

C201 | Communities of Practice for Knowledge Sharing



NOVEMBER 8, 2023



10:45 P.M. -11:30 P.M.

SPEAKERS





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Overview of Communities of Practice (CoPs)

Presented by

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Kent State University
School of Information (iSchool)
M.S. in Knowledge Management Program



Outline

Definitions and Characteristics of CoPs

Activities of CoPs

Benefits of CoPs

10 Principles for CoPs

Types of CoPs

How to Create CoPs

Definitions

Community:

 "Groups of people who share an interest, a specialty, problems, or a passion for a specific topic" (Garfield, 2020)

Community of Practice (CoP):

• "a network of people in an organization, or across multiple organisations, who work in the same area of practice, and who can seek knowledge from, and share knowledge with, each other" (Milton, 2022)

Characteristics of CoPs (Nickols, 2012)

Joint Enterprise:

 Members are there to accomplish something on an ongoing basis; they have work in common and share a "mission."

Mutual Engagement:

 Members interact to clarify work, to define and change how it is done. They establish their identities through this mutual engagement.

Shared Repertoire:

 Members share common work as well as methods, tools, techniques and language, stories and behavior patterns. There is a cultural context for the work.

CoP Activities (Nickols, 2012)

- Regular, work-related interactions (rough or smooth)
- Common tools, methods, techniques and artifacts such as forms, job aids, etc.
- Common practices and beliefs about best practices
- Common stories, legends, lore, "inside" jokes, etc.
- A highly effective "grapevine"
- A rapid transfer of best practices
- Conversations come quickly to the point
- Problems are framed quickly

An ability to assess the effectiveness of actions taken and the utility of products produced

A fairly broad consensus among the members about who is "in" and who is "out"

A shared awareness of each others' competencies, strengths, shortcomings and contributions

A shared, evolving language

Perspectives reflected in language that suggest a common way of viewing the world

Behavior patterns that signify membership

Benefits of Communities

Sharing new ideas, lessons learned, proven practices, insights, practical suggestions

Applying shared insights

Reusing solutions through asking and answering questions

Retrieving posted material

Collaborations through dialog and interactions

Brainstorming which can lead to innovation

Network externalities

Types of Communities

Communities of Interest

Communities of Practice

- External CoPs
- Internal CoPs

How to Create a Community (Mohan, 2007)

Identify what you want to give to your members and why

Form a core team

Survey your members to understand their needs

Develop a marketing plan

Identify your influencers

Learn about available technology

Develop a resource plan

Develop a statement of justification

Implement and start your community!

Critical Success Factors (Garfield, 2020)

The CoP fills an unmet need and does not duplicate any existing community

Its topic uses industry-standard, conventional terms and is a broad as is reasonable

People are likely to want to join in sufficient numbers to achieve critical mass

At least one person is willing to manage the community

The community manager will measure the community using standard indicators and take corrective action as needed

10 Principles for Communities (Garfield, 2020)

- 1. Communities should be independent of organization structure; they are based on what members want.
- 2. Communities are different from teams; they are based on topics, not on assignments.
- 3. Communities are not sites, team spaces, blogs or wikis; they are people who choose to interact.
- Community leadership and membership should be voluntary
- **5.**Communities should span boundaries; they should cross functions, organizations, and geographic locations.

- 6. Minimize redundancy in communities; before creating a new one, check if an existing community already addresses the topic.
- Communities need a critical mass of members; take steps to build membership.
- 8. Communities should start with as broad a scope as is reasonable; separate communities can be spun off if warranted.
- Communities need to be actively nurtured; community leaders need to create, build, and sustain communities.
- Communities can be created, led, and supported using TARGETs (<u>Types</u>, <u>Activities</u>, <u>Requirements</u>, <u>Goals</u>, <u>Expectations</u>, <u>Tools</u>

Additional Resources

How to Start & Lead Communities of Practice - Stan Garfield

(https://stangarfield.medium.com/how-to-start-lead-communities-of-practice-f2944b22ef56)

Courses:

- Kent State University, School of Information KM 60305, Communities of Practice:
 - This course will explore communities and community management from a practical perspective. It will enable students to learn how knowledge management leaders launch and lead communities of practice programs as part of their initiatives. Students will learn how community managers do their jobs successfully through applying proven practices for creating and cultivating communities. The course exposes students to the fundamental concepts and principles of communities of practice and includes real life case studies. Students will complete a course project pertaining to community of practice evaluation.

Others: Social Work, Education, Discipline-specific

References

- Garfield, S. (2020). *Handbook of Community Management: A Guide to Leading Communities of Practice.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.
- Garfield, S. (2017, December 30). *How to Start and Lead Communities of Practice*. https://stangarfield.medium.com/how-to-start-lead-communities-of-practice-f2944b22ef56.
- Garfield, S. (2014, June 30). *Communities Manifesto: 10 Principles for Successful Communities*. LinkedIn Post. https://www.linkedin/pulse/20140630211036-2500783-communities-manifesto-10-principles-for-successful-communities/.
- Milton, N. (2022, July 25). LinkedIn Post.
- Mohan, M. (2007, March 17). *The Ten Step Checklist for Starting Your Community*. https://bestengagingcommunities.com/2007/03/17/the-ten-step-checklist-for-starting-your-community-from-my-future-of-communities-blog/.
- Nickols, F. (2012). *Characteristics of A Community of Practice (CoP)*. https://www.nickols.us/CoPcharacteristics.



Thank You

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Internal Communities of Practice

Presented by Richard Huffine, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)



Outline

- Reasons and Goals
- Types
- Platforms Used
- Challenges



Goals and Reasons for Internal CoPs

User Engagement

- Goes beyond help desks, email announcements, and periodic training
- Supports community members answering one another's questions
- Can be a great way to gather use case examples

Knowledge Transfer

- Providing a casual forum for asking questions, seeking advice, sharing updates
- Can be hosted by a product owner, sponsoring office, Center of Excellence, etc.

Transparency

Better than a web site for sharing documentation, recorded training, etc.

Goals and Reasons for Internal CoPs

Valuable connections for:

- Sponsoring organizations looking to engage practitioners/users
- Subject Matter Expert(s)
- Staff developing their skills
- Onboarding new practitioners



Internal CoP Types

Functional

- Practitioners of a specific function
- Users of a specific system
- Stakeholders in a specific topic or issue

Organizational

Voluntary contributors that come together to support a mission or goal

Collegial

- Colleagues that have enjoyed working together
- Alumni of a training program

Internal CoP Platforms

Microsoft Teams

Slack

Yammer

SharePoint

Confluence

In addition to these platforms, CoPs can be conducted manually through a coordinator or community manager.

Internal CoP Challenges

Mandate

 A successful CoP needs a compelling call to action for participants but it cannot become mandatory – if it does, it ceases to be a CoP

Burnout

- CoPs can wax and wain, depending on the passion or interest in their topic
- Community Managers can manage this with discussion prompts, varying engagement approaches, and reinforcing the reason for the Community periodically

Time

A lot of employees today struggle to have time to participate in CoPs



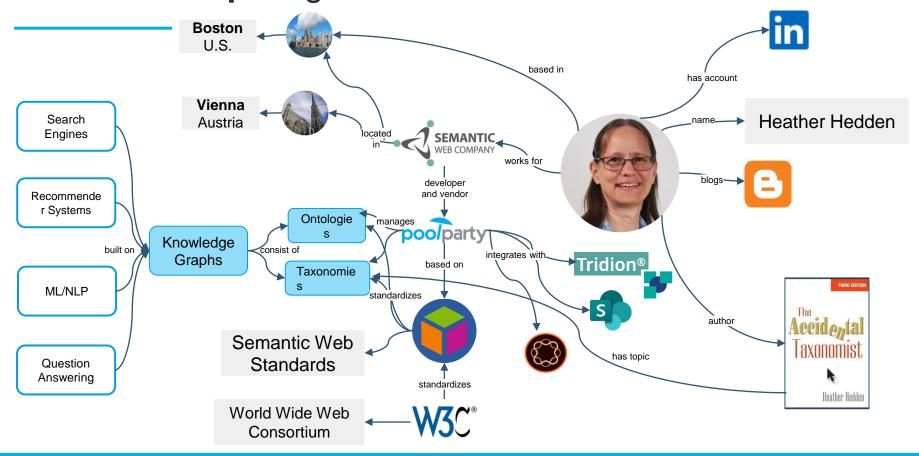
External Communities of Practice (CoPs)

KMWorld Conference November 8, 2023



Click the Graph—get in contact with us!





Outline



- External CoP goals
- External CoP types and examples
 - Company or industry-leader led, with external members
 - Company-led for its customers
 - Professional membership association groups
 - Open, volunteer-based
- CoP platforms used
- External CoP challenges

Goals and Reasons for External CoPs



External knowledge management from "a network of people ... across multiple organisations"

- Knowledge acquisition and sharing
 - Learn ideas and best practices from beyond one's organization to improve one's work and that of one's organization.
 - Learn about new tools and technologies.
- Networking
 - Connect with professionals in the field (for ideas,
 opportunities, job referrals, conference speaking, publishing, etc.)
 - Find local contacts for in-person meetups
 - Connect internationally for global perspectives

Goals and Reasons for External CoPs



Valuable connections for individual professionals

- Knowledge workers who are the only or one of a few professionals in their field at their employer:
 - knowledge managers, taxonomists, information architects, search specialists, linguists, corporate librarians, etc.
- Remote employees
- Employees of small companies
- Independent contractors, freelancers
- Those transitioning to a new professional field

External CoP Types



- 1. Company or industry-leader led communities, with external members
- 2. Company-led communities for their customers
- 3. Professional membership association-based "special interest groups"
- 4. Open, volunteer-led communities





1. Company or industry-leader led, with external members

- May be organized by company or an industry leader with employer approval
- Mix of internal and external members, but more external
- To obtain knowledge from a wider group
- Often around technology type, set of technologies, common product platform
- Focus is more on periodic live web meetings, with guest speakers or moderated discussions on a theme, than a discussion group
- Examples with monthly online meetings:
 - Estes Park Group knowledge graphs and data centric architecture
 - Semantic Content Graph Guild knowledge graphs and semantics
 - RWS Taxonomy Task Force Meeting content management taxonomies





HOME

ABOUT US

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

PROBLEMS WE SOLVE

GIST ONTOLOGY

CONTACT US

Events

Events Hosted by Semantic Arts

Estes Park Group

Monthly | Virtual

Semantic Arts' Estes Park Group is a monthly online presentation and discussion forum on knowledge graph and data-centric architecture (DCA) trends. SA President Dave McComb first brought the Group together in person in 2017 for a weekend retreat in Estes Park. Colorado, thus the name.

Check out Previous Meetings

Interested in Joining?

Name (Required)

First

Last

Email (Required)

Company (Required)

SUBMIT

Example:

Estes Park Group

Hosted by Dave McComb, president of the consulting company Semantic Arts

https://lp.constantcontact pages.com/su/2oTGVsK

Post your ideas for graph-powered content applications here

ANNOUNCEMENTS





LAST POST

by FirstLight 🛭

1739

Semantic Content Graph Guild

Hosted by Michael lantosca, Senior Director of Content Platforms, Avalara

https://thinkingdocs.com

Calendar of Events by FirstLight » Tue Jun 21, 2022 7:22 am	0	821	by FirstLight (Tue Jun 21, 20)	
SCGG Zoom Meeting Recordings by FirstLight » Fri Apr 22, 2022 5:12 pm	0	1204	by FirstLight I Fri Apr 22, 202	
<i>i</i> Discussion forum rules by FirstLight » Mon Feb 28, 2022 1:53 pm	0	753	by FirstLight ! Mon Feb 28, 20	
Kickoff Meeting Announcement by FirstLight » Sun Feb 27, 2022 9:18 am	0	830	by FirstLight (Sun Feb 27, 20	
TODICS	DEDI IES	VIEWS	LAST BOST	h

V	by FirstLight » Mon Feb 28, 2022 1:36 pm	Ŭ	1,00	Tue Jan 24, 2023 9:41 am	
•	Post your learning resources and refrences here by FirstLight » Mon Feb 28, 2022 1:42 pm	9	1191	by FirstLight Thu May 26, 2022 12:42 pm	
•	Semantic technoogy tools and technology by FirstLight » Mon Feb 28, 2022 1:48 pm	4	692	by FirstLight Sat Apr 30, 2022 9:21 am	
•	Post your burning questions about ontologies and knowlege graphs here by FirstLight » Mon Feb 28, 2022 1:32 pm	5	885	by FirstLight Fri Apr 22, 2022 10:39 am	
•	Vendor Forum by FirstLight » Wed Mar 02, 2022 10:34 am	0	748	by FirstLight Wed Mar 02, 2022 10:34 am	
1	Generative AI/LLM Test: DITA vs. Unstructured Content by ClaudetteH » Thu Jun 22, 2023 9:20 am	0	268	by ClaudetteH ☑ Thu Jun 22, 2023 9:20 am	
	CMS Enabement for Graph-driven content	1	498	by JohnO 🔼	

REPLIES



2. Company-led community for its customers, as a user community

- Often for business/engineering software that requires expertise to use well
- Not for just quick-how to answers, but for use case examples and best practices

ChatGPT: **A software customer user community** is a platform where users of a specific software product can come together to share knowledge, ask questions, provide feedback, and engage in discussions. This collaborative space can be beneficial for both users and the software provider.

Benefits:

- Know individual customers better which can be promoters, which are at risk
- Know use cases better for sales and marketing messages
- Get ideas for product improvements and enhancements
- Customers answering each others' questions contribute to knowledge base.



Company-led example:

Semantic Web Company's PoolParty software user community

- Reason and justifications for time/effort/cost
 - Service to customers, also offered by our competitors
 - Let customers answer questions to reduce our technical support tickets
 - Better understand customers to improve our product and services
 - Better understand the market for messaging
- Whom to include in the community
 - Customer contacts (users, technical contacts, business contacts)
 - Partner contacts
 - Semantic Web Company employees (of Sales, Marketing, Professional Services, Customer Support, Software Development, upper management)
 - Prospects who are doing product trial





- 3. Professional membership association-based "special interest groups," "divisions," or "communities"
 - Technically supported by the parent organization
 - For some, the special interest group is more important than the parent
 - May be more of a community of interest

Companies in the industry should have employees as members who can monitor the discussions and posted resources for trends, tips, best practices, competitor intelligence, and knowledge resources.



CONNECT



Community Home

Discussion 499

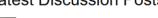
Library 20

Events 0

Members

This is a link to the KM Community website

Latest Discussion Posts Add





Community Forum on 11th Sept

Posted for Deb Hunt We are hosting the Community Forum on 11 th Sept. https://www.pathlms.com/sla/courses/50423/webinars/33930 SLA September 2023 Community Leader Forum | SLA Learning Hub SLA wants to continue to exceed new levels



RE: Looming KM Certification

By: Guillermo Galdamez, 2 months ago

Hi Jaye! I know small local NGOs and other civic organizations generally welcome the help of students in the KM space. When I was doing my Master's we usually did work with local NGOs, and sometimes different offices/groups in the university. ...



RE: Looming KM Certification

By: Kendra Albright, 2 months ago

Hi Jaye, Kent State University has both a certificate program and a Master of Science (M.S.) in Knowledge Management. The M.S. requires a research paper or project as their capstone experience. Papers and projects run from designing and developing

Community Ad Builder



Q

Latest Shared Files

Create a Library Entry This Library has no recent entries. Add a file or multimedia through a new Library Entry.

Professional association community of practice example:

SLA (Special Libraries Association) Knowledge Management Communitv



RE: ChatGPT/Generative AI integration into corporate/university ...

By: Jaye Lapachet, 2 months ago

One of the projects people on my team run is developing a LLM that produces

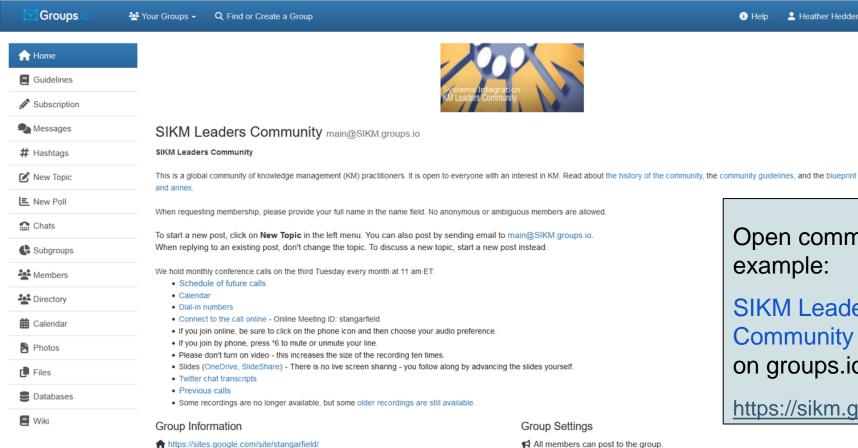


4. Open volunteer-based community

- Led by volunteers, one or a small number
- May be charter-based
- Free (no membership dues), but no budget
- Could be a web/email discussion group or a Meetup.com group
- Focus tends to be on the discussion group

Examples

- SIKM (Systems Integration KM) Leaders Community
- Knowledge Graph Conference (KGC)
- Taxonomy Talk group





party_®

Open community example:

🙎 Heather Hedden 🕶

SIKM Leaders Community on groups.io

https://sikm.groups.io

1.204 Members

2,202 Topics , Last Post: Oct 28

Started on 08/12/05

Group Email Addresses

Post: main@SIKM.groups.io

Cubacriba: main taubacriba@CIKM groups is

All members can post to the group.

Posts to this group do not require approval from the moderators.

Messages are set to reply to group.

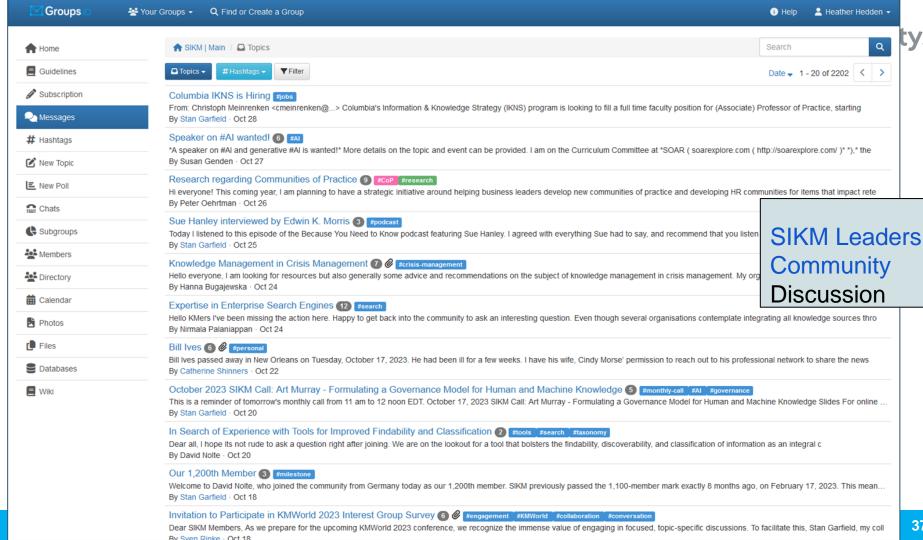
Subscriptions to this group require approval from the moderators.

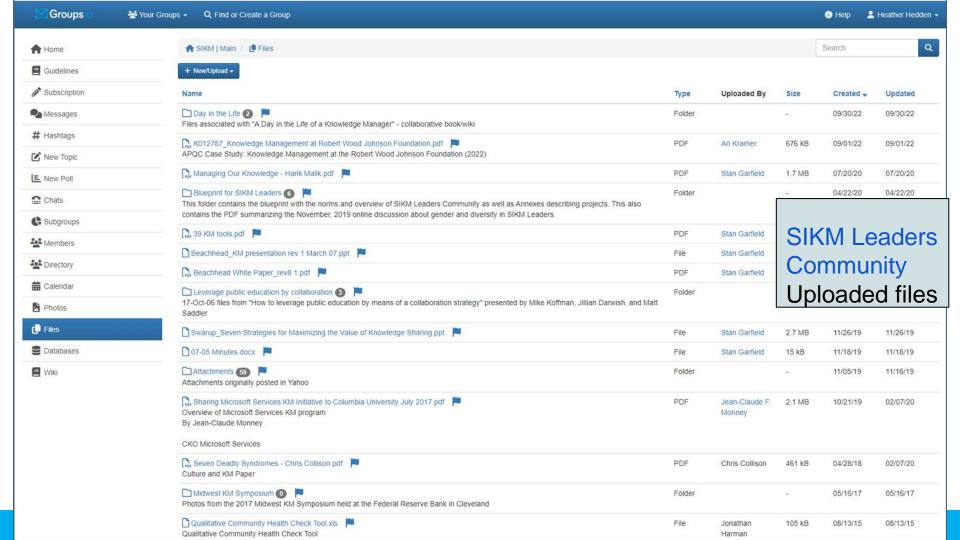
Archive is visible to anyone.

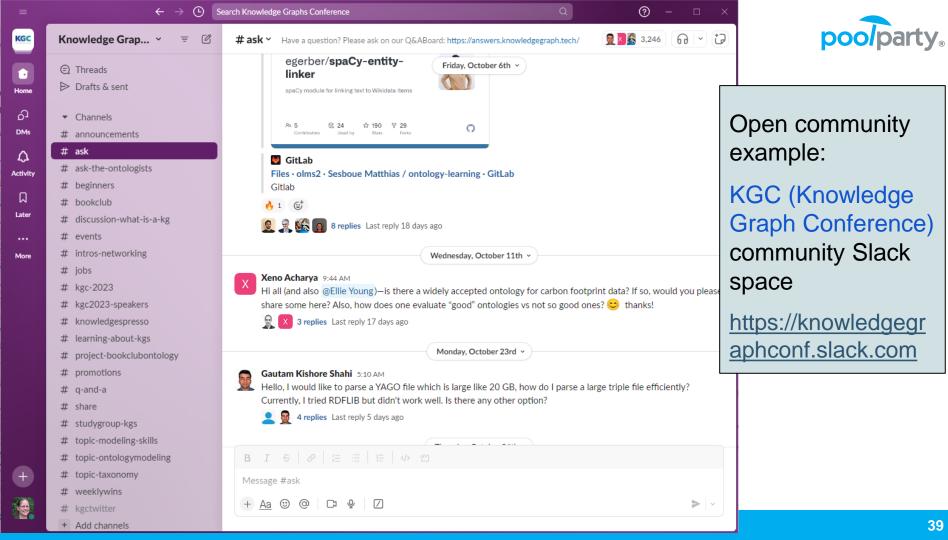
Group Settings

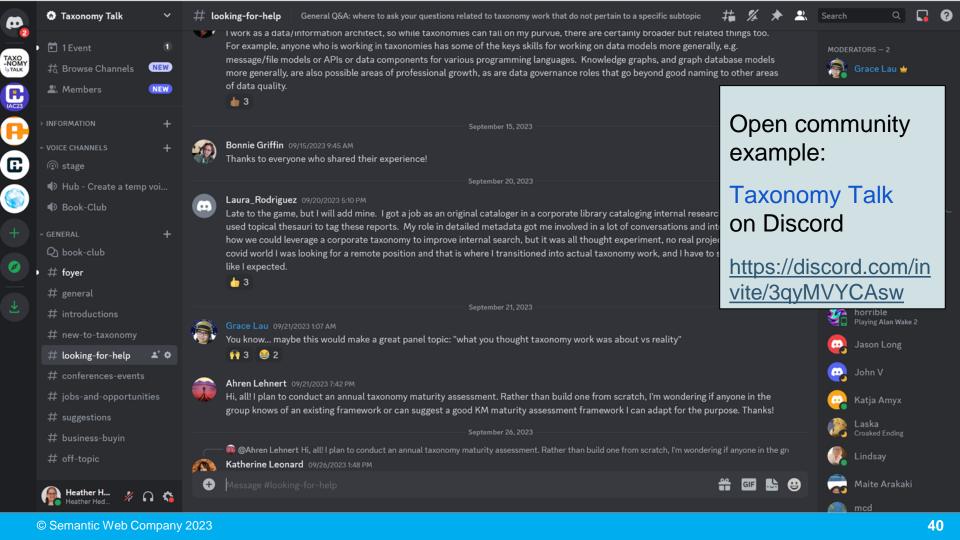
Wiki is visible to members only.

Members can edit their messages.









External





Taxonomy Talk: Organizational Charter

V.0.5 Major revision, Date: 20220601

Why Are We Doing This?	2
Who Does This Community Serve?	2
What Do We Hope This Community Will Achieve?	3
What Do We Hope Growth/Success Looks Like?	3
Governance	3
Values	4
Rules and Guidelines	4
Experience	5

Why Are We Doing This?

What is the purpose of Taxonomy Talk? What gaps in existing communities are we trying to fill?

- Taxonomists have no single association to meet and build community outside of some specialized and industry-specific sub-organizations.
- Fragmented communities of taxonomy practitioners have no centralized point of contact to gather, ask questions, and share ideas, resources, job postings, and practices.
- Company-, platform-, and special interest-agnostic forums are rare. We seek to build just such an agnostic forum.

duce restrictions, membership requirements, and other exclusionary and prohibitive

such an agnostic forum.

Participants don't have to join a formal membership organization, which often include

Open community example:

Taxonomy Talk on Discord

Has a charter written by the founder-moderators with guidelines

External CoP Platforms



- Membership-based organizations and company hosted groups tend to use commercial software.
 - Website comparing commercial software Captera lists 387 "community software" applications. www.capterra.com/community-software
- Volunteer-based groups, with no budget, use free platforms (either open source or the free limited-feature version of commercial software).
 - Groups.io groups.io
 - phpBB <u>www.phpbb.com</u>
 - Discord <u>discord.com</u>
 - Slack <u>slack.com</u> free version (with data storage limits, so old messages get deleted)
- Other commercial platforms with groups (Google Groups, LinkedIn groups, previously Yahoo groups) have hesitant users, detractors.

External CoP Platforms



Semantic Web Company's PoolParty software user community platform criteria

- Integrates with our customer relationship management (CRM)
- Low-cost or free license and integration
- Easy to use/familiar to our customers, who don't want to learn yet another platform

Chose Slack, free plan, where messages older than 90 days are hidden 💤 SICK



- Already used by many of our customers, either at their employers or external groups/conference (such as KGC, LavaCon, Data Day Texas)
- We want it to be used a discussion forum, not a knowledge base
 - We can monitor and mine information for a separate knowledge base
 - Discussion threads usually do not last longer than 90 days.
- Our Marketing Automation Manager can build the integration with an API

External CoP Challenges



- Members reluctant to pose questions or post answers, that might compromise their employer's intellectual property
- Not knowing who users are who don't use their full real names
- Systematically and effectively collecting knowledge from discussions
- Moderator or leader losing interest, focus, or time
- Shifting area of interest or focus (especially in open communities)

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THANK YOU!