

Communities of Practice: turning conversations into collaboration

January 2009
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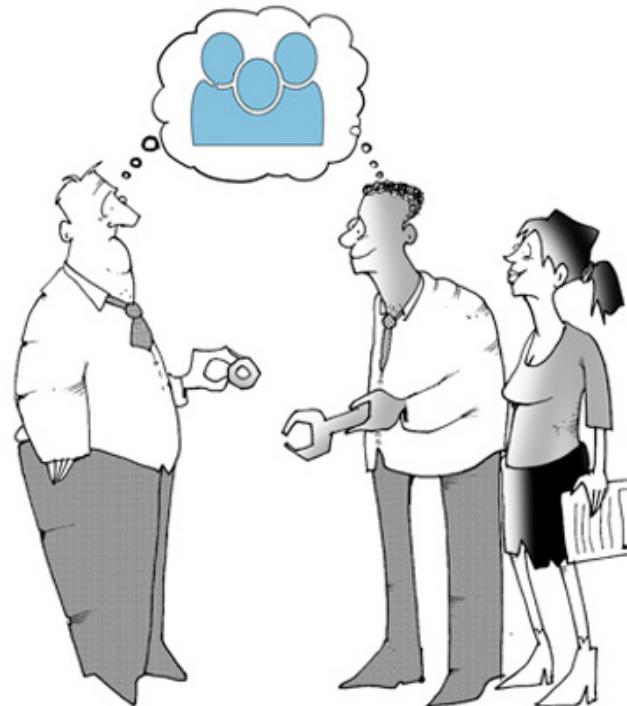
What I will cover

- What is a ‘Community of Practice’ (CoP)?
- Five steps to a successful CoP
- CoP Facilitation – the magic ingredient
- Case Study - IDeA CoP Project
- Case Study from the private sector

What is a Community of Practice?

Communities of Practice

communities of practice – an environment connecting people and encouraging the sharing of ideas and experiences



A community



A domain of interest

Gosport Allotment
Holders & Gardeners
Association



A place to meet



Someone to facilitate



VIEWIMAGES



A community of practice

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.co.uk

Communities of Practice

A Community of Practice is a network of individuals with common problems or interests who get together to explore ways of working, identify common solutions, and share good practice and ideas.



- puts you in touch with **like-minded colleagues and peers**
- allows you to **share your experiences** and **learn** from others
- allows you to **collaborate** and achieve **common outcomes**
- accelerates your **learning**
- **validates** and **builds** on **existing knowledge** and good practice
- provides the opportunity to **innovate** and create **new ideas**

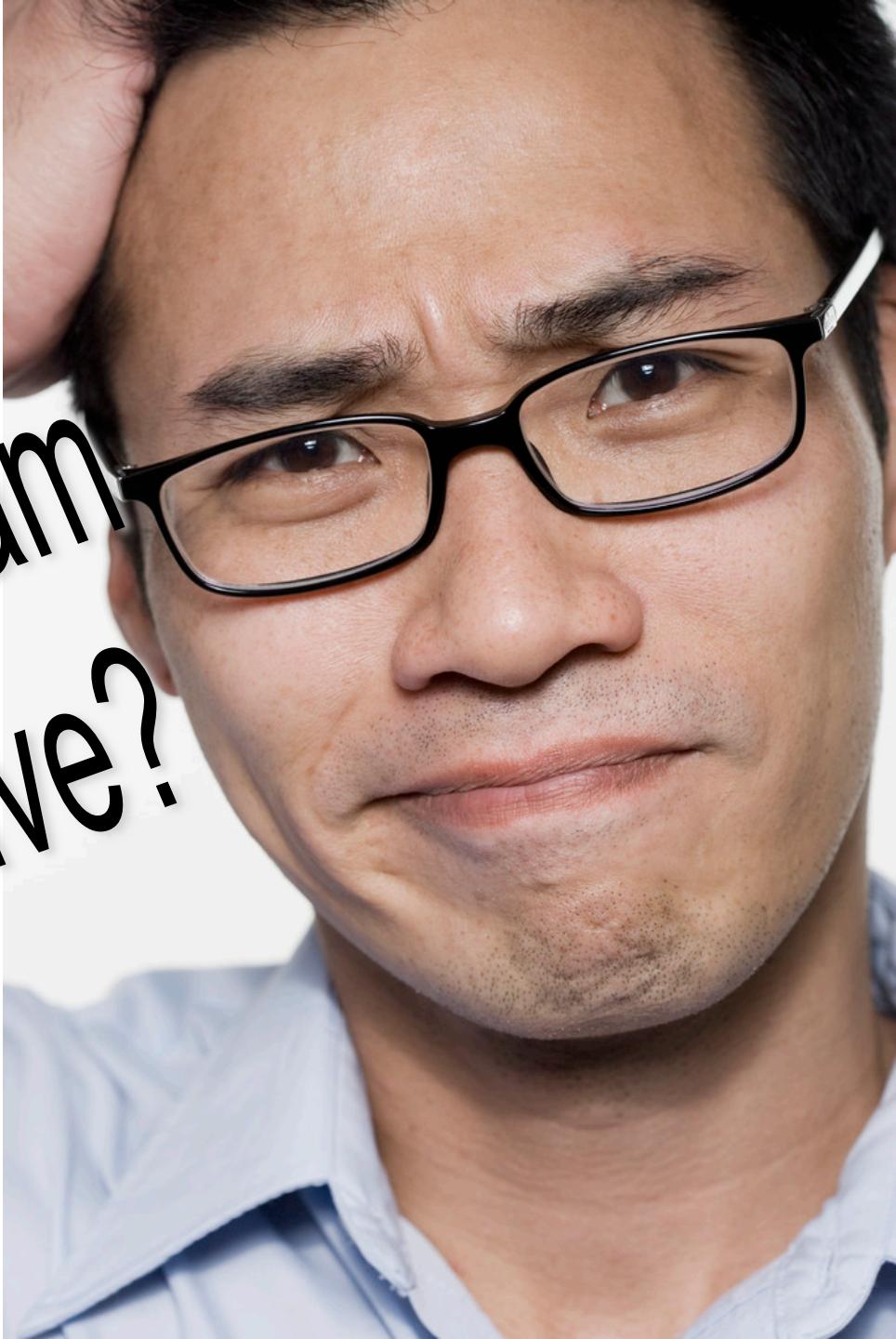
Why have a Community of Practice?

CoPs are not about bringing knowledge into the organisation but about helping to grow the knowledge that we need internally within our organisations.

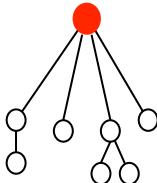
Developing Successful Communities of Practice

**Step 1: Establish or identify
a purpose**

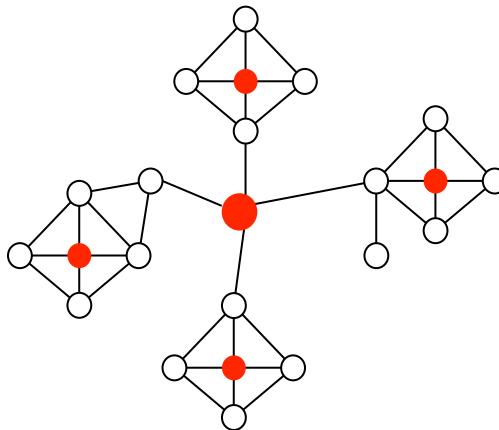
What problem am
I trying to solve?



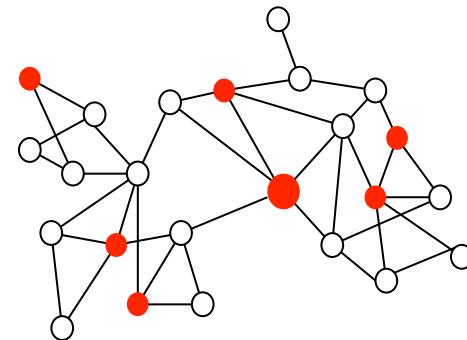
Degrees of Transparency and Trust



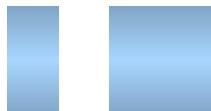
Join our list



Join our forum



Join our community



Increasing collaboration and transparency of process

Is the answer already out there?



Dynamics of Different Network Types

	Community of Practice	Project Teams	Informal networks
Purpose	Learning Sharing Creating Knowledge	Accomplish specific task	Communication flows
Boundary	Knowledge domain	Assigned project charter	Extent of relationships
Connections	Common application of a skill	Commitment to goal	Interpersonal acquaintances
Membership	Semi - permanent	Constant for a fixed period	Links made based on needs of the individual
Time scale	As long as it adds value to the business and its members	Fixed ends when project deliverables have been accomplished	Long – term, no pre-engineered end

Step 2: Identify your Community

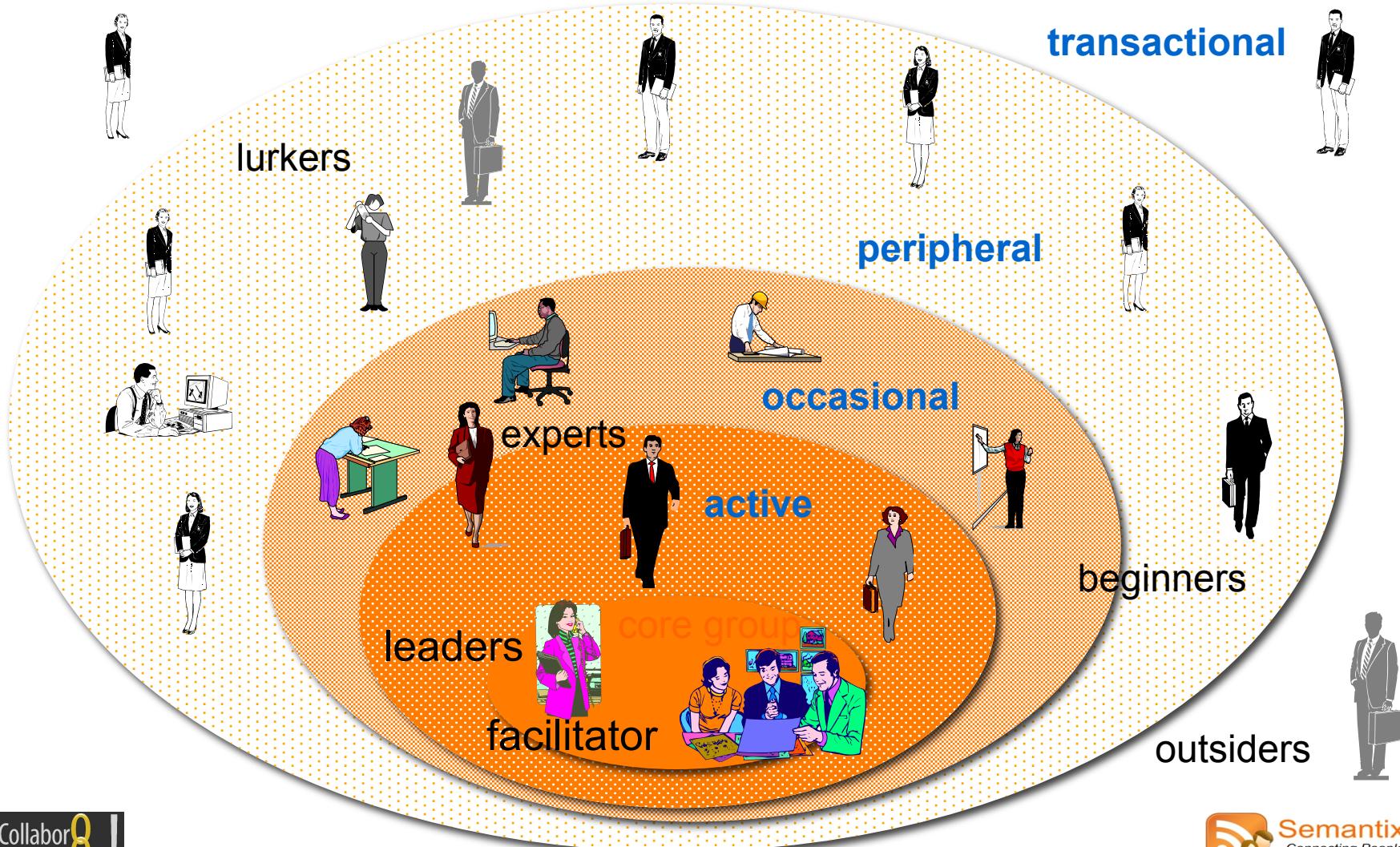
Know your audience



This is our audience



Members of an active community



Community Type

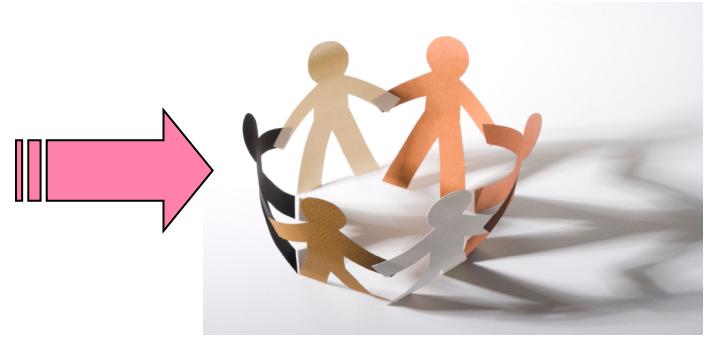
- **Helping Communities** provide a forum for community members to help each other with everyday work needs.
- **Best Practice Communities** develop and disseminate best practices, guidelines, and procedures for their members use.
- **Knowledge Stewarding Communities** organise, manage, and steward a body of knowledge from which community members can draw.
- **Innovation Communities** create breakthrough ideas, new knowledge, and new practices.

Understanding your Community

	Helping Communities	Best Practice Communities	Knowledge Stewarding Communities	Innovation Communities
Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lower cost through reuse ■ Social responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lower cost through standardisation ■ Consistency of project ■ Improves outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tracks shifting marketing trends ■ Regulation and legislation
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Connecting members ■ Knowledge who's who 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collecting, ■ Vetting ■ Publishing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enlisting leading experts ■ Manage content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Decipher trends ■ Share insights ■ Development of Policy
Structure and roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Problem solving ■ Sub committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Index and store Best practice ■ Publishing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Task force 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Domain experts ■ Sub-committees
Reward for participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sense of belonging ■ Assistance to daily work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Desire for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Passion for the topic ■ Professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Job responsibility to detect emerging trends
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tacit - high socialisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Low tacit ■ Explicit to explore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tacit to explicit ■ Tacit to tacit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Explicit to tacit.

Step 3: Understand the Culture and Behaviours

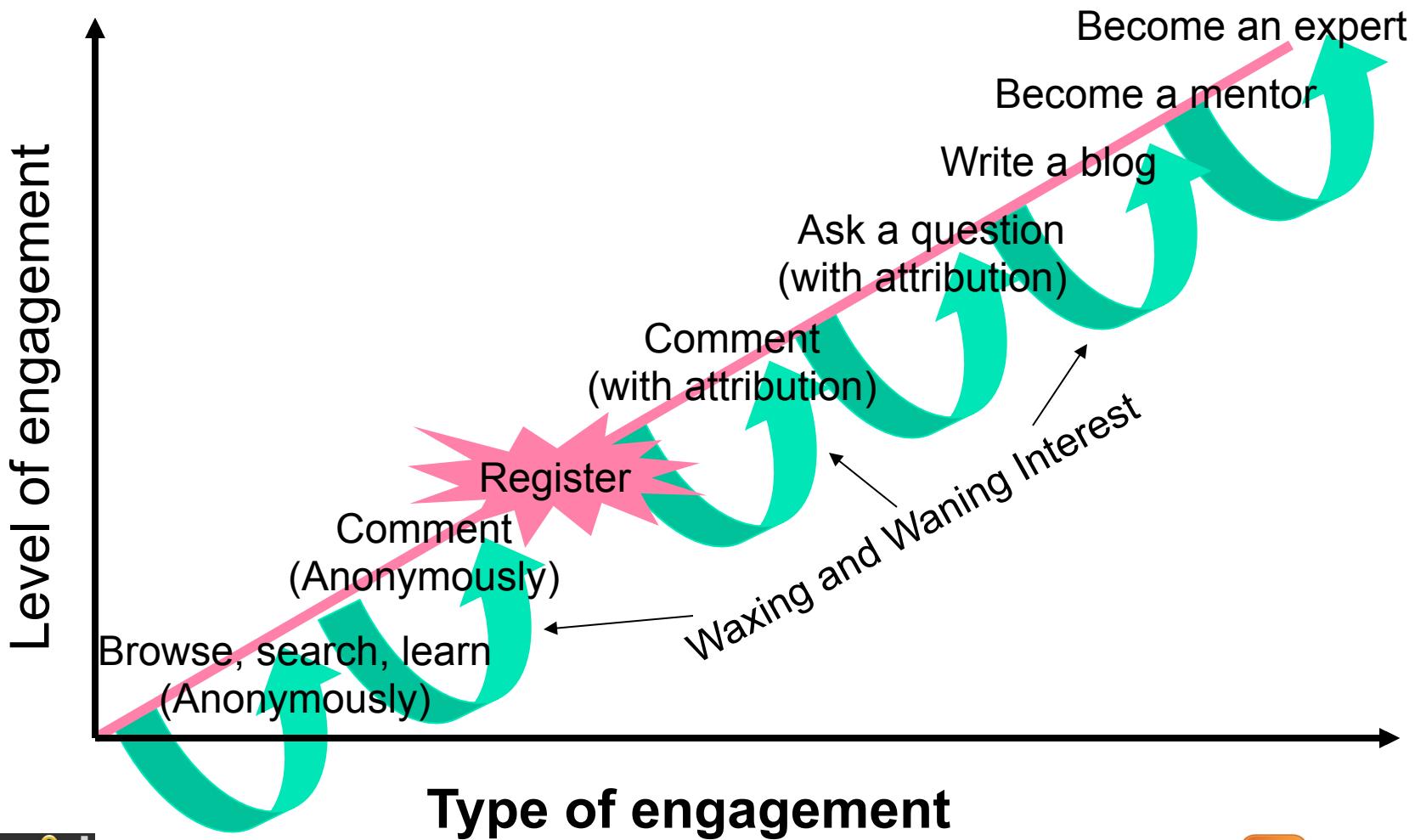
Addressing the culture



Why does a person engage with a Community of Practice?

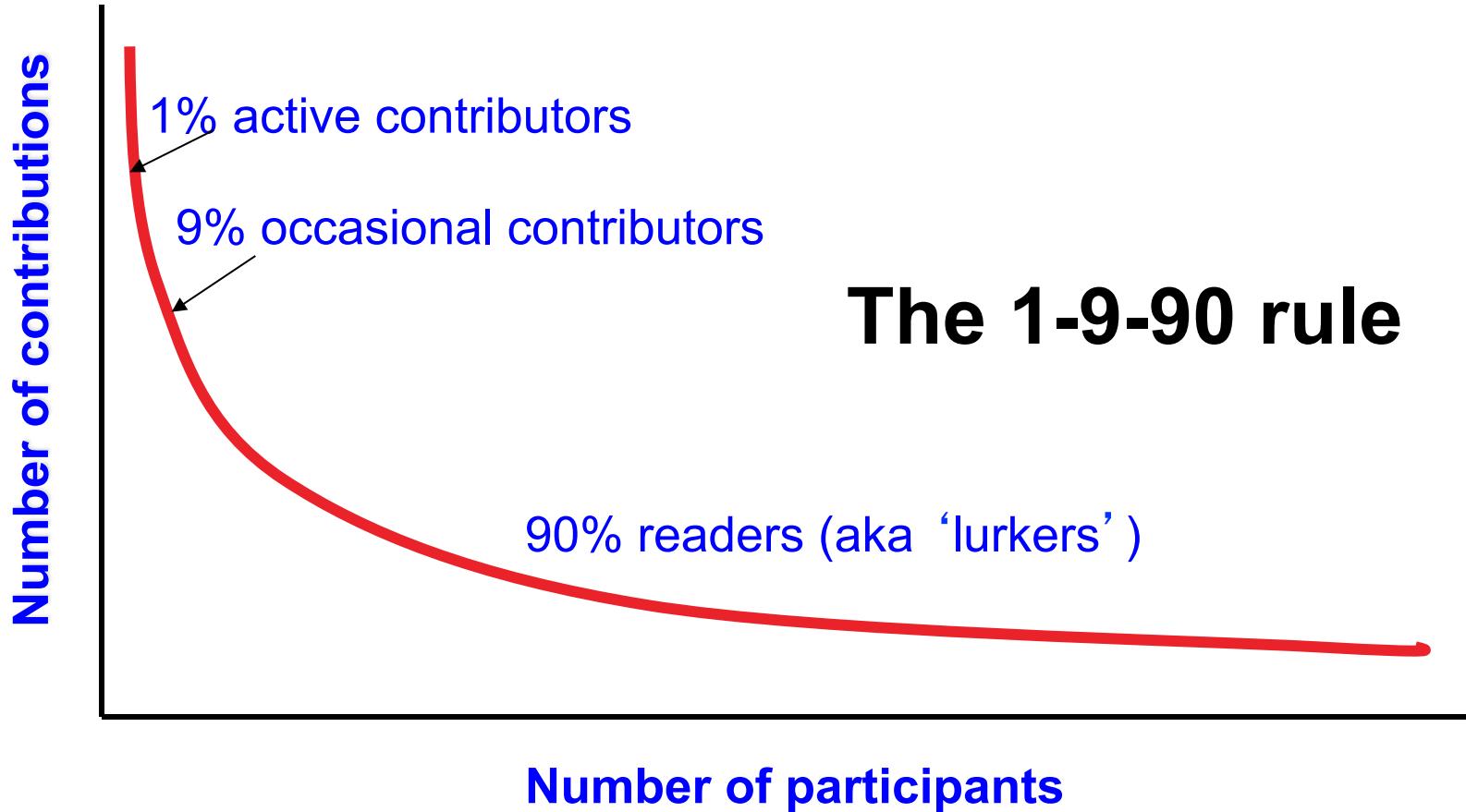
- Attractive purpose grabs and retains attention
- Perceived benefits:
 - Socialisation
 - Co-learning, knowledge sharing and co-production
- Each person chooses to be a member
 - Volition
 - Joining in – and leaving!

Levels of engagement



Patterns of contribution

Ref: Jacob Nielson http://www.useit.com/alertbox/participation_inequality.html



The “1% Rule”

- For every 100 people online only 1 person will create content and 10 will “interact” with it. The other 89 will just view it.
- Each day at YouTube there are 100 million downloads and 65,000 uploads

The important message is: look after your content creators!

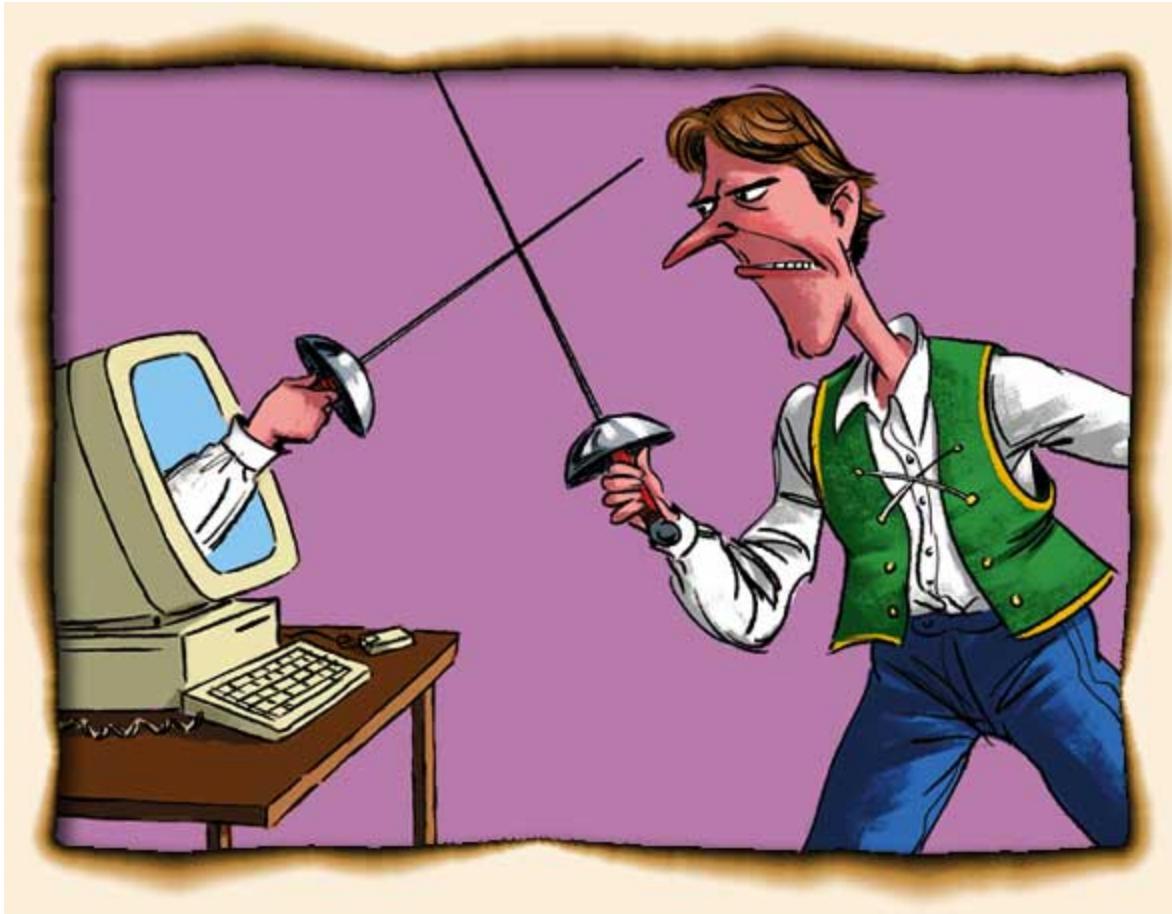
- In Yahoo Groups, 1% of the user population might start a group; 10% of the user population might participate actively. 100% of the user population benefits from the activities of the above groups

Source: The Guardian

It's more about the people than the technology



Community Archetypes



Duelsists

In a perpetual personal duel. Generally don't menace anyone except each other.

<http://redwing.hutman.net/~mreed/warriorshtm/duelists.htm>

Community Archetypes



Ego

For **Ego**, the discussion forum is all about him, and he regards discussions that stray from that topic as trivial dalliances.

Ego is one the fiercest of all the Warriors and will fight to the death when attacked

Community Archetypes



Filibuster

Attempts to influence the forum simply by holding the floor. His monotonous hectoring and prodigious output of verbiage rapidly clears the field of other users

Community Archetypes

Big Dog and MeToo



Big Dog is a bully who doesn't hesitate to use his superior strength to intimidate other combatants.

Me-Two will join the attack. Me-Two is far too weak and insecure to engage in single combat.

Community Roles and Responsibilities

On a more serious note...

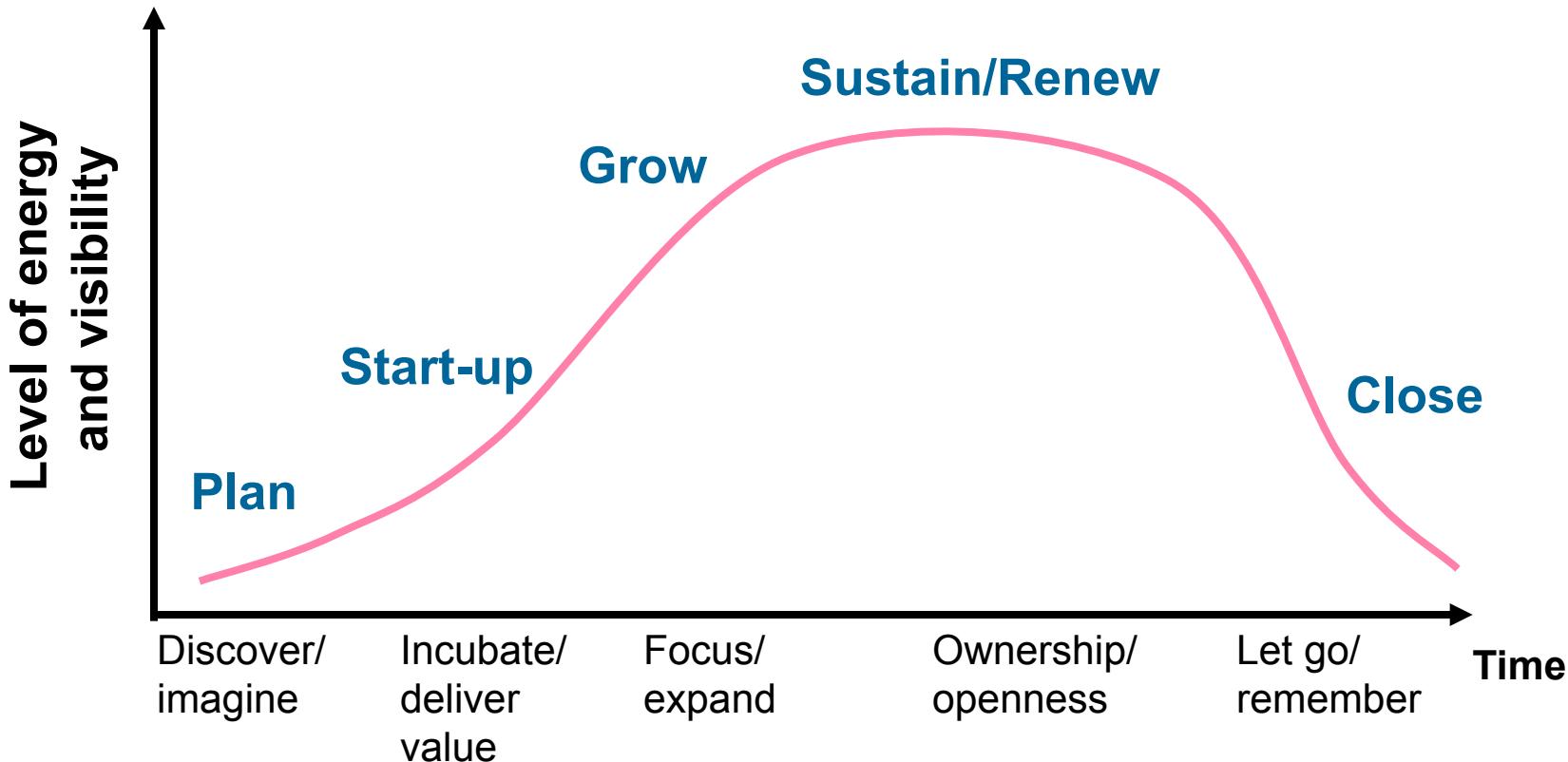
- **Champion/Sponsor** is able to envision the services of a CoP over time, and should have a sense of how the CoP can interact across the organisation
- **Facilitator/Coordinator** consulting, connecting, facilitating, helping, guiding.
- **Leader** serves an integral role in the community's success by energising the sharing process and providing continuous nourishment for the community
- **Librarian** organises information/data (may be part of Facilitator/Coordinator role).
- **Technical Steward** understands business needs and ensure the appropriate tools are available to meet these needs.
- **Core Group** is a working group that initially performs start-up activities and continues to provide ongoing organisational support.
- **Experts** are the subject matter specialist
- **Members/Participants** without these there is no community; the essence of a community is its members.

Step 4: Develop the ‘Practice’

Attributes of a successful CoP

Critical Success factors	Seekers <i>I need someone</i>	Contributors <i>I am someone</i>
Awareness	How do I know who is out there?	How can I become more known?
Competence	Is this person competent?	How do I advertise my skills?
Benevolence	Will this person help me?	How do I develop my reputation as a trusted member?
Motivation	Do I want to work with this person?	Why will I cooperate with this person?
Access	How do I approach this person?	Do I want to be approached?
Skills	Does the CoP have the tools to collaborate effectively?	
Mechanism	Do we have a method to collaborate?	

Your community's life-cycle



From: Cultivating Communities of Practice by Wenger, McDermot and Snyder

Building an environment to support collaborative working



Find and connect with experts

Find and connect with your peers



Threaded discussion forums, wikis, blogs, document repository



News feeds



News and Newsletters

Event calendar



What makes a successful community?

Facilitation – the magic ingredient

STONE SOUP

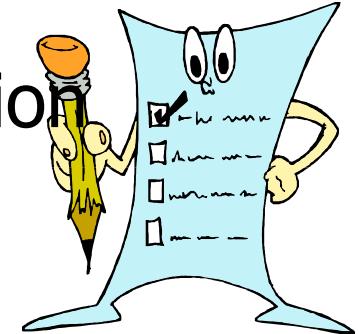


**Facilitating or
Coordinating a
community**

Facilitators' (Coordinators, Moderators) responsibilities

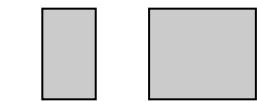
Facilitation and Coordination of a CoP includes:

- monitoring activity
- encouraging participation (facilitation techniques)
- producing an action plan
- reporting CoP activity – metrics, evaluations
- monitoring success criteria and impact
- managing CoP events



What can you accomplish in one week?

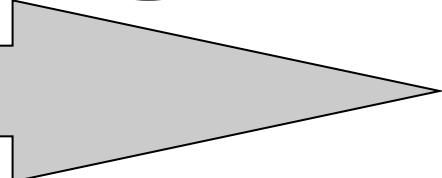
- Start a discussion
- Read a wiki
- Upload a document
- Read a blog
- Read a forum post
- Read a document
- Add an event
- Contribute to a wiki
- Comment on a blog
- Write a blog
- Respond to a forum posting



No time



1 hr



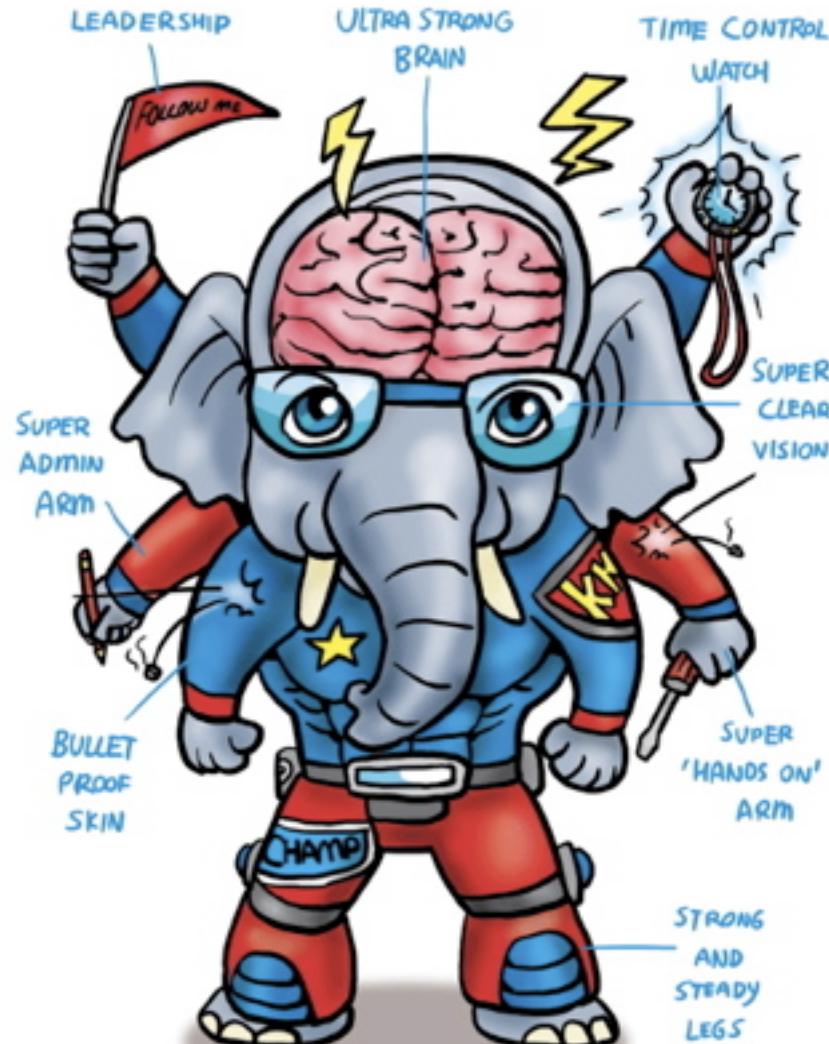
5 hrs

10 hrs

Lots of time

ACTIVITY:
**WHAT ARE THE ATTRIBUTES OF
A GOOD CO-ORDINATOR?**

A Good Facilitator/Coordinator?



A Facilitator/Coordinator cultivates the community



Step 5: Monitor and Measure Everything!

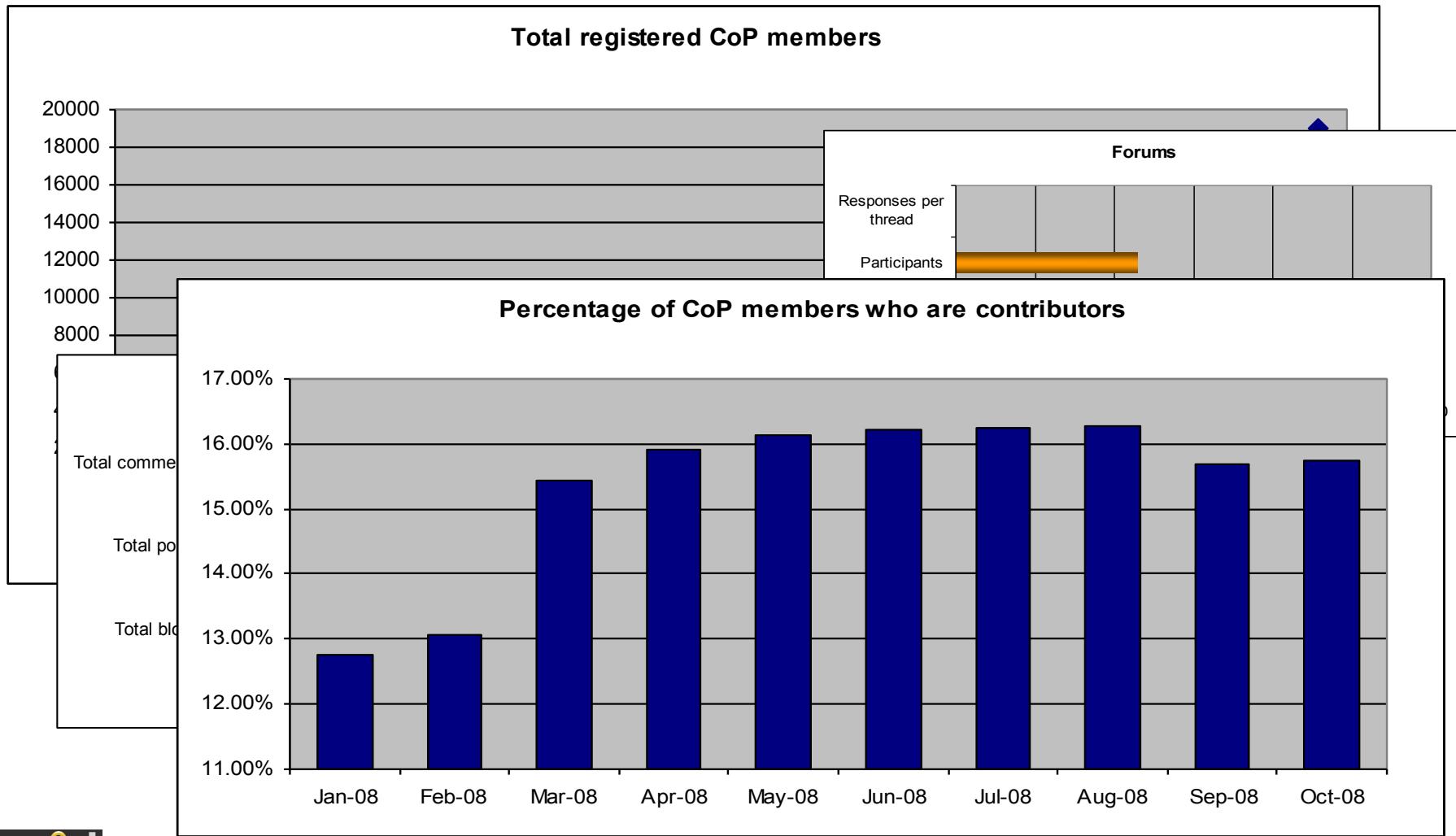
Metrics



IDeA CoP Membership and communities

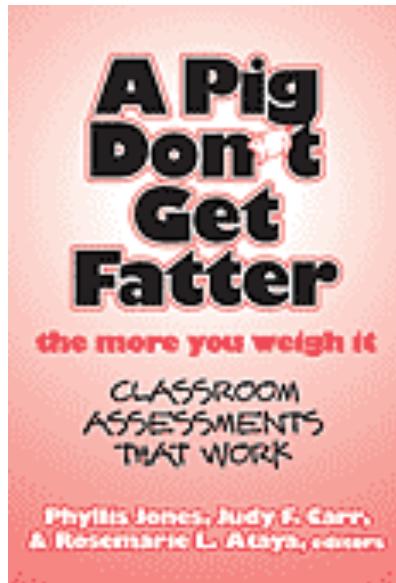
- Over 26,000 registered members
- Over 600 communities
- Average membership of a community is 50
- Highest membership of a community is over 1400
- Over 2700 members are contributing.
- Average of over 16,000 visits per month.
- Average of over 1000 contributions per month.

Metrics – CoP Activity



Metrics

- Don't rely on metrics to claim your community is successful.
- Use metrics to understand your community better.



What makes a successful CoP?

- ✓ clear purpose – what will it be used to do?
- ✓ creating a safe and trusted environment
- ✓ committed core group of active participants
- ✓ being motivated
- ✓ knowing the needs of participants
- ✓ having a clear action plan with activities to meet needs
- ✓ blending face-to-face and online activities

This can all be achieved by good, active facilitation

Case Study: IDeA CoP Platform
www.communities.idea.gov.uk

About Local Government

- Local government in England and Wales employs a workforce of 2.1 million people across 410 local authorities.
- Each authority is working to deliver the same 700 services to their residents.
- Has an annual operating budget of over £106 billion for delivering services.

About the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)

- Receives funding from the Revenue Support Grant
- Sister organisation of (owned by the Local Government Association)
- Works in partnership with councils and regional organisations to provide
 - Leadership (helping councillors become better leaders)
 - Enables and supports councils in sharing good practice
 - Incubator for new ideas for improving service and value across the local government sector.

access accommodation **activities** adoption advice agendas allotments **allowance**
animal appeal areas arrears arts **assessment** association backdating badge balance
band bays **benefit** bereavement bins births books breaks buildings
burials bus buy care carer cars **ceremonies** certificates change charges
childcare **children** circumstances citizenship **civil** clearance clinical closures clothing
clubs collections community complaints consumers contaminated costs
COUNCIL councillors crime dates death debt **decisions**
declaration decoration development direct disabled discounts disturbance diversions **dog** drains
drivers dumped e-billing education elections eligibility emergencies exclusions
exemptions facilities family fines fly-tipping fostering **fouling** frameworks freedom **funeral**
garden governor graffiti grants grave gritting hazardous health **historical** history **holiday**
homes housing illegal injuries inspections **insurance** interest internet items kerb kids
land leisure **library** licences lights limits listed litter local marriage
meals membership minutes mobile modernisation naming needs neighbour obstructions
older organisations parenting **parking** partnerships pass pavements
payments people permission permits places planning playschemes plots
pollution private problems **properties** prospectuses proxy
recycling reductions registered registrations renewal renovation rent
repairs results roads roadworks roll routes rubbish **safety** scheme
SCHOOL search **services** sheltered short-term spaces speed spillages sports
squatters street structures **student support** surgeries syringes **tax** tenancy
tenants term ticket traffic translation **transport travel** trees voluntary votes **waste**
welfare wheels winter **young youth**

Over 700
local
government
services

Project Timeline

Sept 05 Business Case	Apr 06 Planning	Sept 06 Pilot	Dec 07 Launch	Nov 08 People
				
<p>Various iterations business case to get management backing for KM strategy, including CoPs</p> <p>Intensive work with stakeholders</p> <p>Produced spec for the KM team structure</p>	<p>Management team approval</p> <p>Developed and run training for facilitators</p> <p>Developed technology spec for online platform</p>	<p>First pilot built on Drupal failed</p> <p>Assisted in running focus groups with potential members of the Pilot communities</p> <p>Introduces a technology platform to support collaboration</p>	<p>Official launch December 2007</p> <p>Ongoing support to selected communities at the IDeA through a coaching and mentoring scheme</p> <p>Completion of application form to set up a community</p>	<p>Over 26,000 people registered</p> <p>Over 600 Communities</p> <p>140 have IDeA involvement</p>

Co

Community hub

[Home](#) [Forum](#) [Events](#) [Library](#) [Wiki](#) [Blog](#) [Shoutbox](#) [Cloud](#) [Admin](#)You are here: [All Communities](#) > Community hub

Welcome to the Communities Hub

Facilitator announcement

This hub is a shared community space for all registered users to post content that may be of interest to other registered users, and is not tied to any thematic domain. Information for new members is available in the welcome desk.

[Welcome desk](#)

Blog posts

[Latest posts](#) [Blog roll](#)

[Insights everywhere](#)

04 Sep 2008 15:45 | [Ingrid Koehler](#)

[OFT report finds public sector bodies cost the economy a billion in hidden information markets](#)

01 Sep 2008 17:56 | [Adrian Barker](#)

[FYI an action on LoGGIC regarding GI draft strategy](#)

01 Sep 2008 12:23 | [Dave Briggs](#)

[Insights everywhere](#)

04 Sep 2008 23:43 | [Ingrid Koehler](#)

[MSA Governance Document - Please discuss](#)

01 Sep 2008 11:11 | [Adrian Barker](#)

[Insights everywhere](#)

04 Sep 2008 23:43 | [Ingrid Koehler](#)[View all blog post](#)

Latest wiki activity

Share your content. Add and edit content collectively.

[CAA Readiness: Community activities](#)

04 Sep 2008 16:26

[Policy Briefings and Recent Policy News](#)

27 Aug 2008 11:08

[CoP Round Ups Index](#)

Latest forum posts

Collaborate with other community members.

[Member involvement in external consultation](#)14 Aug 2007 16:26 | [Rachel Gapp](#)[Equality Assessment of Learning Disabilities](#)14 Aug 2007 16:26 | [Rachel Gapp](#)[Customer Insight guidance consultation](#)

Font size

Choose font size:

Search a community

[Search](#)

Shoutbox

**Steve Daley said:**

23 Oct 2008 12:45

Hey! Welcome to the Best Value group! Thanks for joining. :-)

**Tessa Daley said:**

23 Oct 2008 12:45

Hello! Care to join 'Best value' community. Check it out! :o)

[View all shouts](#)

Tools

 [View metrics](#) [FAQs](#)

Tagged items

Analog Best Value Comp
Community Enterprise Heart Int
Knowledge Logistic Manufaturer News
Quality Readability Super Sat
Time Technology Texture Underlying

[View all tagged items in this community](#)

CoPs in local government

Lessons Learnt: What went well and not so well



Lessons Learnt



WENT WELL

- Evidence of greater collaboration across councils
- Evidence of more joined-up thinking and new ways of working
- Greater knowledge (and use) of social media tools
- Continued and growing enthusiasm for collaboration



NOT GONE WELL

- ‘Tribal’ working practices.
- Poor/little use of tagging.
- Most self-organising networks do not attend Facilitator training.
- Getting middle-management involved.
- Traditional hierarchies can inhibit development of CoPs

Summary – Conversations to Collaboration

- Step 1: Establish/identify a purpose
- Step 2: Identify a Community
- Step 3: Understand the culture and behaviours
- Step 4: Develop/support the ‘Practice’
- Step 5: Monitor and measure everything!



The future

- Platform expanding to include central government and third sector
- Breaking down silos through the use of a shared community space
- Better metrics available for the communities
- Blended off-line/on-line training for facilitators
- Support for mobile working

A Quote

I'm now convinced that sharing knowledge, information and experience through CoPs is the future of success in local government, and that social media tools such as those employed within the IDeA CoP platform are the glue that can stick cross-sector collaboration projects together

Local Authority CoP facilitator

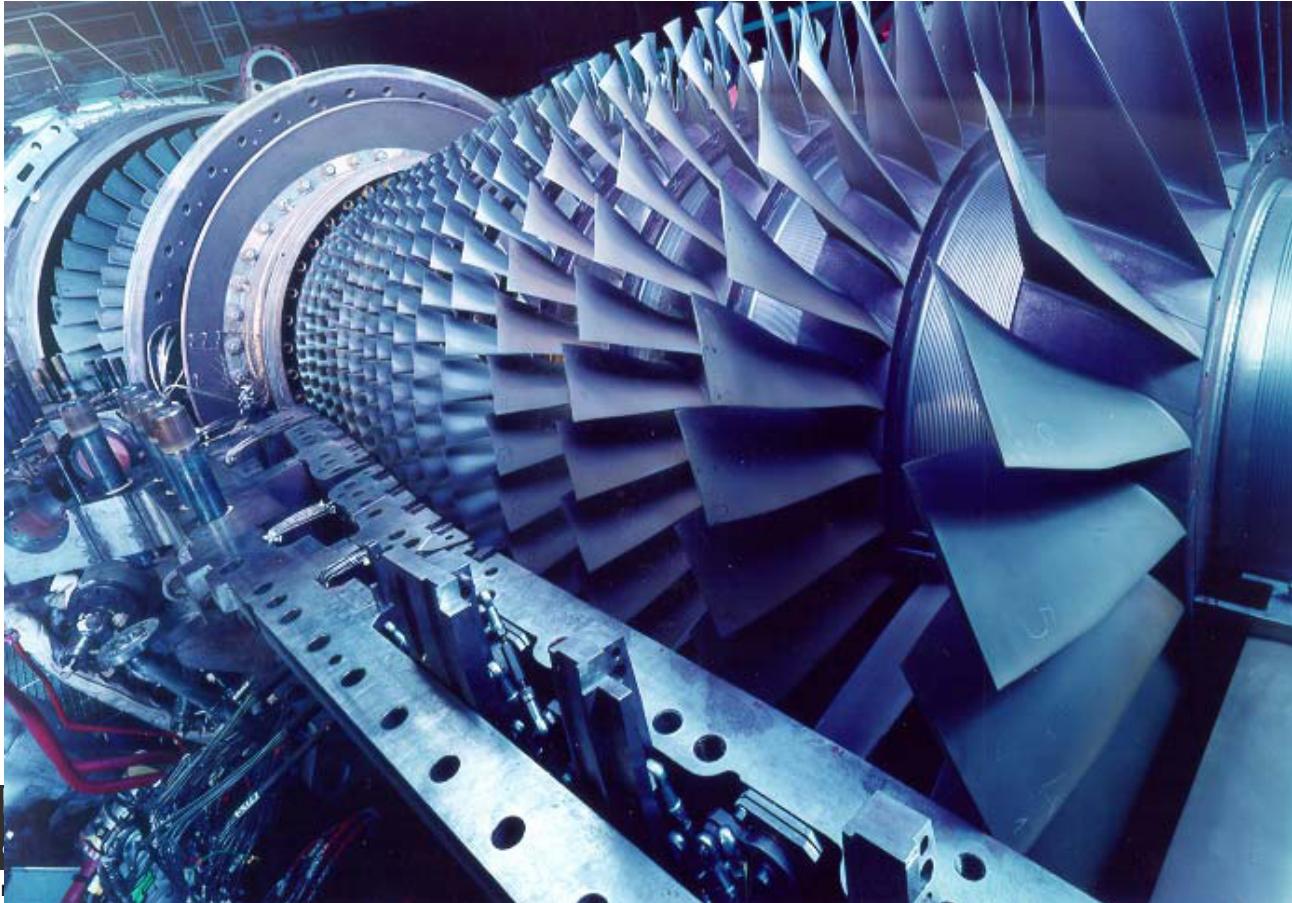


Successful CoPs – Measuring Outcomes

- **Mapping Services Agreement** (535 members) – joint procurement strategy on target for achieving savings of over £100m over 4 years.
- **NI14 Avoidable Contact** (631 members) – highly active online conferences
- **Policy and Performance** (1785 members) – Producing joint policy briefings
- **Projects and Programme Management** (356 members)– Consistent contract templates developed for all local authorities.

A CoP Story from the private sector

Asia Pacific Bohai: Knowledge about defective gas turbine rotors prevented certain engine failure.
Potential cost saving of over \$83 million



Recommended Reading

- Cluetrain Manifesto – *David Weinberger*
- Cultivating Communities of Practice –
Etienne Wenger, Richard McDermot, William Snyder.
- Community, Economic Creativity and Organization – *Ash Amin, Joanne Roberts*
- Here Comes Everybody – *Clay Shirky*
- Groundswell – *Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff*
- Tribes – *Seth Godin*

Thank you!

TINA THE TECH WRITER

I'M
STARTING
MY OWN
BLOG!

DEAR
GOD,
NO!



scottadams@aol.com

www.dilbert.com

EVERY DAY I WILL
RECORD MY PERSONAL
THOUGHTS ABOUT
OUR BUSINESS.



4-16-07 © 2007 Scott Adams, Inc./Dist. by UFS, Inc.

I NEED YOU TO WRITE
THE FIRST ONE BY
NOON. I CAN'T WAIT
TO SEE WHAT I'M
THINKING.



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