The Power of Communities of Practice

An Inside Look at How Knowledge Sharing Happens

Douglas Look

Business Solution Architect, Autodesk Knowledge Platform

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Class summary

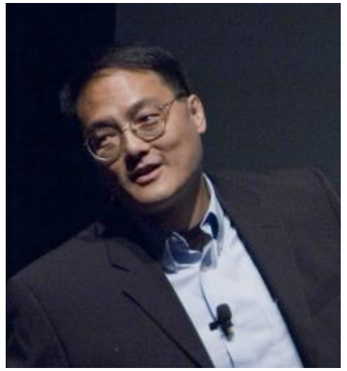
The goal of the session is to have a collaborative and interactive conversation that will deepen the insights and understanding related to communities of practice as a strategy for sharing knowledge.

Key learning objectives

At the end of this class, you will be able to:

- Understand the potential value of participating in communities of practice
- Gain an understanding of why people participate and their motivations
- Share insights & ideas on how to make communities of practice more effective
- Network with professionals who share interest in communities of practice

Roundtable Discussion



Douglas Look
Business Solution Architect
Autodesk, Inc.



John Wallace
User Experience Architect
Autodesk, Inc.



Rebecca Arsham
Global CADD Applications Training Manager
WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff



Christopher Crowe
Associate AIA
AECOM



Michael Hall
Principal Customer Support Manager
Autodesk, Inc.



Bob Palioca
President
Ideate, Inc.



communitas

n. The very spirit of community; an intense community spirit, the feeling of great social equality, solidarity, and togetherness.

Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/rvoegtli/15416431146

What are Communities of Practice?

> **“Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a *passion* for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.”**
>
> Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner



Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/carnivillain/3902043851

What are Communities of Practice?

Three crucial characteristics

- ***Domain***: Shared identity defined by a shared domain of interest
- ***Community***: joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information.
- ***Practice***: Members of a community of practice are practitioners. They develop shared resources.

Source: Brief Introduction to Communities of Practice, Wenger-Trayner, 2015



Why should we care?

Value of Communities of Practice:
- They solve problems quickly.
- They transfer best practices.
- They develop professional skills.

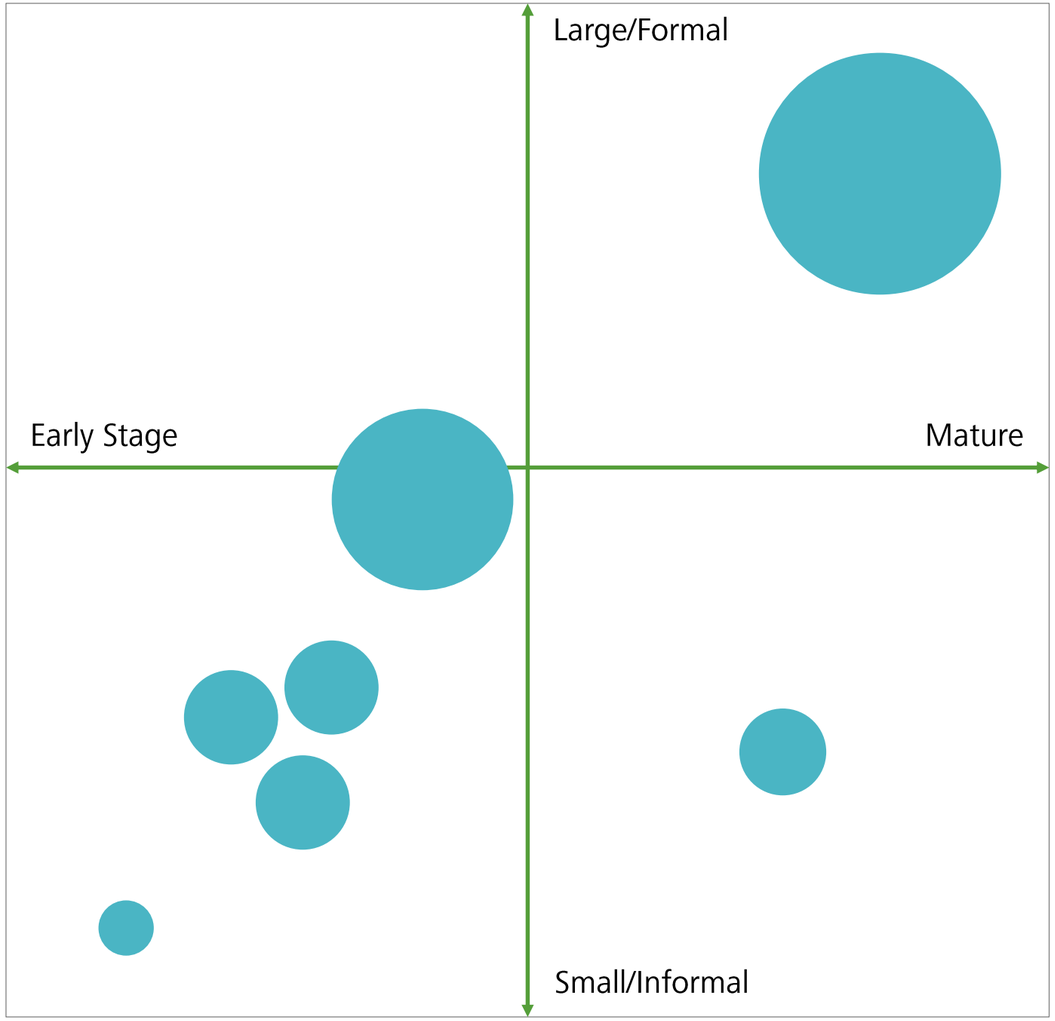


> **“They are where a good deal of the work involved in knowledge creation and organizational learning gets done.”**
>
> John Seely Brown, Paul Duguid

CoPs Take Many Forms

Communities = people, not technology

- Balance of informal/formal
- Unstructured/structured
- Small, Medium, Large
- Early stage/mature stage
- Local/regional/international
- Industry/Practice/Product focus
- Internal/external networks



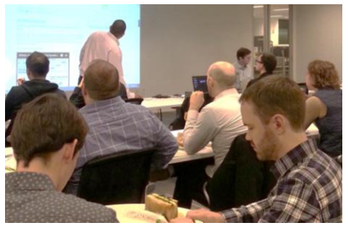
Diffusion of Innovation

WSP/PB PANs



Practice Networks
100's – 1000's of participants
The 95 percent
Working users, Public and Internal

SF Dynamo User Group



User Groups
10's of participants
The 5 percent
Internal evangelists
Go-to people

Bad Monkeys



Inner Circle of Experts
5 – 16 participants
The 1 percent
Enthusiasts, Independent learners
Value sharing

Early Adopters | Chasm | Early Majority | Late Majority | Laggards

Social Learning: People learn through others

How are people learning together?

- **Small groups** of leading edge experts
- Sharing knowledge and establishing a shared identity (talking trash, talking shop)
- **Making connections** an important outcome
- Next-Perts highly plugged into **social media**
- Members of expert communities of practice can be a great source of knowledge
- **Creating solutions that don't yet exist**
- Need **both public and private platforms** for sharing knowledge



Autodesk Communities of Practice Workshop

"My magical assistant would help me understand who has certain skills, their interests, projects, and experience..."

Arup Skills Network Lead

Face to Face: The power of in-person

Personal Engagement Matters

- People highly value the opportunity to meet each other
- **Shared interaction key to building shared identity**
- Face to face interactions help **build relationships**
- Face to face involves **learning on both sides**
- Structured events for social communication involves group interaction
- Autodesk **inside access helps build reputation**
- Regularly scheduled events build learning and knowledge sharing into the culture



Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/cogdog/19514518670

“Behind all the technology, it’s all about building relationships.”

Emily Hooper, IA Interior Architects

Motivations

Motivations: why participate?

- Intrinsic/extrinsic
- Altruism
- **Helping others**
- Reciprocity
- **Recognition**/reputation/status
- Share and learn
- Developing own brand/reputation
- Tied to **professional development**

> **“Get to meet some really interesting creative people, see fascinating new things, and it’s a great marketing tool…”**
>
> Jeff Richlin, Richlin Machinery



Source https://www.flickr.com/photos/tomas_sobek/13005774895

Value

Value: what do they get out of it?

- Immediate **help**
- Comradery/shared identity
- More powerful voice
- Professional **development**
- Build reputation/status
- Fun/excitement/energy
- Part of a movement
- Shared best practices
- Explore new topics
- **Satisfaction** from helping others
- Finding the right expertise

> **“The more you can give me, the more I can give you.”**
> Civil 3D User Group



Source: Adam Tow

Key Principles

Help users connect *to form long term relationships*

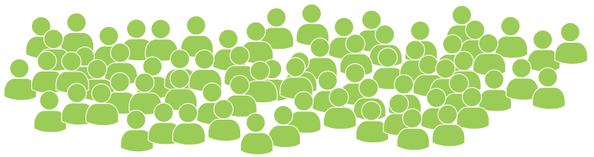


Help communities develop content *that fills knowledge gaps in practice and productivity*



Support face-to-face meetups *to have fun and develop trust*

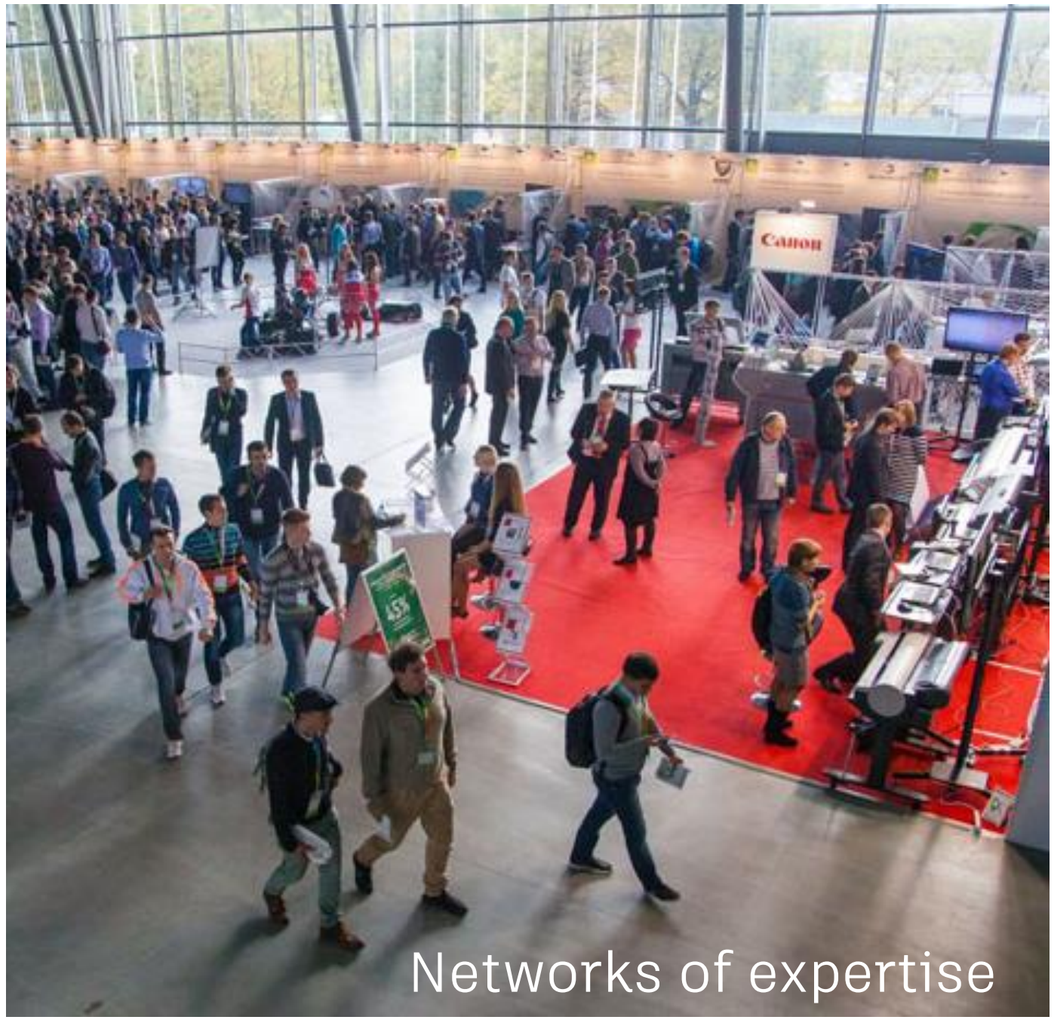
Provide a public/private platform *to help communities share their knowledge*



Why Autodesk?

What can Autodesk provide?

- A **destination for content** marketing
- **Access** to global expertise
- Access to expert networks
- Knowledge as a service to internal CoPs
- Sponsor grand challenges
- **Transparency**: product direction
- Logistical resources
- Playbooks for starting CoPs
- **Face to face connections** at Autodesk University
- Liaison to product teams



Networks of expertise

Source: Autodesk University at Sokolniki Convention Center

What Can Autodesk Do to Nurture Communities of Practice?

Support face-to-face meetups

Give us challenges



Community of Experts

Be transparent and authentic

Engage in two-way conversation

Help us find speakers

Help us with logistics

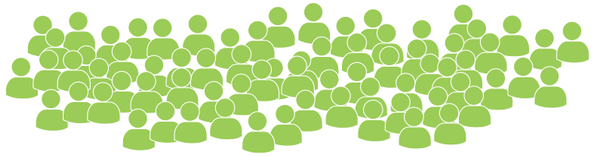


User Group

Don’t market to us - help us solve our problems

Provide infrastructure for internal sharing

Help us find the right person to talk to

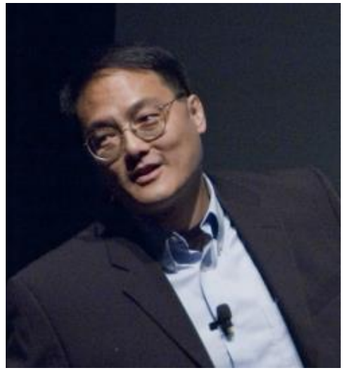


Practice Network

“Communities don’t launch, they grow from seeds”

Rachel Happe, The Community Roundtable

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