Building Scalable Communities from International Knowledge Networks
A case study with Cycling Without Age

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Knowledge Networks Allow Small Organizations to Effectively Transfer Information
Organizations Experience Problems as Knowledge Network Scale
Background Overview

knowledge-networks

+governance

communities-of-practice
Social Learning Groups form within Organization to Share Knowledge and Expertise
You Can Conceptualize Knowledge Networks And Communities of Practice In Terms of a Student Trying to Edit a Paper
Within *knowledge networks*, individuals use their connections to share information and gather input.
Within communities of practice, individuals collaboratively collect, share, and modify information in a specific domain under a defined structure.
Knowledge Networks are a Valuable Learning Resource for Organizations
Overly Centralized Knowledge Networks Don’t Scale Well

Centralized

Decentralized
Communities of Practice and Knowledge Networks Have Complementary Value to Organizations

**Knowledge Network**
- Innovation free from structure
- Connections increase knowledge potential
- Loss of local insights
- Noise

**Community Of Practice**
- Collective intention to advance learning
- Access to a shared body of knowledge
- Bureaucracy
- Closed and inwardly-focused
Using Emergent Leaders in a Defined Governance Structure can Develop a Community of Practice
Networks and Communities Require Certain Functional Aspects from a Technical Platform

Sociability

Moderation

Usability
About Our Sponsor:
The goal of this project is to develop a platform that could support a sustainable community of practice around CWA’s knowledge network.
Our Methods Objectives:

Investigate Current Platform Usage

Characterize CWA’s Social Learning Group Structure

Iteratively Design and Implement new Governance Structures Around Improved Technical Systems
Objective 1: Investigate Current Platform Usage
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- Downloaded: 370 Posts
- Singled Out: 194 Question Posts
- Subcategorized: 18
Categorizing the Question Posts Revealed What Affiliates Look For When Interacting With Podio

- Local Connection: 7%
- Documentation: 25%
- Discussion: 68%

Sample Size: 194
Objective 2:
Characterize CWA’s Social Learning Group Structure

Knowledge Network?

Community of Practice?
Coding CWA’s Podio Feed Revealed Their Social Learning Group Structure

Knowledge Network Posts: 91%

Community of Practice Posts: 9%
Mapping CWA’s Knowledge Network

Identified Askers & Respondents

Knowledge Network Map

Guidance Survey
Mapping CWA’s Knowledge Network Revealed A Centralized Structure & Valuable Informants
Affiliates Bypass CWA’s Platforms to Communicate

Less than 20% of relationships used Podio or Facebook Workplace as a mode of communication

“we’ve just reached out locally by email, so we’ve bypassed what was originally set up as a community.”
Objective 3: Design New Governance Structures Around Improved Technical Systems

Focus Group With Chapter Sample

Research & Develop the Next Iteration

Analyze Feedback

Develop Final Product

Focus Group With Hub
Iteration 1

Document Library and FAQ in Podio
We Organized the Information Into Categories Based on Our Codes
"[Podio] just becomes overwhelming, and then you look at something and it’s so out of date. In some ways I’ve lost a little bit of faith in some of it - I go ‘I won’t go on there because it's just too hard’."
Comparing Platforms Revealed the Ideal Host for CWA’s Community
Iteration 2

https://cwa.community
Training Materials and Designated Governance Structures are Vital to a Community’s Success

“To make a community work, you not only need a software platform but you also need people to manage it... The software product itself can’t solve everything, it’s just an instrument and you will have to explain to people how to use it in the best way…a start with the kind of roles, responsibilities, and guidelines would be an extra.”
Final Iteration

Community
Behavioral
Guidelines

Training Materials For:
- The Hub
- Moderators
- Affiliates
Recommendations:

1. Migrate Data
2. Develop Training Materials
3. Consolidate Materials For Regional Captains
4. Establish Moderators
5. Conduct a Pilot with Moderators
6. Shutdown Podio & Facebook Workplace
7. Launch Discourse
8. Encourage Local Events
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Questions