



The
Commons
Stack

The Commons Stack Praise System: A Case Study



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Summary

To acknowledge people's contribution to the TEC and track work done, the TEC uses Commons Stack praise bot. Anyone with the dishing powers in the TEC and Commons Stack can "dish praise" to community members to acknowledge their work and input, which are then transformed into TE Commons Impact Hours and CSTK token score. This practice relates to monitoring in Ostrom's 8 principles of a sustainable common resource management. While Ostrom analyzes monitoring as a check against appropriator behaviors within a community, what makes the Praise System unique is it's a positive monitoring, as if someone calls 911 to say this person is awesome.

TEC Impact Hours acquire monetary value after a successful Hatch, and their value (assumed to be in the \$15-\$200 per hour range) is determined by the funds raised with the launch of the Hatch. The more funds that are raised, the higher the hourly wage for impact hours becomes. Additionally, the more funds that are raised, the larger the portion of tokens that are paid back to 'covesters'. These two properties mean hatchers are incentivised

to raise more funds, and covesters are incentivised to also help collect more funds. A third variable to consider is the total number of impact hours contributed. As the total impact hours goes higher, the hourly DAI payout per hour goes down.

Praise is dished on telegram in many of the Commons Stack TEC groups and verbally in TEC Weekly Syncs, and soon will be available on the Discord channel as well. At the beginning of each Weekly Sync call, there is ~20 minutes allocated for the people to praise each other, without needing to have the dishing powers as in the Telegram group.

Bi-weekly, a few people (It started as always Griff and Livia but [has expanded since](#)) quantify qualitative contributions (praise amount & contributed hours) listed on the spreadsheet as people dish praise. They subjectively reward points to each item praised based on time and relative impact on the project. These two people used to get the same as the median person rewarded. This was felt unfair by the community and an update to the incentive for praise quantifiers was [proposed and approved](#). The quantification process is transparent and can be tracked by anyone in the [spreadsheet](#).

We post [the leaderboard in every blog post](#). It is something to be proud of for our community members. They don't have to see how those are quantified, but they see the result.

Initially there was a 4-tiered weighting structure that categorized contributions made relative to their direct impact on the advancement of the TEC roadmap. As a result, the TE praise that was tangentially related to TEC's launch preparation and TE praise that didn't help TEC at all constituted the lowest tiers.

Praise System Evolution

The praise system evolved over time, and there were some structural changes made:

- We got rid of the Tier structure because it was too much work and unnecessary since different types of contributions were already being covered by the subjective process of quantification.
- The quantifiers were receiving really small impact hours, which was also discouraging new people from taking up this task. We changed the rules so new people could come in and quantify. Now, every praise that someone gets while being quantifier counts as the average impact hour per praise.
- The praise quantification was opened to a larger group as few other people started to get as much involved and understanding of the overall process as Livia and Griff, which are crucial for the subjective nature of the quantification.

Lessons Learned

Here are some important lessons we learned along the way:

- **Be very careful with designing a tiered rewards structure:** During the design of the incentive rewards metrics, a conflict emerged between the leaders of TE and TEC. When we had a tiered structure, we had in mind rewarding people in proportion to their relevant contributions towards the TEC. So, for the specific purpose of designing this tiered praise

system, the TE was not the primary focus but the people involved in the TEC. The tiers were:

T1: let's give 100% to everything related to TEC and impactful for TEC.

T2: something that is not so impactful but related to TEC receive 25%.

T3: TE projects and activities indirectly related to TEC but still related to them receive 5%.

T4: TE projects that aren't related to TEC get nothing.

Although we wanted to make it very clear that our objective was creating the TEC and not building TE, we failed to communicate that structure is different from content. As a result, having TE projects and activities accounted after T3 and T4 created problems.

Some TE leaders also expressed resentment about TE projects receiving 5% of impact hours. We could have done a better job compromising on that. We could have said T3 will receive 15% IH hours.

Another way of resolving this issue would be giving them much more verbal importance or in a way that recognizes them as a critical piece.

- **The verbal praises nourish a gratitude culture:** In the TEC Weekly Sync calls, there used to be an intro question for collecting data and giving everyone a time to speak. Later, the intro part of the calls evolved into the verbal praise, where TEC members dish praise to each other for 15-30 minutes. At first, Griff was questioning if allocating a third of the call to verbal praise was the best use of the call. After a few calls, however, he realized its value. While also serving as a way to

update people about what is happening, verbal praises developed a strong culture of gratitude.

Culture of gratitude through verbal praise has its unexpected side benefits, like building stronger relationships between community members.

At some point, the two prominent leaders of the TE and TEC, Angela and Griff, were having differing opinions on the direction of the TEC's Onboarding Group and Angela disengaged from the project to focus more on the TE Academy, leaving an unsettling feeling with how the TE and TEC were coexisting. However, after Angela joined one thursday call and dished verbal praise to Griff, saying that she admired his work among other things, and Griff reciprocated with praises for her, it greatly helped build a stronger relationship between the two leaders. Having the space for public praise made this possible.

Impact Hours are debt: Every week we have more and more impact hours (~300) as there are more and more people contributing. With this trend, we are going to end up with a lot of impact hour debt, so much so that half of the money raised could go to impact hours, and that's too high. That also means that our minimum raise has to be higher.

- **Impact hours are debt for our launch:** And we need to see them that way. This also adds pressure to the launch of the hatch because the more the launch is delayed, the more debt is going to grow.

It needs to be clear to people that there are so many urgencies to launch, and impact Hour Debt is an important one. We need to have a talk about money as a community because there is a tendency in people to get weird about money as it tends to drop people into a scarcity mindset.

- **Make it super simple to dish praise and super easy to allow anyone to do it.**
- **Sanity check is super important for Impact Hour quantification:** It is crucial to be flexible on turning the praise amounts to Impact Hours. If people need to get more praise because they made valuable contributions but failed to receive enough praise for them, quantifiers just give more points to the praise they did get. The subjective approach in going over the results and adjusting them where deemed necessary helps get the quantification closer to reality and decreases the chances of abusing the praise system.
- **Encourage everyone to choose their own best deal of IH/Wage Distribution:** While those who are not paid for their work receive 100% Impact hours, those who are paid for their work receive disproportionately less according to the amount they are paid. A lot of needs and risk preferences play here, and it is preferred to let the members choose for themselves their mode compensation in x% Impact Hours and x% payment. Commons Stack full time team members receive 15% of their Impact Hours.

Relevant Documents

Praise Bot Github Repo

<https://github.com/commons-stack/CommonsStackBot>

Praise Quantification Proposal

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tg5vKNwy1hqOxxlihiXDBr7a1J-gfRGODpGZBIpao2mU/edit?usp=sharing>

Dishing Praise Culture in the TE Commons

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-EcsTmgDP7CehSzZM-WvdAQ8as-EKL-KlgwPKM5t9ln4/edit?usp=sharing>

Rewarding Praise Quantifiers Proposal

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DVldX-lWFsffi-yq04laktJw7baeUxDBItPC3ilsXux0/edit?usp=sharing>

Acknowledging & Rewarding Contributions to the TE Commons

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1P_W9u5Tk1xTRfP2_c3k7iN4whmb6JGP_LwRou_ZqN4E/edit?usp=sharing

Praise Quantification Update and Proposals

<https://forum.tecommons.org/t/praise-quantification-update-and-proposals/144>

Impact Hour Rewards - Deep Dive

<https://forum.tecommons.org/t/impact-hour-rewards-deep-dive/90>

