SHERPA

SELFIE HElpeR & Pedagogical innovation Assistant

European Commission

Deliverable D5.1 Project Website (supplementary report)

Document Control Page

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Abstract	This document is a supplementary report accompanying *Deliverable D5.1 - SHERPA Project Website*. It outlines the design and implementation process undertaken in developing the website, illustrates the main features offered to visitors, and briefly describes the site's back-office management system.
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Executive Summary

This document is a supplementary report accompanying *Deliverable D5.1 - SHERPA Project Website*. It outlines the design and implementation process undertaken in developing the website, illustrates the main features offered to visitors, and briefly describes the site's back-office management system.

As specified in the project work plan, these activities form part of SHERPA Work Package 5 (WP5), specifically *Task 5.2 – Dissemination*, which is being led by Partner P05 - the National Research Council of Italy, Institute for Educational Technology (CNR-ITD). The work described in this report has thus been - and is being - performed by members of the CNR-ITD project team, acting in collaboration with the other SHERPA partners, from whom suggestions and website content have been gathered.

CNR-ITD's activities dedicated to the project website are being pursued in accordance with the functional requirements set out in the project work plan and within the general framework for communication and dissemination outlined in SHERPA Deliverable *D5.2 Communication Strategy and Dissemination Plan* (2020). The initial draft specifications for the website were later refined collaboratively together with SHERPA partners at the project Kickoff Meeting held on 16-17 January, 2020. As specified in SHERPA *Deliverable D1.1 - Coordination and Management Plan,* Task 5.2 (which includes production, management and upkeep of the website) is scheduled to cover the entire duration of the project lifecycle. Accordingly, efforts to maintain, update and optimize the site are also being informed and guided by emerging project needs, regarding both dissemination and impact. Specifically, the website will contribute to SHERPA's impact by promoting and facilitating functional integration of SHERPA outputs into the ecosystem of SELFIE[1], the EC's flagship initiative for promoting the development of schools' digital competence through the widely-used SELFIE self-reflection tool.

For further information about the nature and objectives of SHERPA itself, as well as its relationship with SELFIE, readers are invited to visit the project website at https://sherpa4selfie.eu/.

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[1] https://ec.europa.eu/education/schools-go-digital_en

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1   Primary Objectives and Functions of the SHERPA website

The SHERPA website is a core project dissemination channel and as such is a fundamental pillar for fulfilling the objectives of the project's overall communication strategy and for bolstering the impact of its outputs and results in symbiosis with the EC's SELFIE initiative[2]. Essentially, the site acts as a one-stop shop for anyone seeking to find out about SHERPA and, by extension, acts as a major gateway to SELFIE. The website succinctly illustrates the nature and structure of the project, its mission, overarching objectives, expected outputs, and unfolding activities. What's more, it provides visitors with the latest news on how SHERPA work is progressing, and offers stakeholders a gateway not only for communicating with the project team but also for engaging with the project's expanding presence, connections and interests on social media, specifically via the LinkedIn and Twitter feeds embedded on the homepage. The site also grants different stakeholders access to a variety of project materials like research deliverables and dissemination materials for different audiences and pursuits (project infographics, slide presentations, press releases, and the like[3]).

Given SHERPA's core mission, namely to enrich the SELFIE ecosystem by scaffolding SELFIE users and enhancing their understanding and successful operationalization of their SELFIE reports, it comes as little surprise that visibility and space is devoted to SELFIE right across the site; even the graphic look & feel and the URL of the site have been explicitly fashioned to resonate with that adopted for SELFIE.

In summary, the website is expected to provide a set of primary functions:

- illustrate the project's nature, objectives, and expected results in easy-to-understand terms;

- grant user-friendly access to comprehensive, up-to-date SHERPA information of interest to and suitable for different stakeholder groups;

- act as an effective multidirectional communication hub, with contact points to the project team, as well as showcasing and providing access to SHERPA's social media presence;

- list and describe project deliverables, offer accessing to each in accordance with its distribution category (confidential, restricted, public);

- branding of the SHERPA project through a distinctive graphic style and feel that is specifically designed to resonate with that of its 'parent' EC initiative, SELFIE;

- offer visitors a springboard for entering and engaging with the SELFIE ecosystem.

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[2] https://ec.europa.eu/education/schools-go-digital_en

[3] To be included progressively through the project's lifecycle

2   Design & implementation of the SHERPA website

The design and implementation strategy for the SHERPA website was based on a set of basic principles:

- Clear, simple layout and content structure with an acceptable level of interface accessibility (usability – see *Section 2.2 Website usability & accessibility*);

- Simple communication style and captivating graphical interface (appealing user experience, or UX);

- Practicality in content updating and back-office maintenance;

- Sound and effective management of visitor privacy and of data security.

With regard to process, at the outset of the project a simple mock-up was produced and presented to partners at the project kick-off meeting in order to illustrate the proposed structure, functionalities, and general look & feel foreseen for the website. This provided the opportunity to gather feedback from partners in order to optimize the initial design and ensure that the implemented website would fully comply with project requirements and expectations, especially in responding to the characteristics of different end-user groups located in different contexts, e.g. education and educational research sectors in partner countries.

Subsequently, CNR-ITD selected the WordPress CMS platform[4] for website implementation and management. WordPress is free of charge and open-source, and has other advantageous characteristics of great benefit to SHERPA (see *Section 3 – Content Management*):

- it is based on the PHP programming language;

- it features an intuitive interface that is simple to manage even for non-experts;

- it has advanced features for the protection and security of data and contents;

- it offers a variety of free graphic templates and extensions.

Accordingly, a WordPress instance (Version 5.4.4) was then installed and configured on the production server managed and maintained by the Service Center of the Italian National Research Council, CNR-ITD's umbrella body. The platform instance functions are accessible to the system administrator at CNR-ITD via the WordPress Dashboard (figure 1).
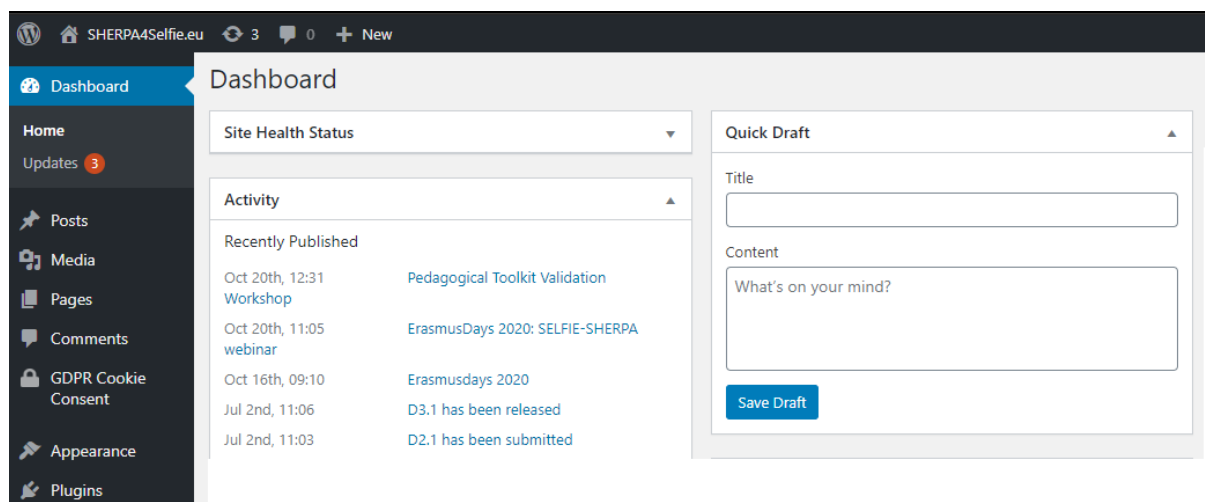
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[4] https://wordpress.com/

Figure 4 - WordPress Dashboard for back-office management of SHERPA website

2.1 Layout and contents

This section briefly describes the current layout of the project website and the nature of its contents. Visitors can access the main site pages showcasing project outputs and activities via a menu ribbon (fig. 2).

Figure 5 – SHERPA website content menu ribbon

Each page on the site contains the following common elements:

- top of the page - project logo and site menu ribbon

- bottom-of-page ribbon (fig. 3) - EC logo and disclaimer, link to the SHERPA project entry on the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform[5], link to an *About*-style page titled [Learn more about the project](https://sherpa4selfie.eu/?page_id=43)[6] providing a more detailed description of the SHERPA project and its composite workpackages, an accessibility statement, Contact & Info details and credits.

A standard cookies and privacy ribbon (see fig. 3) is displayed so visitors they can express their consent (or not) to the website's related policies and personalize settings if they so wish.

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[5] https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/612867-EPP-1-2019-1-EL-EPPKA3-PI-FORWARD
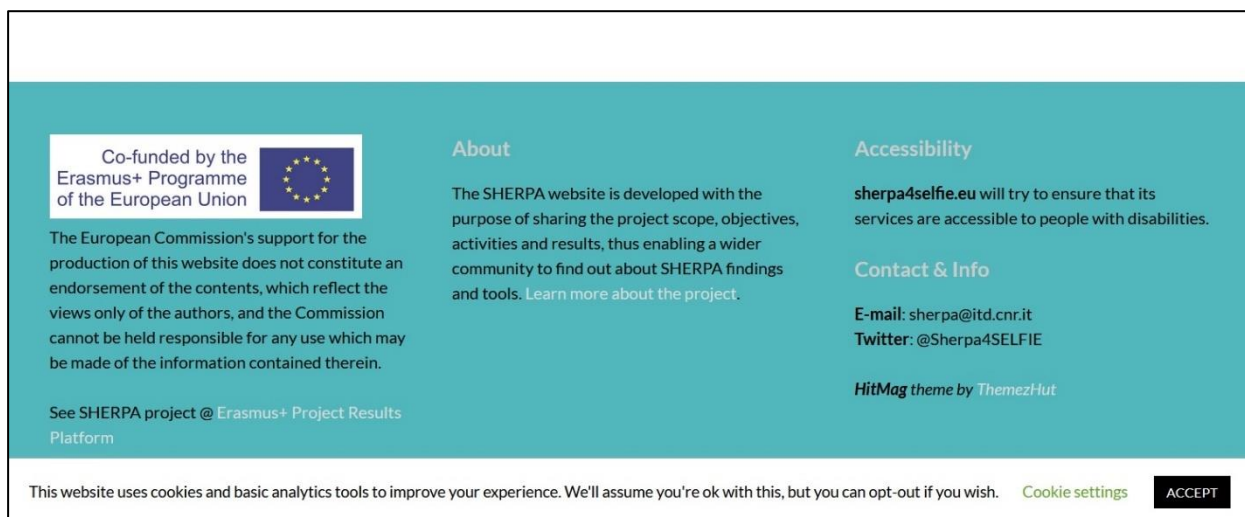[6] https://sherpa4selfie.eu/?page_id=43

Figure 6 – SHERPA lower info ribbon featuring website cookie & privacy ribbon

All text contents on the pages of the SHERPA website are in English language. The main showcase pages listed on the upper menu ribbon are described hereafter.

Home

The homepage welcomes the visitor, offering a very brief overview of the project mission and its chief outputs. This concludes with a link to a fuller, structured project description page: ([Learn more about the project](#)), which also appears in the bottom ribbon (see fig 3). To instill a sense of dynamic project activity, the homepage also previews the three most recent project news items (fully listed on the complete "News & Events" page) and features feeds from project-related activity on the Twitter and LinkedIn platforms. A complete project partner listing is also displayed, together with associated logos and web links.

News & Events

This page reports all on-going project news, with items dedicated to progress announcements (output development and other project milestones, publication of deliverables, etc.) as well as outreach activities such as dissemination events, workshops, webinars and the like. Where possible, access to the related outreach and dissemination materials is included.

***SELFIE Helper - SELFIE Pedagogical Toolkit* pages**

These two information pages are respectively dedicated to showcasing the two main project outputs: the SELFIE Helper tool and SELFIE Pedagogical Innovation Toolkit. The pages are updated to reflect the latest developmental stages reached.

Deliverables

This page displays a table listing all project deliverables by workpackage, showing the title, type of output, dissemination level, and language of each. Links to published deliverables either grant direct access to the document for download (i.e. for public deliverables), or resolve to a page for users with special access permission to insert the necessary password in order to access and download Restricted and Confidential deliverables.

SELFIE

This menu item is a direct link to the European Commission's main website dedicated to the SELFIE initiative (https://schools-go-digital.jrc.ec.europa.eu/). It is given prominence so as to act as a clearly identifiable gateway to the SELFIE ecosystem.

2.2 Website usability & accessibility

The SHERPA project site was designed and developed to maximize usability on both fixed and mobile devices and on all major web browsers. To this end, a WordPress graphic template was chosen (HitMag theme by ThemezHut) that ensures content responsiveness and rescaling. In other words, website contents are automatically resized and realigned within the window to suit the user's device, thereby optimizing usability and User Experience (UX).

As alluded to in the bottom ribbon on each webpage, despite the inevitable contingency and technical constraints imposed, all efforts are made in sherpa4selfie.eu "*to ensure that, wherever possible, its services are accessible to and usable by all, including those with disabilities*."

3 Content Management

As mentioned in Section 2, the SHERPA website is based on the WordPress platform. Site content is entered, updated and managed using the WordPress Dashboard, which is accessible to the system administrator and those on the CNR-ITD WP5 team with the necessary credentials. The main features of the dashboard are briefly described below.

Pages

The pages comprising the various sections of the site are generated using the *Pages* function (fig.4). This also displays essential analytics, in the form of total views per page on the SHERPA website. Fuller analytics data are available using the **WP Statistics plugin** (see p.10).

Figure 4 - WordPress Page function for website page generation

Media

The WordPress *Media* function shown below in Fig. 5 has the dual function of providing a loading point for integrating new multimedia materials on the SHERPA website and acting as a central repository for all the multimedia materials present on the site itself. At present, these mostly include individual images (logos, infographics, photos, etc.) and documents in pdf format (webinar/workshop presentations, deliverables and so on).
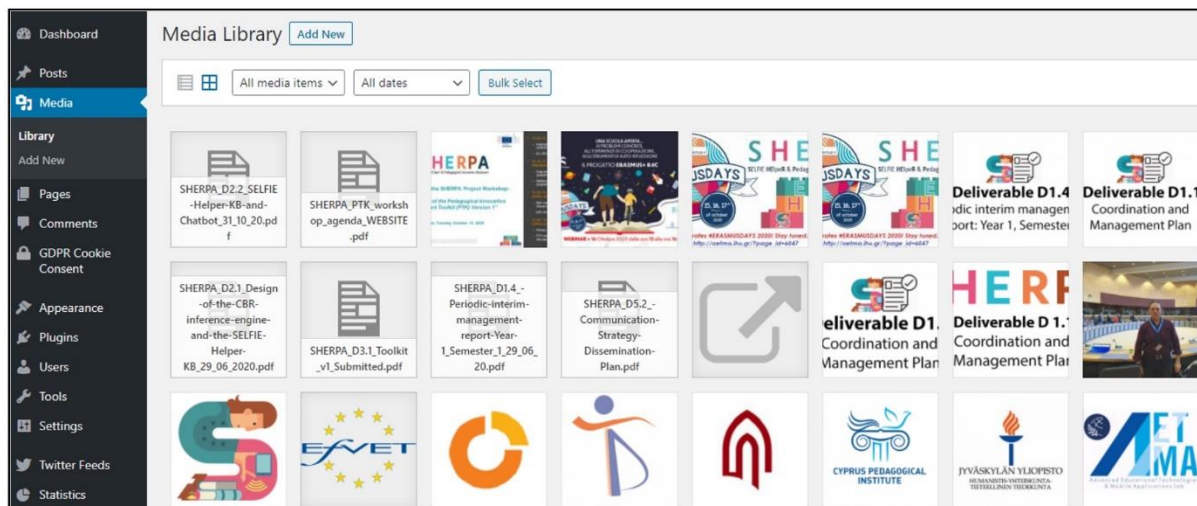
Figure 5 – WordPress Media function

Posts

The *Posts* function shown below in Fig. 6 is used for inserting and editing news. As with the *Pages* function, the total number of views generated by public browsing is shown.
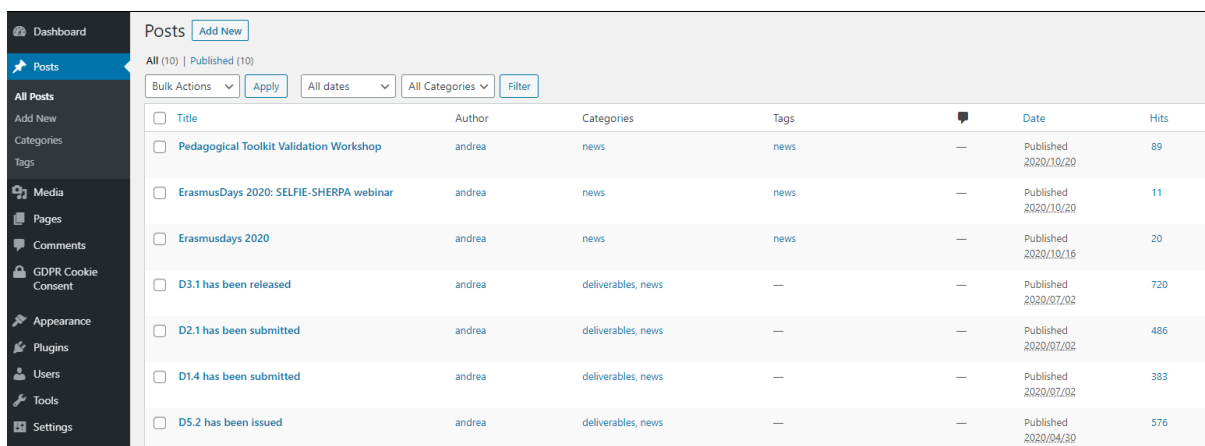

Figure 6 – WordPress Posts function

Plugins

The WordPress platform offers around 60,000 plugins for enriching WordPress sites, enhancing both functionality and UX. This section briefly describes the plugins adopted in the development of the SHERPA project site (fig. 7).
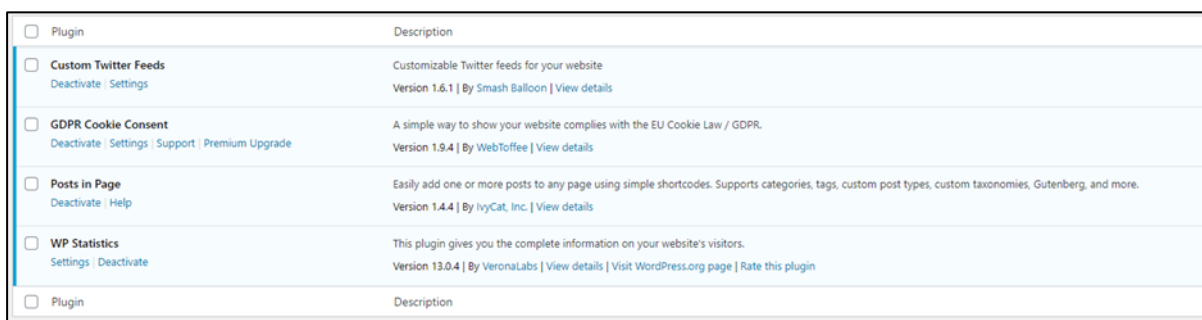

Figure 7 - WordPress plugins control panel

The four plugins adopted thus far are:

- **Custom Twitter Feeds** – for embedding Twitter feeds in web pages;

- **GDPR Cookie Consent** – for simple embedding of the "GDPR & Cookie Policy" ribbon necessary for informing users of EU GDPR Law on cookies and data privacy, and gaining their consent on the adoption of cookies when visiting the SHERPA website;

- **Posts in Page** - allows multiple posts to appear on a single page (used for the News & Events section);

- **WP Statistics** – generates detailed website analytics and displays these on a control panel in both tabular and graphic formats (fig. 8). These data are totally anonymous and do not permit backtracking to individual visitors. The data displayed include number of total visits and visits over time, search engines used to reach the site, operating systems used by the overall visitor population, and list of most frequently visited pages.
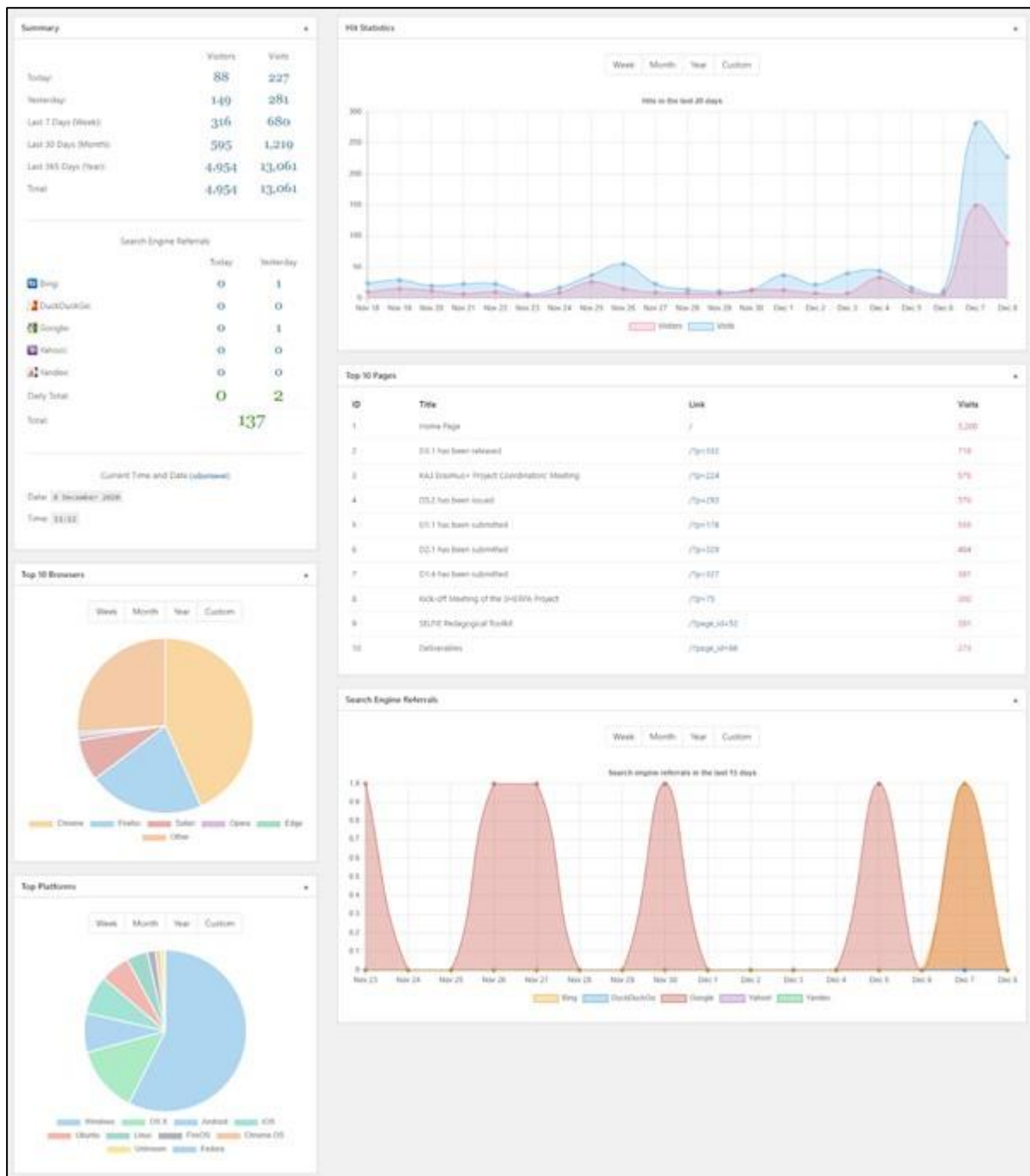
Figure 8 – website analytics control panel of the WordPress "WP Statistics" plugin

Note that The complete, detailed breakdown of analytics data for website traffic during Year One of the SHERPA project are reported in the Technical Progress Report (Section II.2.3. Website) delivered to the European Commission.

4   Next Steps

Over Year Two of the project, the SHERPA website and related WordPress back-office management system will continue to be updated, optimized and enriched to meet the expected evolution in project requirements, as well as any relevant contingencies that may emerge. Indeed, as specified in SHERPA *Deliverable D1.1 - Coordination and Management Plan,* Task 5.2 (which includes production, management and upkeep of the website) is scheduled to cover the entire duration of the project lifecycle. Accordingly, efforts to maintain, update and optimize the site are also being informed and guided by emerging project needs, regarding both dissemination and impact. Specifically, the website will contribute to SHERPA's impact by promoting and facilitating functional integration of SHERPA outputs into the ecosystem of SELFIE[7], the EC's flagship initiative for promoting the development of schools' digital competence through the widely-used SELFIE self-reflection tool.

5   Reference List

SHERPA Deliverable *D1.1 - Coordination and Management Plan* (2020) – The SHERPA Project Consortium. 612867-EPP-1-2019-1-EL-EPPKA3-PI-FORWARD. Funded under Erasmus+ KA3 Support for Policy Reform EACEA 36/2018. Confidential document stored at https://sherpa4selfie.eu/?page_id=206

SHERPA Project Deliverable *D5.1 - SHERPA Project Website* (2020) – The SHERPA Project Consortium. 612867-EPP-1-2019-1-EL-EPPKA3-PI-FORWARD. Funded under Erasmus+ KA3 Support for Policy Reform EACEA 36/2018. Website accessible at https://sherpa4selfie.eu/

SHERPA Project Deliverable *D5.2 Communication Strategy and Dissemination Plan* (2020). The SHERPA Project Consortium. 612867-EPP-1-2019-1-EL-EPPKA3-PI-FORWARD. Funded under Erasmus+ KA3 Support for Policy Reform EACEA 36/2018. Accessible at https://sherpa4selfie.eu/wp-content/uploads/SHERPA_D5.2_-Communication-Strategy-Dissemination-Plan.pdf

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[7] https://ec.europa.eu/education/schools-go-digital_en