COMMUNITY BUILDING 101: BUILDING AND GROWING YOUR GATEWAY

Sarah-Jane Morris, Founder and Principal Consultant, Listen Community Consulting
Kitty disclaimer!
Who am I anyways?

A short intro

- 15 years experience building communities
- 8 years experience building developer communities
- Built inclusive communities for companies like Mashery, Intel, Keen IO and Shopify
- Launched my own developer community consultancy to help companies grow inclusive, welcoming, diverse and sustainable developer communities

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First: what is community?

A community is a group with a shared principle, interest, cause, or place, navigating that commonality together. In other words, one community members’ actions can impact the community as a whole.

And how can community benefit your gateway?

A gateway community can be built around research, education, projects, and ideas. Gateway communities can be leveraged to encourage research awareness, share and exchange knowledge, push innovation forward, and gather valuable feedback.
What do you mean, "inclusive"?

- Overused terminology in tech HR/hiring
- Extend inclusion to community building
- Ultimately simple: inclusion is not just making efforts to invite different kinds of humans, but welcome them with open arms.
Wheel of Diversity!
What will we cover?

10 questions to ask yourself to build an inclusive and sustainable gateway community:

- Who's in your community?
- Have you sought out diverse feedback for your gateway?
- Are you using welcoming language in your gateway?
- Are you using inclusive imagery in your gateway?
- Is there a code of conduct in place for your gateway?
- What community tools are you using?
- What are the benefits of collaboration in your gateway community?
- When should you join in to gateway community conversations?
- Should you engage in relevant external gateway communities?
- How can you encourage community and collaboration in new gateways?
Who's in your community?

- Researchers
- Contributors
- Developers
- All or a combination of the above
- Ask!

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Have you sought out diverse gateway feedback?

- Nancy Douyon's Oculus headset story
- Diverse feedback means better outcomes
Are you using welcoming language?

- "bossy and feisty" = never used to describe men
- Find the language tool here: https://lsn2.us/inclusion
Are you using inclusive imagery?

- Be sure to be authentic when using images
- WoC in Tech Flickr
- Broadly's Gender Spectrum Collection
- Find them all here: https://lsn2.us/inclusion
What community tools are you using?

- Chat and collaboration tools vs. Forums
- Capturing SEO long-tail traffic
- Benefits of a knowledge base
Is there a Code of Conduct in place?

- Crucial to signal community safety
- Geek Feminism wiki to get started
- Check 'em out here: https://lsn2.us/inclusion
Who are you sharing your gateway with?

- Make a point not to just share with friends, no matter how early on
- Consider user interviews or surveys to get diverse feedback
What are the Benefits of Gateway Community Collaboration?
Tech community friends!

Neil Mansilla, Head of Developer Experience, Atlassian
@mansillaDEV

Taylor Barnett, Lead Community Engineer, Stoplight
@taylor_atx

Elizabeth Kinsey, Developer Marketing Manager, Slack
@eakinsey

Liz Couto, Developer Product Marketing Manager, Shopify
@lizcouto

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Types of collaboration

What kinds of collaboration benefit gateway communities?

- Community forums
- External communities
- Mentorship
Healthier Ecosystems

- Community developers testing apps together: Atlassian example
Decreased Support Debt

- Community-led Slacks: Atlassian example
Increased community resources

• Creation of the open-source plugin: Stoplight's example
Community-led inspiration and mentorship

- Community sustainability
When should you join in?
Importance of consistent communication channels

- Consistency of information location and update frequency
- Less time seeking answers, more time collaborating
Unexpected gateway community touchpoints

- Email inspires community chatter
- Move questions from support queue to community forums

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Should you Engage with External Gateway Communities?
Who's talking about your gateway?
Set up alerts

- Simple Google alerts
- Slack integrations
Proceed with caution

- Participation creates expectation
- Stick with your consistent community channels
External frustration = internal red flag

- When your community isn't feeling supported, they'll take it outside
- Ensure your channels are clearly communicated and consistently used
How can you Encourage Collaboration in new Gateway Communities?
Talk to your users!

- Talk to any engaged users
- Find your target users
- Connect them with each other
- Share updates often
Ask your users!

- Address their pain points earlier on to build trust
- Building trust in the platform means building trust in fellow users
- Showcase diverse voices and connect them with each other

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Takeaways

Benefits of community collaboration

- Healthier gateways
- Increased gateway resources
- User to user inspiration and mentorship
Takeaways

Set the stage for collaboration: when and where

- The importance of consistent communication channels
- Making sure you consider more unexpected community touchpoint
- Set-up alerts for external communities to save time
Takeaways

Handling external collaboration

- Proceed with caution in external communities
- Frustration spilling over into “non-sanctioned” communities can indicate inconsistencies with your sanctioned communication channels

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Takeaways

Tips for getting collaboration rolling

- In new gateway communities, talk to early stage users and build relationships with them
- Ask your users questions, what do they need from your community in order to thrive... and respond where you can!
Thank you!

Stay in touch!

- Twitter: @SarahJaneMorris
- Also twitter: @ListenComm
- Email: sj@listen.community

Listen offers a series of developer community growth programs that are firmly based on listening. We start with a complete diagnostic analysis of your current developer program, your goals and your KPIs. From there, we take a deeper baseline measurement of your community health based on a proven developer community survey methodology our founder created in 2016. This will give us the data we need to create a complete developer growth and inclusion strategy based on your community’s needs. Once this has been created, we’ll be thrilled to help support and sponsor execution of our plans.

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