

Building Communities That Work

A Hands-On Workshop on Fighting Noise in Developer Forums

Overview

- Why this workshop?
- Timeline
- Online communities you follow
 - Type of community (membership, messages, moderation)?
 - Purpose?
 - What noise (membership, messages, moderation)?
- Noise reduction
 - < 10 people - choose one, and perhaps a second
 - > 10 people - each group chooses one
- Wrapup

Why this workshop?

Some challenges wrt information sharing:

- Ministry of Truth (Fake News) <-> 20th century Science
- Algorithmic feeds - gain or pain?
- Bots / sock puppets

Questions

- Proof of Personhood - [save social media](#) - [cryptocurrencies](#)
- Which online community for which purpose?

Proof of Personhood

- In Real Life - meet up
 - Easy if met physically (until humanoid robots exist)
 - Some challenges if scale is needed (e.g., voting)
- Online - use tokens
 - Challenges when using tokens
 - Anonymity
 - No multiplication of tokens
 - Accountability
 - How to create tokens
 - Government issued identities (Swiyu :)
 - Web of Trust (Key Signing Parties...)
 - [Personhood parties](#)
 - [The Orb](#)

Timeline for less than 10 people

- Short presentations
- Brainstorming
 - Start with individual ideas (pen and paper)
 - Linus writes down / groups ideas
 - Sort together

Timeline for more than 10 people

- Split into groups of 5 to 10 people
- Short presentations
- Choose a name for the group
- Designate a secretary / speaker (either 1 or 2 persons)
- Brainstorming
 - Start with individual ideas (pen and paper)
 - Secretary writes down / groups ideas
 - Sort together
- Presentation



<https://go.epfl.ch/enhancer-communities>

Online communities you follow

- Name of service
- What are you looking for?
- How do you interact?
- How are the following handled?
 - membership
 - messages
 - moderation
- What noise (membership, messages, moderation)?



<https://go.epfl.ch/enhancer-communities>

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The White Chocolates - Stack Overflow

Procrastination (by answering), looking for solutions, providing normal expertise answers,

Looking for solutions regularly (daily), providing help irregularly

Membership is open

Messages are public, consensus-moderated

Moderation is present, but volume of content is very high

Most annoying noise is low-quality content (both Q and A) + recently AI

The Pistacchios - LinkedIn

I use this community for networking, targeted information

I mainly interact *daily* by posts and *direct_messages*, *forum*, ...

Membership is *open*

Messages are *public or private*

Moderation is *absent*

Most annoying noise is: spam with jobs, unlimited scrolling

The Pistacchios - Magic the gathering

I use this community for playing the game

I mainly interact *daily* by *direct_messages* (*whatsapp group*), *forum*, ...

Membership is *open*

Messages are *public, moderated*

Moderation is *present*

Most annoying noise: it's hard to navigate the tension between engagement and relevance

Group Noired - LinkedIn

I use this community for 1) jobs; 2) LOLs; 3) first point of contact (LinkedIn)

I mainly interact *frequency* by *direct_messages*, *web*, *app*...

Membership is *closed* (*invitation*; *nodes*)

Messages are *public*, *private*, *moderated* (*recommended algo*)

Moderation is *absent for individual interactions*, *present at network level*

Most annoying noise is notifications (mail; app; etc)

Noise Reduction

- Which community are you referring to?
- Describe the current state
- Describe the desired state
- How to to from current to desired?
 - What would need to be changed?
 - Would a system with "Proof of Personhood" help?
 - What other system has a similar solution?

Group White Chocolates - Noise Reduction

Community name: StackOverflow

Current state: *usage declines due to replacement by gen AI; volume is outpacing moderation*

Desired state: *constructive, useful, good-faith content that aligns with community expectations; discussions on niche and recent content*

How to go from current to desired?

- Changes needed:
- Existing systems with the desired state:
- Would a system with "Proof of Personhood" help?
 - *No, historically problematic content is from humans (including AI-"assisted" answers)*

The Pistacchios - Noise Reduction

Community name: Magic the gathering

Current state: *non-relevant posts (jokes,...)*

Desired state: moderated *separation of content*

How to go from current to desired?

- Changes needed:
- Existing systems with the desired state:
- Would a system with "Proof of Personhood" help?

Group Noired - Noise Reduction

Community: linkin

Current state (challenges): too *noisy*, we want to make it *quite enough* but not too quiet.

Desired state: *quite enough*

How to go from current to desired?

- Changes needed: How much (what level is the noisy 1-5) noise you want to have.
- Existing systems with the desired state: It can be configured through the platform, or a plugin instead of the recommendation algo.
- Would a system with "Proof of Personhood" help? (NO), it always associate with the real name.

Wrapup

I want to do a write-up of this - if you're interested, send an email to linus.gasser@epfl.ch - I'll only use it once after the write-up to inform you.