Communication and Knowledge Transfer in OSM
Introduction

About Myself

• Hanna Krüger
• Username raubraupe
• from Germany
• OSM hobbyist since 2012
• Mechanical Engineer by day

Main Activities

• OSMF and FOSSGIS member
• voluntary work for the German local chapter (FOSSGIS)
• casual mapper
• maintaining OpenStreetMap Wiki (Deleting staff)
Let’s Start!
**Communication**

- **Definition:**
  - All kind of information shared about OSM related topics

- **Examples:**
  - Discussions
  - Blogs and Websites
  - Forums and Wikis
  - Social Media
  - Messages and Mails
  - Announcements and Ads
  - Guidance / Help / FAQ
  - Reports
  - Feedback (Fix me, Bugs…)
  - …
Who communicates?

• Short answer: everyone

• Groups of Players
  • OSMF and Working Groups
  • Local Chapters & Communities
  • Mapper
  • Companies
  • Software Developers
  • User
  • Beginners, Interested Persons
  • ...

• Communication in and between these groups
Different Media for Different Purposes
Offline Communication

Meetings, Mapping Parties, Conferences, Regular’s Tables, …

Pros

• private and personal contact

• socializing

• strengthen communities

Cons

• higher effort to participate

• traceability and confirmability

• often no recording or reports
Group Chats

What’s App, Telegram, Slack, Matrix, ....

**Pros**

- private communication
- conversations and discussions
- just in time reply

**Cons**

- only private access
- little visibility
- no archive
Facebook

Used mainly by Humanitarian Organisation, African and American Communities

**Pros**
- High reach and popularity of this media
- Great for “Ad” content
- Easy to communicate in groups

**Cons**
- Limited public access
- Badly searchable
- No chronology of timelines
- Manipulation by spam and retweet circles
Twitter

Used by many different groups
- eg. Software Developers, Companies, HOT, Official Channels, Mappers

Pros
- Easy to consume (just 280 chars)
- high popularity
- possible to get high reach
- great for ‘Ad’ content

Cons
- sketchy information
- filtered content and opinions
- low attention span
Mailing List

Very popular in Europe and Special Interest Communities

**Pros**

- popular medium
- high accessibility
- good for detailed and long discussions

**Cons**

- cultural differences complicate participation
- time consuming media
- Archive = Pain in the butt
Boards

OpenStreetMap Forum, Help, Reddit, …

Only for specific purposes

• Q and A
• Bugs / Fix me
• Guidance

Pros

• well searchable
• just in time

Cons

• only for special purposes
• not suitable for long discussions
• outdated content
**Blogs & Websites**

**Types**
- Community
- Weekly OSM, OpenStreetMap Blog
- Companies
  - Mapbox, OsmAnd, ...
- Personal Blogs

**Pros**
- detailed content
- well linked
- reports, reviews, announcements

**Cons**
- relatively low reach
- high inhibition threshold
- time consuming medium
## Wiki

**OSM Wiki and Local Chapter Wikis (especially European)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• allows sharing all kind of media</td>
<td>• complicated syntax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• well searchable</td>
<td>• mobile access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• maintenance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Media for daily use

### Inhibition threshold

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Group Chat</td>
<td>Face to Face</td>
<td>Blog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>Meet Up</td>
<td>Mailing List</td>
<td>Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viral</td>
<td>Timeline Based Social Media</td>
<td>Board/Forum</td>
<td>Wiki</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Hanna Krüger*
Benefit of Scattered Communication

- easy to participate
- low inhibition threshold
- strengthen local communities
- strengthen groups of special interest
Downside of scattered Communication

- hard to find and retrieve information
- inconsistent and conflicted information
- impossible to distinguish between
  - Proposal - Current State - Outdated Version
- hard to collect, spread and transfer knowledge
Knowledge Transfer

What is important

• well searchable
• persistence
• high accessibility
• multilingualism
• high refresh period
Media for Knowledge Transfer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility (for consumer)</th>
<th>Searchability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Wiki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
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</table>
Problem

• scattered communication characterize OSM
• difficult and time consuming to find information
• private access
• conflicting information
Solution?

- choose your communication channels more carefully
- think about audience and reach
- stop mirroring channels & conversations
- backup important information on global channels
  - Examples: Weekly OSM, Belgian Matrix Channel
- remind yourself to keep information updated
Thanks for your Attention!

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