



How do you keep the candle lit and not burn it from both ends (as a community & as a community member)

Shared notes

Birds-of-a-Feather - eResearch Australasia 2023

Tuesday 17 October

Hosted by the Australasian Chapter of Women in High Performance Computing (WHPC+ AusNZ).

Note: We include a "+" in our name because our Chapter is open to all people from all walks of life.

Anyone who is interested in diversity & inclusion in HPC or eResearch is welcome in our Chapter.

Ways to connect with WHPC+ AusNZ:

- Slack: whpcausnz.slack.com - https://join.slack.com/t/whpcausnz/shared_invite/zt-18o4a4pue-S4tArDwBsthS_LPeCiTsIA
- X / Twitter: @WHPCAusNZ - <https://twitter.com/WHPCAusNZ>
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/whpc-australasia>
- Website: <https://aero.edu.au/whpc/>
- Slides of our WHPC journey as a community:

 WHPC AusNZ BoF - eResAU 23 - community management.pdf

Supporting sustainable community engagement

Communities come in all shapes and sizes and they exist along a spectrum of purpose, from ones that share information and educate to others built around collaborative co-creation. Your community's purpose will play into where you want to take it and how it will evolve over time. Across their lifespan, communities will grow, shrink, and maybe even shift in focus. This is natural.

A balancing act must be navigated behind the scenes of building, managing, and growing membership, all the while ensuring community members are individually getting what they need from being involved.

Ideally, a community has a Community Manager at its helm. As a sector, we need to recognise and advocate for these kinds of roles, giving these important facilitators space and time to help our communities reach their full potential.

Read on to hear what community organisers and community members from across the eResearch sector shared as tips on how to support community engagement and growth in a sustainable way.

W4DC



Situation	Solutions	Actions
Recruiting volunteers	Offer different types of volunteer roles (range of complexities, commitment levels, etc.) to cater to different availabilities and capabilities Consider how volunteering could be counted towards career development	When recruiting, emphasise the benefits of being involved (what's in it for the volunteer) – eg. skill development, expanded network, etc.
Securing employer backing for community participation	Employers need to understand how volunteering can be counted towards career development: • training • connections • corporate citizenship	Make a pitch for having 10% headspace to participate in a community. Highlight how your involvement can feed benefit(s) back into the organisation, eg. opportunities to learn about different software and tools; strengthened networks; potential new collaborations
Leveraging other groups / communities	Take advantage of people who are adjacent to a community - make connections and aim to align efforts (eg. co-host events or cross-promote your activities)	Once connections are made, aim to keep them healthy through regular catch-ups (eg. monthly or even quarterly). Can be a Zoom call, an email update - whatever keeps you on each other's radar.
Balancing effort	A community works best when it's developed slowly over time. Avoid the urge to "be & do everything" – forgive yourself for not doing it all.	Pick a few things and do them well (eg. a newsletter, a meetup, a Slack space). Those are the elements that will add strength to your community and help carry it long-term.
Avoiding burn-out	Need to have a plan for replacing ourselves, because we can't be involved forever. As individuals / volunteers, we need freedom to be honest about what we can take on.	Consider options for governance structure: • strategic vs. hands-on • appointed vs elected <i>Example from the Carpentries:</i> Use an EOI & align questions around the objectives of the community. Create a rubric to assess & compare applications.

Situation (cont.)	Solutions (cont.)	Actions (cont.)
How to combat the 'identity issue' & find your community members	Identities shift and people change, but a common goal / shared vision is what aligns community members. Showcasing role models can help people identify with your community. Recognise that imposter syndrome may be what's keeping people from joining your community.	Share stories of: • how people first got involved • what keeps them involved today • why they enjoy being part of the community Tackle imposter syndrome head-on - share stories that speak to that explicitly "At first I wasn't sure if this community was for me, but then..."
Navigating your membership lifecycles	Not all members will need you forever - that's okay - your purpose is to deliver value to them when they need it most. Ensure the channels that bring people in (and onboard them once there!) stay supported & reliable.	Don't leave new members stranded once they've joined. Welcome them! Help them navigate your community spaces, connect them with existing members, invite them to participate. Collect stats to understand how your community changes over time (eg. # members, rates of engagement, etc.)
Staying focused on your community's purpose	Everything you do should circle back to your community's purpose.	Write down your intentions and purpose and always refer to them (on website, in docs, during events, etc.).

Links / resources:

- [Center for Scientific Collaboration and Community Engagement \(CSCCE\)](#) - a research and training center to support and study the emerging field of scientific community engagement.
 - Australian BioCommons recap of participating in CSCCE's 8-week course: <https://www.biocommons.org.au/news/cscce-course>
- Community Managers - An Overview: *(by The Turing Way - a community dedicated to making collaborative, reusable and transparent research "too easy not to do")*
<https://the-turing-way.netlify.app/collaboration/research-infrastructure-roles/community-manager.html>

Who attended our BoF:



Where are you based (geographic location)



Who/what are your communities:



Overall, what is your role in your communities:

