The Power of Communities of Practice
An Inside Look at How Knowledge Sharing Happens

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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

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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

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

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

**SF Dynamo User Group**

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

**Bad Monkeys**

**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

“**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

“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
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
What Can Autodesk Do to Nurture Communities of Practice?

- Support face-to-face meetups
- Give us challenges
- Be transparent and authentic
- Engage in two-way conversation
- Help us find speakers
- Help us with logistics
- Don’t market to us - help us solve our problems
- Provide infrastructure for internal sharing
- Help us find the right person to talk to

“Communities don’t launch, they grow from seeds”
Rachel Happe, The Community Roundtable
How did we do?

- Your class feedback is critical. Fill out a class survey now.
- Use the AU mobile app or fill out a class survey online.
- Give feedback after each session.
- AU speakers will get feedback in real-time.
- Your feedback results in better classes and a better AU experience.