Community characteristics & orientation

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Community & UN SDG(s):	TOPS, SDGs #3 Good Health, #12 Responsible Consumption, potential leak into #4 Education
Date:	October 13th, 2023

Instructions

Research the community you are most interested in exploring using links from the UN Sustainable Goals website (https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/) and others. In your exhaustive research, answer the following.

Community characteristics		
Community life-cycle (current state)		
Where is your community in its life-cycle?	**What you need to focus on:**	**Special needs**
☐ **Just forming** Need basic tools to connect, but not sure from there	Research and/or discuss the potential of some basic tools with members, explore what ideas it might give them, and see what they might bring in with them.	
☐ **Self-designing** Information stage, but with a strong sense of what it wants to accomplish	Contribute ideas to the design. Analyze systematically the implications of their community design for technology, infrastructure, and technology skills.	
☐ **Growing & restless** Ready to add new functionality to its tool configuration	Try to make this a community reflection and self-design event. Does their restlessness suggest a major change, such as a transition to a new platform?	
☒ **Stable and adapting** Just needing some new tools	How much disruption will the community tolerate? How will the new tools be integrated into or affect existing practices?	Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) is a long running community, founded in 1948. I will be focusing on the Regina chapter. Currently they weigh in weekly and store the information in a notebook, other groups are potentially using a spreadsheet. They all have the member resources for recipes and fitness guides located on tops.org. Need something easy to use that will augment their use of already existing tools provided by TOPS.

Constitution

Diversity: How diverse is the community?

Topic	Your notes
What are the different types of members and what are their levels of participation?	They have chapter executive, "Keep Off Pounds Sensibly" (KOPS), and those who attend the weekly meetings. Chapter executive record member weights, run information sessions and plan the meetings. KOPS members provide insight on how they lost weight and provide encouragement to those in the group that have not reached their goals yet. Regular members participate by joining group discussions, requesting topics for a meeting, and weighing in weekly.
How spread apart is it in terms of location and time zones?	TOPS overall is across North America with different chapters.
What language(s) do members speak?	English, presumably French and Spanish in Chapters located in areas where those languages have a larger demographic.
What other cultural or other diversity aspects may affect your technology choices?	TOPS ranges a large variety of people, they are diverse in age and cultural background, Regina specifically: _____ Making this easy to use for folks who are older is a concern, do they use a mobile phone? Have a computer? This needs to augment, be an "optional" tool so as to not alienate those who do not like this form of tracking.

Openness: How connected to the outside world is your community?

Topic		Your notes
How much do you want to control the boundaries of your community? Does your community need	☐ To be private/secure ☐ Open boundaries ☒ Both private & public spaces	This would focus on Calorie tracking, a small tool that would start private but should be extended to sharing within a private group (E.G. your local TOPS chapter). Add things like tracking your weight digitally so you have a private record, and not just the TOPS record.
How does your community need to interact with other communities? Do you need common tools for sharing and learning with them?		TOPS can interact with the general health and weight loss communities, this tool will need to be designed for groups like tops in mind but also useful for those not in a group, or looking to form less formal groups than TOPS (E.g. you and your gym buddies)

Technology aspirations

Technology savvy, tolerance, & constraints: What are your community's technology interests and skills and patience thereof? What are the constraints imposed by technology factors?

Topic	Your notes
How interested is your community in technology?	Varies based on the person, the community is diverse in age and thus some are more open to use technology than others.

What is their capacity for learning new tools?	This would be in addition to existing struggles with healthy eating, their work and would require leaving their current solution. Needs to be a very easy switch.
What is the range of skills? If their interests and/or skills are diverse, could it cause conflict or distraction?	Some members use computers every day for work/recreation, others would like to go back to landlines. This diverse set of skills means that ease of use is a priority, but also making the tool optional to allow people who are not comfortable with it to continue their path.
How tolerant are members of the adoption of a wide variety of tools?	More tools would increase confusion and stress, less is more.
How many technological boundaries are they willing to cross, e.g. sign in to more than one web-based tool, learn to use new tools, or give up old favorites? This helps you understand what level of integration you need.	Depending on the person, some are more willing than others. Having less accounts is preferred among some, and would thus be the target.
What are your members' technology constraints (e.g., bandwidth, operating systems, etc.)?	Members have varying technologies, some have android, others iphone, some no smartphone at all.
How much time are members able to be online and from where (office, home, field)? Some people have limited online time, or are able to be online only in specific locations. Others are always on. Very diverse situations can affect participation	Time online varies by person, as some are retired, others stay at home spouses/parents and others work a day job in various fields. Offline functionality would benefit members who lack internet 24/7.

Community orientation

Relevance to community: Use the range from 0 (no relevance) to 5 (high relevance) to determine what matters most to the community. Look at these from the perspectives of the different types of members (under "constitution"). Also discuss the "value-added" to each member group

0	1	2	3	4	5	Orientations	Variants	Key activities/your notes
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	**Meetings** Many communities place a great emphasis on regular meetings where members engage in shared activities for a specific time. Meetings, and the visible participation of members, assert the community's existence	☒ Face-to-face/blended ☒ Online synchronous ☐ Online asynchronous	Weekly meetings, in person or online depends on group.

☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	**Open-ended conversation** Some communities maintain ongoing conversations as their primary vehicles for learning. Open-ended conversations are common when a community is co-located and people keep the conversation going as they "bump" into each other.	☒ Single-stream discussions ☐ Multi-topic conversations ☐ Distributed conversations	Most conversation happens during meetings.
☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	**Projects** In some communities' members want to focus on particular topics, go deep, and collaborate on projects to solve problems or produce useful artifacts. Learning is not just a matter of sharing knowledge or discussing issues. Members need to do things together in order to develop their practice. Projects usually involve a subgroup within the community	☒ Practice groups ☐ Project teams ☐ Instruction	Single group, usually knowledge sharing comes in the form of preparing a presentation either solo or as a small group.
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	**Content** Some communities are primarily interested in creating, sharing, and providing access to documents, tools, and other content. Valuable and well-organized content is a useful resource for members	☐ Library ☒ Structured self-publish ☐ Open self-publish ☐ Content integration	TOPS has their own publications on a platform for members, as well as a magazine.
☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	**Access to expertise** Some communities create value by providing focused and timely access to expertise in the community's domain, whether internally or externally. Communities with this orientation focus on answering questions, fulfilling requests for advice, or engaging in collaborative, just-in-time problem solving	☐ Questions & requests ☐ Access to experts ☐ Shared problem solving ☐ Knowledge validation ☒ Apprenticeship & mentoring	Access to Expertise really depends on how many KOPS members are in a chapter.
☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	**Relationships** Some communities focus on relationship building among members as the basis for both ongoing learning and being available to each other. This orientation emphasizes the interpersonal aspect of learning together. Communities with this	☒ Connecting ☐ Knowing about people ☐ Interacting informally	TOPS is a support group, connecting with others is one way people get support for their weight loss and healthy lifestyle desires.

						orientation place a high value on knowing each other personally, emphasizing networking, trust building, and mutual discovery		
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	⊠	**Individual participation** Learning together happens in the context of a group, but it is realized in the experience of individuals. People bring different backgrounds, communication styles, and aspirations to their participation in a community. People have different levels of commitment, they take on different roles, and they use tools differently	☐ Levels of participation ⊠ Personalization ⊠ Individual development ⊠ Multi-membership	Members bring many personal experiences and knowledge acquired outside of TOPS into the group.
☐	☐	☐	⊠	☐	☐	**Community cultivation** Some communities are happy with loose self-organization and unplanned evolution, while others thrive on attention to community cultivation. They have a need to reflect on the effectiveness and health of the community to make things better, joined with a willingness to work on it	☐ Democratic governance ⊠ Strong core group ⊠ Internal coordination ☐ External facilitation	Chapters are often kept alive by a small group of members, but TOPS do member drives as an organization to draw in new people
☐	☐	☐	☐	⊠	☐	**Service context** In some cases, serving a specific context becomes central to the community's identity and the ways it operates. They may live inside an organization, whose charter their practice needs to serve. They may have a mission to provide learning resources to the world or to recruit members widely. Or they may seek interactions with other communities whose domain complements their own	⊠ Organization as context ☐ Cross-organizational ☐ Other related communities ☐ Public mission	Need to follow the desires and goals of TOPS as an organization

Scratchpad (other interesting insights, questions/answers, etc.)

Focusing on TOPS and similar groups as the community as a way to nail down more specific customers, with the hope of providing a tool that is useful to the broader community.