTIEL project.

In addition to the dark purple, a lighter shade of the same colour was chosen, which can be used as an accent colour, if necessary. The same goes for grey: This colour can be applied as a neutral colour for several design elements.

#ffffff	#8f8f8f	#7c6a82	#281434	#000000
R: 255	R: 143	R: 124	R: 40	R: 0
G: 255	G: 143	G: 106	G: 20	G: 0
B: 255	B: 143	B: 130	B: 52	B: 0

Figure 2: The CASTIEL colour scheme

4 Website

When setting up a website, facets to consider range widely, from the structural aspect over the use of technology to lead generation. The following will give a profound insight into these subjects as well as why the chosen solutions integrate the website optimally into the overall strategy.

4.1 Structure

The CASTIEL website is accessible via the URL: https://www.castiel-project.eu/ [1]. For the initial website, the desired content to be displayed was structured into three different sections. All of them are conceptualised in accordance with the KISS-principle: Keep it short and simple. This is especially important at this stage of the project, so visitors can get easy and fast access to the relevant information they are looking for. The integration of Social Media channels was solved via linked icons at the top of each page.

The three sections are the following:

1. About: Information about the objective, funding and course of CASTIEL, as well as the connection to the EuroCC project (cf. Figure 3)
2. Partners: A list of all partners including the country they are based in, as well as a map in which these countries are highlighted for better visualisation (cf. Figure 4)

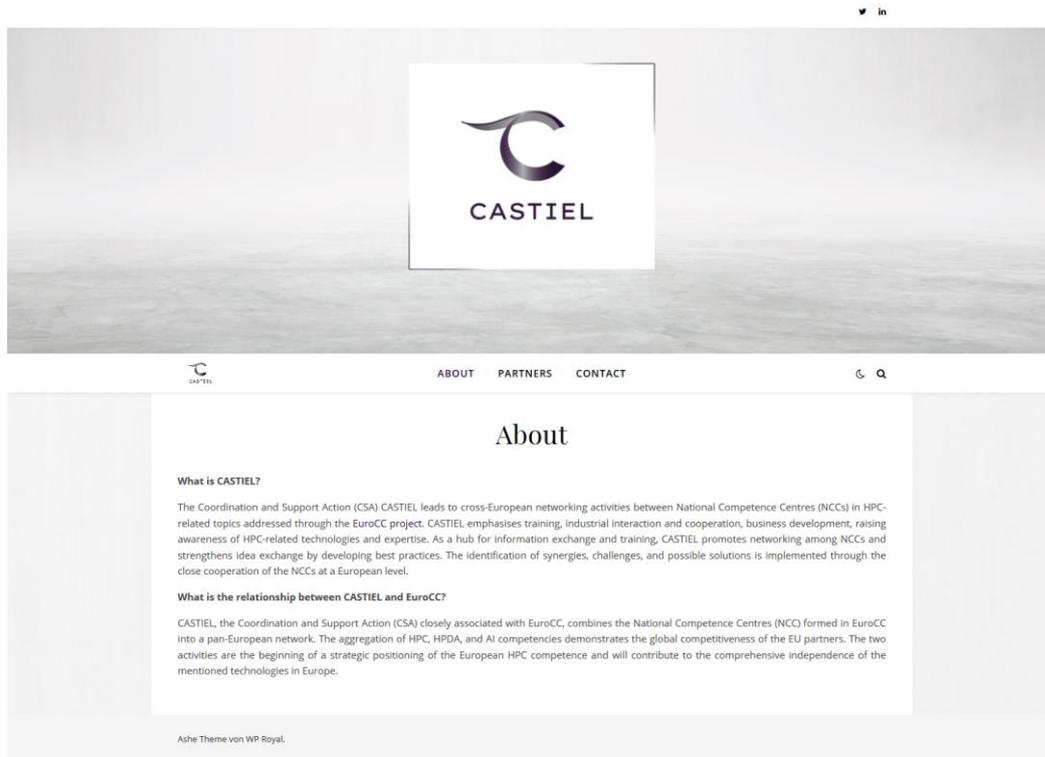3. Contact: Important basic information including funding amount, runtime and contact details (cf. Figure 5)

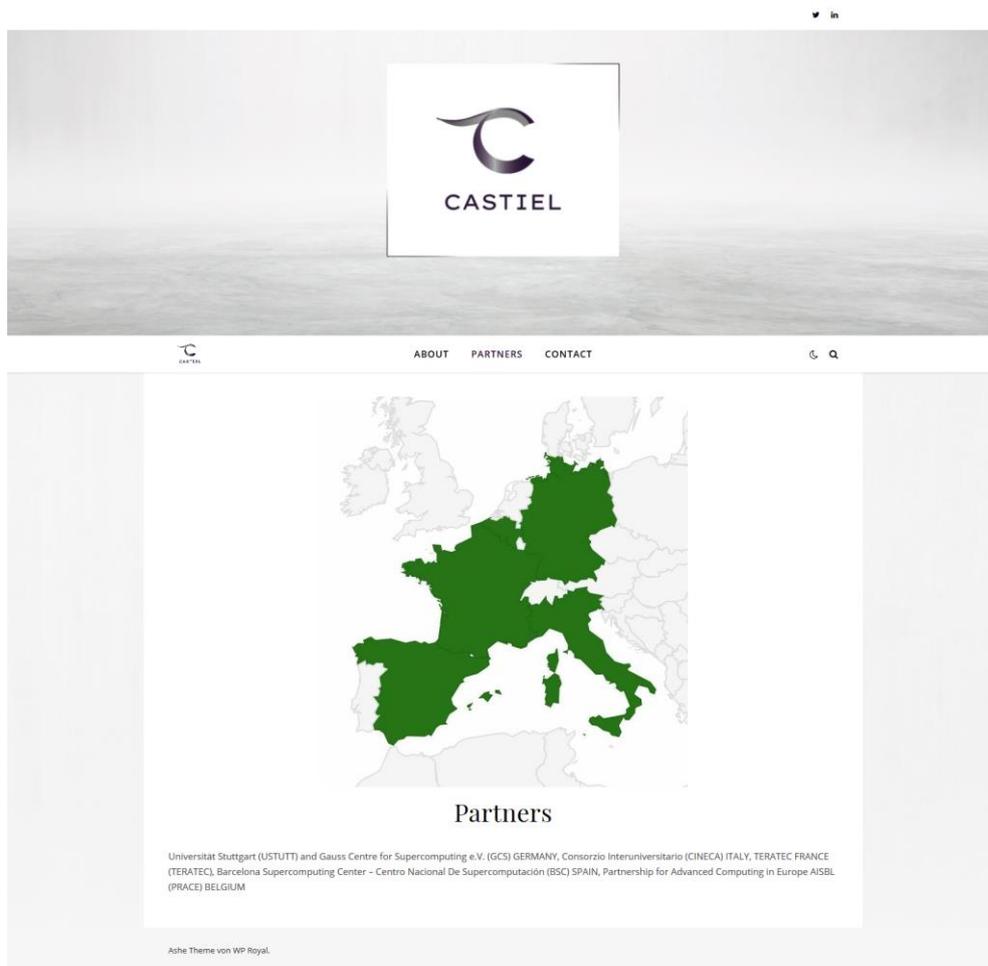

Figure 3: Screenshot Website About

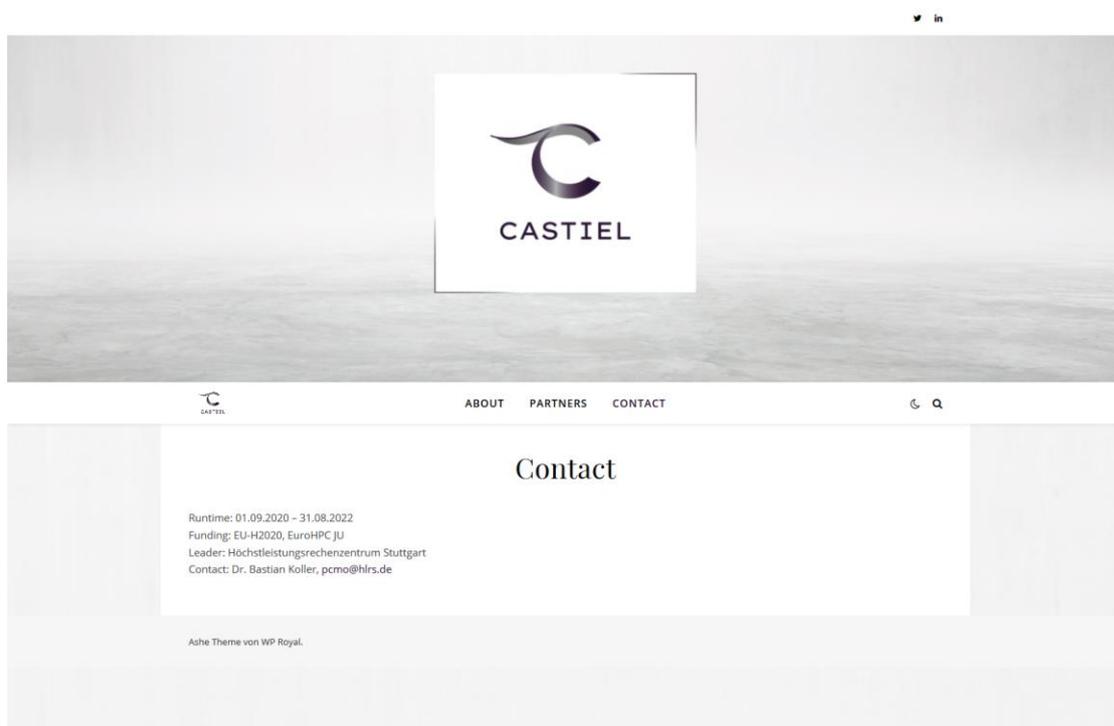**Figure 4: Screenshot Website Partners**

Figure 5: Screenshot Website Contact

The sections are structured on the website according to their extent. The sections with the broadest scope, so "about", "partners" and "contact" are located in the top menu, whereas "social media" is located in the top header bar.

4.2 Technology

In the next step, WP5 decided for WordPress as the content management system for the website, as it is easy to manage and adapt to the needs of the project. Being an open source project, WordPress is distributed for free. It is one of the most popular content management systems, which has a market share of 44% among all CMS-managed websites. [2]. Because it is open source and widely used, it is very stable and versatile, which makes it optimal for our web presence. Furthermore, many project partners have experience in working with the system, so the expected time for user training is low.

Technological benefits of WordPress include:

1. Tracking: Easy implementation of tracking solutions to verify our KPIs. WP Statistics will be the plugin used, since it offers all necessary data and is GDPR compliant [3]. Statistics include information regarding country, device or visited sites per user. With this tool, the success of the CASTIEL Website (and later the CASTIEL GATE) can be monitored on a regular basis and conclusions can be continuously drawn in order to keep improving the web presence.
2. Expandability: Possible implementation of the different user areas that will be included in the CASTIEL Gate, a large variety of well-tested and established WordPress plugins to expand the website's functionalities
3. Content Management/Maintenance: Possibility to add different authors that can add or change content in an easy-to-use visual interface. Existing experience with the WordPress system within the project partners' teams will reduce training time for authors.
4. Usability: WordPress provides basics regarding usability, as most themes are responsive to different user devices, have implemented menus that are compliant to usability principles and offer user friendly functionalities like search boxes, amongst others.

4.3 Theme

If a website is created in WordPress, the developer has the choice from a variety of themes. Choosing that theme is as important as the choice of the content management system itself. We chose the Ashe theme [4]. The following two paragraphs describe the visual integration and the benefits of the functionalities provided by this theme.

1. Visual integration

The theme has a simple, professional design and still includes all the necessary functions. The grey shade from the CASTIEL colour concept was used as the background colour, which is very clear and clean, and stands out from the purple. The purple should be used specifically as a striking accent. The objects are arranged in the centre and the text in one column, aligned in the centre to maintain the clear lines of the CD.

As many smartphone users are now used to using a dark mode – a colour change to a black and grey scheme and a shift of the colours on the smartphone from a white background into a black background, since the colour change is preferred by many users due to lesser energy usage, this mode is also a selective part of the CASTIEL website.

2. Functionality

The theme provides a variety of features that fit seamlessly into the overall strategy and provide a user experience suitable for our target groups. Responsiveness is one of those, as our target groups will access our website through a broad spectrum of devices. The theme will display our content in a suitable form on any device used.

4.4 User experience and usability

For the later CASTIEL Gate to be successful, basic elements of user experience (UX) and usability were already implemented into the initial website. As this topic will increasingly gain importance with the growing range of content towards the CASTIEL Gate, it is important to introduce some aspects early on. Observance of common web design rules is one aspect important for a good user experience. The logo should be found on the top, the search element is on the right hand side and the clickable elements are recognisable as such. Furthermore, the most important content can be found on the first page the user reaches when visiting the web presence, all content can be found with minimal scrolling and there are visual and interactive elements such as the map to enable easier processing of complex information. These basics will be further developed and adapted in the course of the project.

4.5 Content Management and Maintenance

As important as the creation is the maintenance of a web presence. The management of a website is divided into technical, legal and content-related aspects. In CASTIEL, all of these aspects will be maintained by WP5.

1. Technology

Maintenance on the technological side has two main focus points. The content management system itself is one of them. The software and additional functionalities like themes or plugins must be updated regularly. Another focus is the hosting on a server. There are certain scripts, as php, that need to be updated, security standards change from time to time and must be reconsidered. All while constantly checking if the look and functionality of the website are still there.

2. Legal regulations

Laws and regulations concerning websites change frequently, from data protection over storage restrictions to duties regarding the information of the user. The CASTIEL web presence will continuously be updated in order to meet the latest legal demands.

3. Content

The ongoing fostering with relevant and appealing content is one of the main challenges of maintaining a good website. This will be considered in the construction of the overall

communications and dissemination strategy. Thus, regular updates with high-quality new content and conformity with the CASTIEL Gate strategy will be ensured.

4.6 Cross Promotions

The website links directly to CASTIEL's LinkedIn [5] and Twitter [6] accounts with social media buttons in the menu header of the website. The social media accounts are of vital importance with regard to outreach and dissemination activities for the different target audiences. For this reason, CASTIEL's social media accounts and the website are visibly linked to each other in both directions. Social media campaigns and news will link to the website, which has a content hub function. The release of the initial website has been promoted via the social media channels (see Figures 5 and 6).
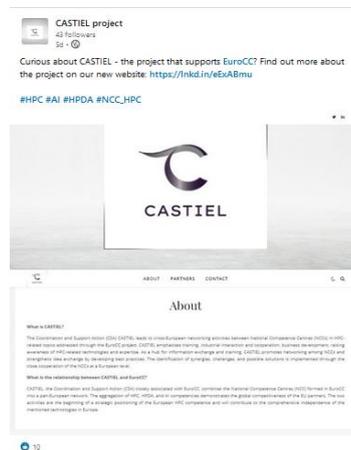

Figure 5: Twitter announcement CASTIEL Website

Figure 6: LinkedIn announcement CASTIEL Website

5 Outlook to the CASTIEL Gate & Conclusion

As mentioned a few times throughout this deliverable, as the next step, the initial website will develop into the CASTIEL Gate, which is defined in the DoA as follows:

> *"(...) the CASTIEL Gate will only act as a proxy to collect links to the offerings within a single place, extended only by some small own-created offerings, mainly a) information about the NCCs and CASTIEL and b) the competence map. The Gate will as well realize a forum for the NCCs and other stakeholders (e.g. the Centres of Excellence or PRACE) and a platform to exchange/share tools, libraries and knowledge in general.*

The functionality of the Gate is to a certain extent predefined by this and can already be put into a first structure:

a. Informational, public content:
   1. Information about the NCCs and CASTIEL
   2. The competence map
   3. A collection of links to the NCCs' services

    b. Organisational content (login required):
1. A forum for NCCs and stakeholders
2. A platform for the exchange of tools and knowledge

The CASTIEL Gate will be developed until month four of the project. It will be based on the design, functionality and technology already implemented. Additional plugins, for example to create the interactive map, or to develop the password protected organisational content area, can easily be added to the existing CASTIEL website.

6 References

[1]   The CASTIEL Website, https://castiel-project.eu
[2]   CMS statistics, https://trends.builtwith.com/cms
[3]   WP Statistics, https://de.wordpress.org/plugins/wp-statistics/
[4]   WordPress Ashe Theme, https://de.wordpress.org/themes/ashe/
[5]   CASTIEL LinkedIn, https://www.linkedin.com/company/castiel-project
[6]   CASTIEL Twitter, https://twitter.com/CASTIEL_project