

ENSE 405

Activity #4: An emerging picture

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Community (UN SD goal):	Sub-goals of Goal 12 - Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Date:	February 6, 2021
Project:	Community and learning-oriented meal planning application

Instructions:

Using your researched information from activities 1-3, fill out the following, comparing the current state of the art with what you think new (software) innovations could bring to the community.

Covering the orientations	
Compare the left-hand column of the document "Technology configuration inventory" table with the right-hand column of the document "Community characteristics & orientation" table. What do you notice about the match (or mismatch) between your dominant community orientations and the current configuration of tools?	
How well does the technology inventory cover the orientations? What themes emerged from both the community orientations and the technology configuration from your colleagues' notes	<p><i>(Assuming colleagues note's are referring to my own investigation notes vs. that of other students taking this project course)</i></p> <p>The current technology configuration particularly supports the Content and Individual Participation community orientations; the relationship between the current configuration and community orientation may just be because the only tools available on the market enforce such orientations.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you almost there? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Are there big gaps?	<p>The current configuration is not supporting more progressive orientations of Community Cultivation or Service Context.</p> <p>As noted in the previous activities, I believe an orientation shift, or the inclusion of tools to support a broader orientation, would be beneficial to the community.</p>
What is the range of skills? If their interests and/or skills are diverse, could it cause conflict or distraction?	The community of meal planners is diverse, there's no doubt of the existence of software-savvy persons developing planning tools. However, the community is not highly composed of technology-savvy people: those persons developing tools for the community are far more profit-led than education-led, and so the use of skills is currently separate from developing sustainable practices.
Achieving integration	
Look at all the pieces of your configuration	
What level of integration and interoperability has been achieved?	The most prominent trend in the technology configuration is that of proprietary software: prominent meal planning platforms do not integrate or inter-operate with one another. Some platforms interoperate with corner services such as other tools which track calories (i.e. Weight Watchers account) or devices (i.e. FitBit).



	Unfortunately, the addition of new tools that could support Community Cultivation or Service Context cannot be done outside the developing company for the platform. The company must see some need for the new tools and agree to build tools for their platform for integration/interoperability for new community orientations.
Where are the big gaps?	The gaps are not caused by absolute inability to add new tools to the platform, the gaps are caused by the absolute inability <i>for the public</i> to add new tools to the platform for the community. Additionally, there exists no such tool where the user could switch between the tool and platform to achieve the same result as a fully-integrated platform.
Balancing the polarities (Current state)	
How is the configuration balanced with respect to each polarity? (<i>Using arrows to show balance/imbalances</i>)	
Synchronous >>>>>>>>>>>> ...Synchronous tools?	<<<<<<<<<<<<<< Asynchronous ...Asynchronous tools?
Participation >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> ...Participation tools?	<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<< Reification ...Reification tools?
Group >>> ...Group tools?	<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<< Individual ...Individual tools?
How well does this balance fit your community?	The balance drives the community to strengthen its existing orientations of Content and Individual Participation, but drives it away from community-strengthening orientations of Community Cultivation and Service Context. One could describe this as the market being absent of community-growing tools/aspects in favor of convenience tools that require less thought in design and ongoing maintenance.
Solution seeking	
In the new configuration, do you want your choice of tools to affect the polarities of your community in ways that differ from the current configuration? Which way?	
Synchronous >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> ...New synchronous tools?	<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<< Asynchronous ...New asynchronous tools?
Participation >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> ...New participation tools?	<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<< Reification ...New reification tools?
Group >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> ...New group tools?	<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<< Individual ...New individual tools?



Introducing tools which support asynchronous discussion, Community Cultivation, and asynchronous education, Service Context should add balance to the community polarity. It should be possible to present all types of tools to encourage and cater to a variety of meal planners.

Above, I define asynchronous tools as tools that each person may use on their own time, without interruption to the linearity of meal planning as it is now (plan-buy-make-repeat) and without needing to be used at the same time as other community members.

MVP notes

I'd like to shift two polarities to make them more even/present in the market: Group Tools and Asynchronous Tools. At the time of writing, two tools come to mind:

1. **A recipe discussion forum.** In order to encourage community cultivation, meal planners should have a place to discuss meal planning, purchasing and food care tips, recipes, sustainable practices, and more. With such a tool, the concerns of the community are directly accessible and present for platform developers to take heed of and address.
2. **A tool which takes your grocery list and suggests local producers which have the food you need.** Such a tool would directly encourage sustainable practice and the sub-goals of UN SD goal 12, particularly with encouraging local producers to stay in business, support people in buying local, and educate people who did not know the producers existed.

Tool 1 is very sorely needed - if anyone were to discuss or complain about current platforms they would have to turn to social media (or more private blogs, forums) to discuss or voice complaints/concerns - which do not directly influence the platform developers to change anything unless done at an unprecedented scale.

Unfortunately, while tool 2 directly supports UN SD Goal 12, it is not really feasible for a single-semester project. It would involve location-based technology, the obtaining of local producer's inventory, and the synchronisation of inventory with what the tool suggests for grocery lists. Additional work would be involved in deciding which local grocer to suggest, what to do if the business does not have all of the food on the list, and what to suggest if no producers are in the area.