

Herat University Open Source Community:

Goals and Policies

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Abstract

This paper was written to describe the importance and roles of Goals and policies in HOUc, we first started to research about a goal's and a policy's theoretical background, in this part we studied about what is a goal, what goals should a community have and what is the importance of goals in communities, what is a policy, impacts of policies on communities, and what should be the policies of an open source community. Then after reaching to a complete understanding about goals and policies, we started setting HOUc goals and policies that could easily prove the importance of Goals and policies, and these goals were set according to our needs and the current situation. In this part we described the significance of our short term goals and long term goals in which we mentioned expanding the community, promoting open source software, getting external projects, communication and creating a learning environment, Different policy which applied on members, projects, and meeting attendance policies. Over all as a result, we first studied goals and policies, then we set our goals and policies according our needs and policies.

Introduction

Goals and policies are one of the most important aspects of a community, surely a community without goals and policies will not function well. Having both of them at the same time is necessary because they complete each other, goals are targets and policies are tools for achieving them.

So as an open source community we really saw the need to create goals and policies for our community, because we thought if we wanted to have a successful community, we should have clear goals and sharp policies. So the purpose of this paper is to study different aspects of goals and policies and as a result set sharp policies and clear goals for HUOC community. After some research our community knew that every community needs goals and policies to sustain and progress better, so we decided to focus on creating a number of goals and policies which help us achieve our main goals and sustain the HUOC in long term. These goals and policies do not focus on specific persons or groups but rather on whole community, these goals and policies defined our community's purpose and how we want to achieve them.

Goals

What is a goal?

Goal is a common term that can be used to "achieve something in life of human beings. We commonly use the terms like aim, target, and objective as synonyms for goal, but academics have different distinct meanings for all these words.

Goals are something that you want to achieve over a time period. Each person's goals during life may be completely different to the goals of other people. Goals depend on your own interests, needs and wants. [1]

There Are Three Kinds of Goals: Short-term, Medium-term And Long-term Goals.

Short-term goals

are those that usually deal with current activities, which we can apply on a daily basis. Such goals can be achieved in a week or less, or two weeks, or possibly months. Our long-term goals cannot amount to very much without the achievement of solid short-term goals.

The medium-term goals

build on the foundation of the short-term goals. They might deal with just one term of school or the entire school year, or they could even extend for several years. Any time you move a step at a time, you should never allow yourself to become discouraged or overwhelmed . As you complete each step, you will enforce the belief in your ability to grow and succeed. And as your list of completion dates grow, your motivation and desire will increase.

Long-term goals

may be related to our dreams of the future. They might cover five years or more. Life is not a static thing. We should never allow a long-term goal to limit us or our course of action [2].

“Over all Goals represent expectations, hopes and dreams, and to the extent our goals are achieved, we are successful.”

By Bruce Wares

The goals of a community:

- Gauge the health of their communities.
- Determine what parts of their communities are functioning well and which are underperforming.
- Learn how to meet the needs of different types of participants, and in the process, how to attract and retain more of them.
- Track and report what is happening to their communities over time, including content, activities, and technical needs.
- Demonstrate the impact of the community on attitudes, on practice, and on student learning.
- Compare their communities to others reaching the same or similar audiences.
- Make a better objective case of value for funders and sponsors.
- The community is serving its intended purpose and audience.
- Knowledge is shared around a domain and related practice emerging.
- Members’ interactions have continuity and depth. (Are members engaged in productive, ongoing, interactions?)
- Collaborative activities are emerging.
- Documents, tools, resources, or other artifacts are created and utilized. (How are these useful to the members?)
- The community provides value for its sponsors.

- Participants' involvement in the community affects their professional practices and student learning. (This question goes beyond improving the community functioning to its external impact, so is generally not addressed until there is evidence that participants are actively engaged in the community's resources, activities, and interactions.)^[3]
- Enable graduates who grow into leadership positions in industry knowing the heartbeat of society better, so that decisions made will not be based merely on the bottom-line but with integrity toward society and the environment.
- Acquaint students with career and professional-skill-volunteering possibilities in the nonprofit sector.
- Enable undergraduates to develop qualities such as confidence, compassion and self-reliance.
- Enable students to explore and acquire new skills, interests and knowledge. Provide opportunities for students to exercise creativity, organization, teamwork and leadership skills.^[4]

Why a community should have goals?

Goals are the most powerful driving force in a community. When you stop setting goals, you stop improving all of the amazing rewards for your community, they allowed us to look beyond our temporary hardships and set-backs, and allowed us to start focusing on a greater community.

When goals are compatible there is a positive effect, but when goals are incompatible the effects can be detrimental to the group's performance. making the goals demanding; they stretch you ensuring the goals are specific; you are clear what you want to achieve.

"Many communities fail, not for lack of ability or brains or even courage but simply because they have never organized their energies around a goal."

Community leaders and key members can use the information gleaned from various evaluation approaches to cultivate and successfully sustain their communities of practice in a variety of ways. Good evaluation can save community leaders time, help gain additional resources for their work, help allocate time and other resources most effectively, and, most

important, enable the community to better engage members and provide resources and activities that best meet their needs, for guidance on important ideas and aspects .

- Goals bring us Unity and Focus.
- Goals allow us to Measure Progress.
- Goals give us Barriers.
- Goals help you Overcome Procrastination.
- Goals give us Motivation.

Written by Osman Hameed . [5]

What goals can be best for an open source community?

Overcoming common misunderstandings about open source sharing what works - and what doesn't -in growing and sustaining your community collaborating effectively in improving shared code bases navigating the waters of choosing a standard license making more effective use of ever-scarcer resources tackling challenges that seem to be unique to your project/culture/geography creating successful open collaboration between industry, academic, non-profit and government groups.

Standard open source community's goals

In developing community goals and objectives, it is important to analyze existing community characteristics, such as: social and economic features, environmental resources, available services and facilities. In addition to examining existing characteristics, another important tool in the development of community goals and objectives is to identify community assets, problems and other issues to be addressed.

For too long, community sustainability has been a nebulous concept with competing definitions and frameworks. There has never been a national standard by which to measure sustainability performance (e.g., economic prosperity, health and safety, climate protection, etc.) at the municipal or county scale.

Establishing these Goals and Guiding Principles is the first giant step toward addressing this critical need, and giving local governments the tools to accelerate their efforts and achieve greater success. This milestone is the product of thousands of volunteer hours, and the engagement of more than 160 sustainability experts and stakeholders from broad disciplines using a collaborative and consensus-based process, drawn from government, the nonprofit and private sectors, and academia.

Herat University open source community's goals

After studying about what is a goal and different other subjects about goals, it is time to set goals for HUOC community, and we categorize these goals in short term and long term goals.

Short term goals

Attracting members:

One of our short term goals is to attract members toward our community. Whereas in the previous paper we mentioned the requirements of joining to our community and here we will discuss on attracting members to our open source community. A successful and strong community often put its attention in attracting members by using standardized roles.

With good and clear announcements and clear introduction and presentation of community by skilled people with a powerful presentment can have good effects on attracting new members to our community. The current members and achievements of a community can have a significant role in attracting new members because a successful community determines by its skilled and experienced members and valuable achievements. Putting awards for those members that add beneficial factors to our community and be active members of it can have effects on attracting new members to community.

Also if our community acts like a community that has obtained many grant from different organization for distributing operational free software's or customized software with new operational features can have an important role in attracting members.

If a Community manager attend conferences and meet-ups among same-interest groups, so this community can raise awareness and bring in new members.

Customizing simple software:

Another short term goal of this community, as we said in previous paper that we have four important parts (customizing software, promotion, study groups, projects), is simple software customization. This will make it a strong community by customizing open source software with new modifications and allowing others to distribute and use it with new features added by us.

In this way our goal is to research on people needs in using software's and extending a modified software that meets all of their needs with its new operations and facilities. Developing and distributing customized software's defines a community as an active community with high level performance.

This helps in having a user preferred OS environment with all their favorite software's installed conveniently as soon as they perform a fresh install. Users need not worry about setting up all the programs again (at least installation part) when they shift to a newer release or reinstallation.

Nationalization:

Another goal of us is to nationalize our community among all provinces of our country by publishing our announcements and results on our website. We can implement it by using computed and predicated ways on how to nationalize our community.

It is usual that if a community can become a famous community in a short time it can be a nationalized community and all of the people around the country will be informed of this as soon as possible by its awesome creativities and grants.

Long terms goals

Communicating with other communities:

Our first line of communication with the media or other community members can be through the Internet or the Web. We design our website so that I can get through the website concept or idea to share with others.

The second step of our activities after the work we've done, then we can upload our activities to the web site so others can understand by reading it from our web page and know about us. After that we can search the other communities and email them and show them our web site that they study our web page and then communicate with us .

Working on external projects:

The first step in this subject is our activities because activity is that strengthen the background or an organ of the Society omit a reference. After introducing in the society or getting some credit we can have some project and work with them.

At first we should consider the problem of social problems that our society has and then get a solution for that, then we should have some solution for that and create some software and introduce our software to the people and convince them to use our software. Our duty should have quality and by quality of our work or task we can have a chance to get some projects and we can work with big projects by abilities and good management.

The first project can be very simple like creating a learning program for schools, a program for clinics and hospitals and also some other programs for other application programs for some duties. Then we can introduce the program for those centers and convince them to use our program and to introduce us in the society.

Software development :

First step is to customize some useful programs, at first we should localize and translate some useful programs. We should use the very basic and simple programs.

Also we should have some programmers that know some programming language like C, C# ... and can use some other programming tools, and should have some educational person to know about the grammatical concept of the local language to customize the packages of the software in localized step. Then we should extend some program by adding some useful tools and then we should customize the OS and after that start the creating a program.

Create a learning environment:

For creating a learning environment at first should have knowledge about the subject that want to learn them. Second should choose a good and educated teacher for learning, have some teaching materials for the members and have a place for teaching room.

And another step is to have a learning page in our website for online learning with a simple interface and we should upload the some learning topics and learning videos.

Promoting open source software:

as we said in previous paper the ways of promoting at first we convince the government to let us organize seminar at schools, university or in some government organization to convince them to use the open source instead of close source and we develop some small software for them for free to motivate them.

Globalization:

With globalization we mean how to globalize our community and it is one of our long term goals. That we well do this with communicating with other communities across the globe. It well help us carry out our tasks better.

Establishing Priorities:

In order to best set the priorities for our goals, our community should collect the information about each one of the goals.

- Does this address something in our mission or vision statements?
- How does it fit with our general goals?
- How do we fill the need?
- What is the strategy for doing this?
- What is the best practice for addressing this issue?
- What resources would be necessary to realizing this need?
- Who would work on this project?
- How much time would need to be dedicated to it?
- Is fulfilling this need an urgent matter?
- What would be the effect on the community if this need was not met?
- Is it feasible to achieve this goal according to present skills and resources?

Once we have done this exercise for each goal articulated, our team can determine the best method for making choices about which goals to take on.

However we decide to address the needs and decision-making process, it will be very important to do this work as a team and with the mission of our efforts in the forefront. The number of and the area of issues we choose to address should depend on the time, resources and goals of our collaboration as well as the needs of our community.

Policy

Definition:

At its most basic, policy is “a course or principle of action, adopted or proposed by a government, party, business or individual [6]. policies are principles, rules, and guidelines formulated or adopted by an organization to reach its long-term goals.

Policies are designed to influence and determine all major decisions and actions, and all activities take place within the boundaries set by them[7]. So basically policies are tools and means that by following them help us achieve our organizational or community goals.

Impact of policies on a community

When we talk of impacts, they can be both bad and good and this is no different in a community. The creation and utilization of policies are crucial to a community because good and bad policies can affect communities in different ways. Policies can determine decisions, actions and outcomes. Bad policies can cause bad decision, bad actions and as a result a tragic outcome that may threaten the very existence of a community.

But good policies on the contrary can cause a community to grow and develop, because good policies cause the accomplishment of long term goals in a community, the accomplishment of long term goals shows fertility and effectiveness of a community which causes further accomplishments and developments in a community.

So in short we can determine that good policies in a community cause the following [8]:

- Better community quality.
- Better coordination.
- Responsive and responsible decision making.
- Non-discrimination.
- Accomplishment of goals.
- Further developments.
- Better discipline.

Best policies/ practices for an open source communities

There are a set of practices that are best for an open source community. An open source community should have policies in different parts Regarding different factors that exist in a community as shown in following:

1. **Users:** a good community should have policies regarding its products, an open source community should make it clear who can use and who cannot use their software, and how?

For example the community should be ensuring that the certain company is in agreement about how to use their open source software [9].

2. **Contributors/members:** every community should have clear and unambiguous policies regarding managing and getting the best work from its members.
3. **Projects:** an open source community should have policies regarding the management of their projects, for example who works on the projects and who can work on them, under which conditions and why?
4. **Share:** share of knowledge among members

Standard open source community's policies

What policies do most standard open source communities use?

Well this is a very hard question to answer, because every community works and operates differently according to its goals, and according to that sets the best policies that can best serve its purposes.

But there are a few policies that most open source communities might share.

Promoting open source software:

A universal access via free license to a product's design or blueprint.

Distribution:

universal redistribution of a design or blueprint, including subsequent improvements to it by anyone

Education:

Education is essential to every community's growth, and open source is no exception, Open source communities educate their members and this is done as an act of a policy.

Members:

every open source community has policies regarding their members.

- how do they manage their members?
- Who manages them?
- How to promote them?
- How to downgrade them?
- Who can start a project and under which conditions?

This management causes the members to take their work and the community serious and as a result causes the work load to be done on time and effectively.

Projects:

open source communities have a set of policies and procedures on their projects too. Their policies clarify:

- what type of projects they can work on?
- who can work on which projects and what they should do to complete the projects?

For example regular meetings between the project stakeholders can be a good policy.

Communication:

Setting up a mailing list:

An open collaboration needs a relatively low barrier to entry communication method that is [10]:

1. Open to all to read
2. Open to many to write to
3. Subscribable
4. Openly archived

Improve infrastructure:

The community keeps finding and building tools, processes that can help the community carry out its job [11].

Share:

members share their knowledge among each other

Policy applied to member

This part is about policies that are applied to all members (senior, junior) without any discrimination, in this parts we want to describe how a member can promote and how it can downgrade. And this process will happen in every 6 months.

Promotion:

Promotion progress is based on achieving points that we have decided for each activity.

The activity points are as following

- Being present more than 85% in attendance and meetings have 8 points.
- writing a new article for website has 6 points.
- Presenting a seminar has 6 points.
- Getting a responsibility and fulfilling the task has 12 points.

Points are given by the senior members.

Promoting from junior to senior must achieve 28 points.

Downgrading:

If seniors don't do their tasks they will downgrade as a junior member, if they can't achieve the target point which is 21 points.

Policies applied to projects:

This part is about how we manage our projects via our policies. For every project we have a contract that describes about benefits, budget (if it has) and we are going to choose best person for best jobs like we said in previous paper, dividing them based on their skills.

In contract we also mention the deadline of the project and it must to be finish on time. For beginning we choose the appropriate projects (simple) based on community members skills.

Meeting policy

1. Meetings take place at least 2 times a month.
2. Inviting members of the "board" should be done at least 4 days before the meeting
3. The main organ for official meetings at least two-thirds affirmative vote of the majority, it is necessary approvals of this number
4. General Assembly at the request of a majority of board members and request a third member Takes place
5. Decisions of the General Assembly by a two-thirds vote of the members present at the meeting shall be.
6. Each member has one vote in the General Assembly Elections

Mutual respect

1. Have an active community, and the software is free friendly.
2. Communication and collaboration with other groups and organizations active in the field of free software and free software as part of a global community.
3. Trying to maintain organizational unity while respecting diversity of opinions.
4. Discipline and prudent and honest duty and responsibility that has been delegated.

This policy means that there is a friendly space in our community and members have collaborate to each other.

Conclusion

After writing this paper, going through so many subjects from knowing what is a goal or a policy to actually setting our own goals and policies, we found out that a community can never be successful without goals and policies.

So we conclude that it was really hard to set good goals and policies, but it is not impossible, with great effort we can have the best goals and policies for us, but till now we did all we could, and think we have set really important goals and policies, because we first need to accomplish these if we want to be a successful community. As a solution HUOC will implement these goals and policies for having a better community.

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