

What's the Password Again?

Distributed Software and Cooperatives

Alli Nilles

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- How *could* we use software?

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3. Future Visioning / Planning

- How *could* we use software?
- What needs to be done? How can we help to make co-ops more efficient and effective?

Overview of Technologies

What is Technology?



What is Technology?

“technology includes all tools, machines, utensils, weapons, instruments, housing, clothing, communicating and transporting devices and the skills by which we produce and use them” – Read Bain, sociologist

Cooperative Technology - What is it?

- signage



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- signage
- dinner bell



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- filing cabinet



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Cooperative Technology - What is it?

- signage
- dinner bell
- filing cabinet
- group messaging apps
- meeting rules / Robert's Rules of Order



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- Scheduling, voting (when not all parties can be in the same place)

Most Important Takeaway

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“the revolution will not be televised...” or on your smartphone

Discussion

What technologies does your co-op use for
**decisionmaking, document sharing, and
bookkeeping?**

When do these work well, and when are they
frustrating?

Remember, technologies include things like rules for running
meetings, written notes, signs, as well as computerized
technologies.

Free and Open Source Software

Why Care About Open Source?

```
def my_program(input):
    calculate the thing
    output "useful information" →
    save "file_for_later.txt"
```

0001010101010101
1010101010111110
0101010101011111

“Free and Open Source Software” Principles

“the freedom to use, study, copy, modify, and redistribute computer software”

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Open source software is continually improved - bugs can be fixed by anyone, not just developers working for company

Relevant Rochdale Principles

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 - requires transparent and equal access to economic process
- autonomy and independence
 - “Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations... they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.”

Case Study: Quickbooks Online

From Intuit's Terms of Service:

"Note that we may modify the **amount of storage space** you have through the Services and the **number of times** (and the maximum duration for which) you may access the Services in a given period of time... Your continued use of the Services will constitute your acceptance of and agreement to such changes."

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What if Intuit goes out of business? Or decides to double prices? Or their servers are hacked and data is stolen/deleted? Users have no recourse.

convenience vs. control

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“just call the landlord” vs. self-management

Decentralized Software

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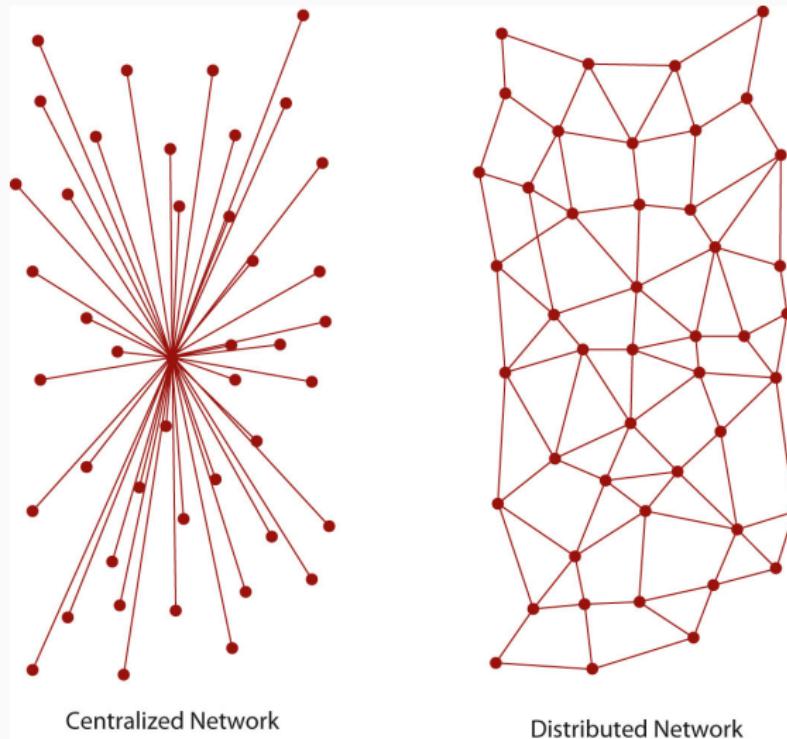


Figure 1: Figure from *Understanding Media and Culture: An Introduction to Mass Communication*

Advantages

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Can use for documents, distributed ledgers (everyone keeps track of everyone's transactions), etc

Examples of Co-op Software and Alternatives

Google Docs

Each document is “owned” by one Google account. This account can change sharing settings, delete the document, etc. Google can lock people out of docs if they violate Terms of Service.

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Best Practices:

- Make a Google account for each “coordinator,” then pass these accounts between people as members change roles

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Best Practices:

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- Save local backups / use Chrome “offline” extension

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Can use GitHub (semi-centralized solution) for better interfaces, hosting wikis, etc.

Alternative: wikis

Not logged in [Talk](#) [Contributions](#) [Create account](#) [Log in](#)

Article [Talk](#) Read [Edit](#) [View history](#) [Q](#)

LocalWiki

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

LocalWiki is a collaborative project that aims to collect and open the world's local knowledge. The LocalWiki project was founded by [DavisWiki](#) creators Mike Ivanov and Philip Neustrom^[1] and is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization^[2] based in San Francisco, California.^[3] LocalWiki is both the name of the project and the software that runs the project's websites.

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LocalWiki

 localwiki
Original author(s) <i>Michael Ivanov, Philip Neustrom</i>
Developer(s) LocalWiki
Stable release v0.5.5 ^②
Preview release Master ^③
Development status Active
Written in Python
Website LocalWiki

Loomio

- centralized tool for decentralized organizations
- open source, co-op run
- integrated collection of tools for voting on proposals, scheduling meetings, polling groups

loomio.org



Platform Co-op

Resource for starting and finding co-ops with digital platforms (ride sharing, journalism, finance, data management, etc)

platform.coop

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- Basic idea behind bitcoin (though 96% of bitcoin is owned by 4% of the network - not exactly decentralized)
- Ideas could be useful for tracking internal transactions in co-ops (not just money: hours worked, task assignments, etc)

A Plea

talk about software - **criticize it** - do not treat it as fixed

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consider creating space in your organizations for dedicated
“software coordinators”

Discussion

What do we want computers to do for us? What can “software coordinators” do for co-ops?

What are the **obstacles** to changing technologies?
Which of these obstacles are **actionable**?