

# Participatory Communications

**A how-to guide for Wikimedians**

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# Agenda

- What is participatory communications?
- Why should I care about this?
- Case study: 100 Wiki Days
- When to apply participatory tools in communications
- Tools for participatory communications
- Open conversation.



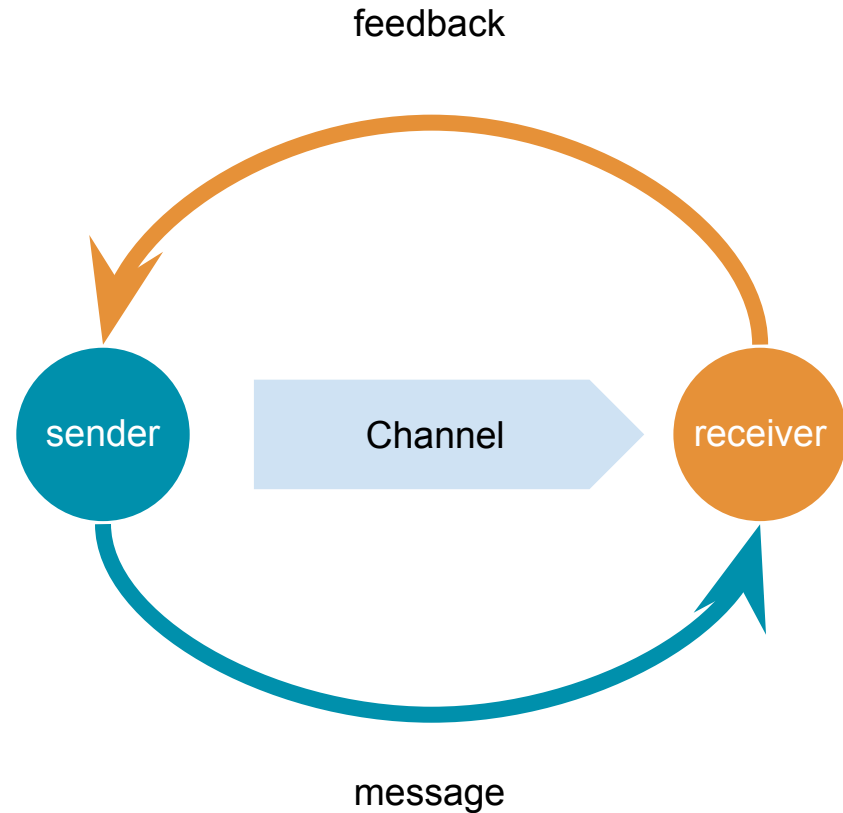
# What is Participatory Communications?

# Traditional communication cycle

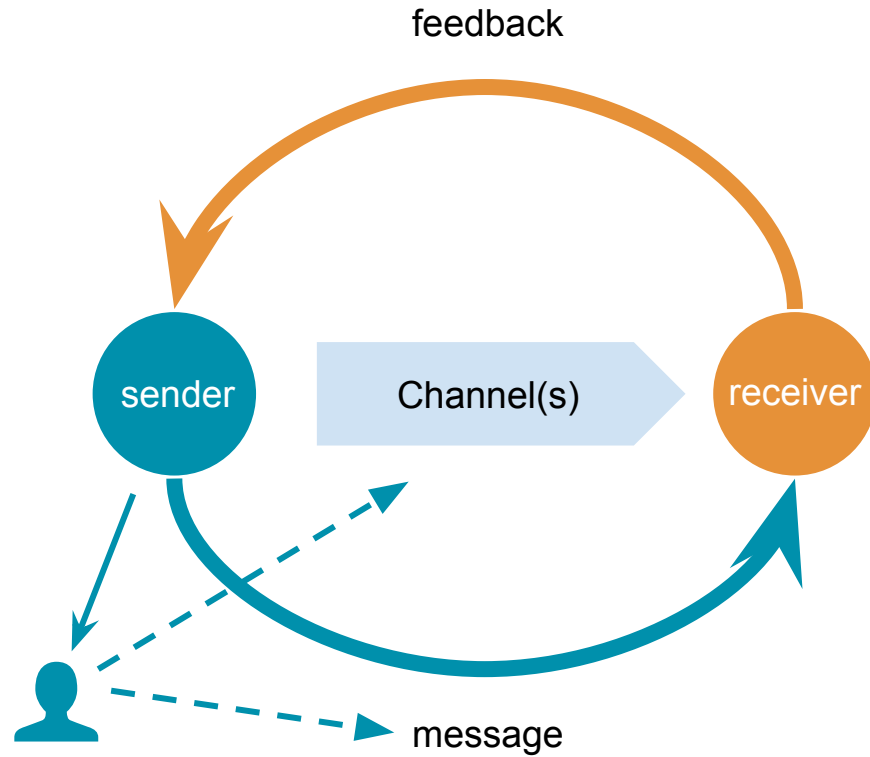
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The verb **communicate** has a double meaning <sup>[1]</sup>:

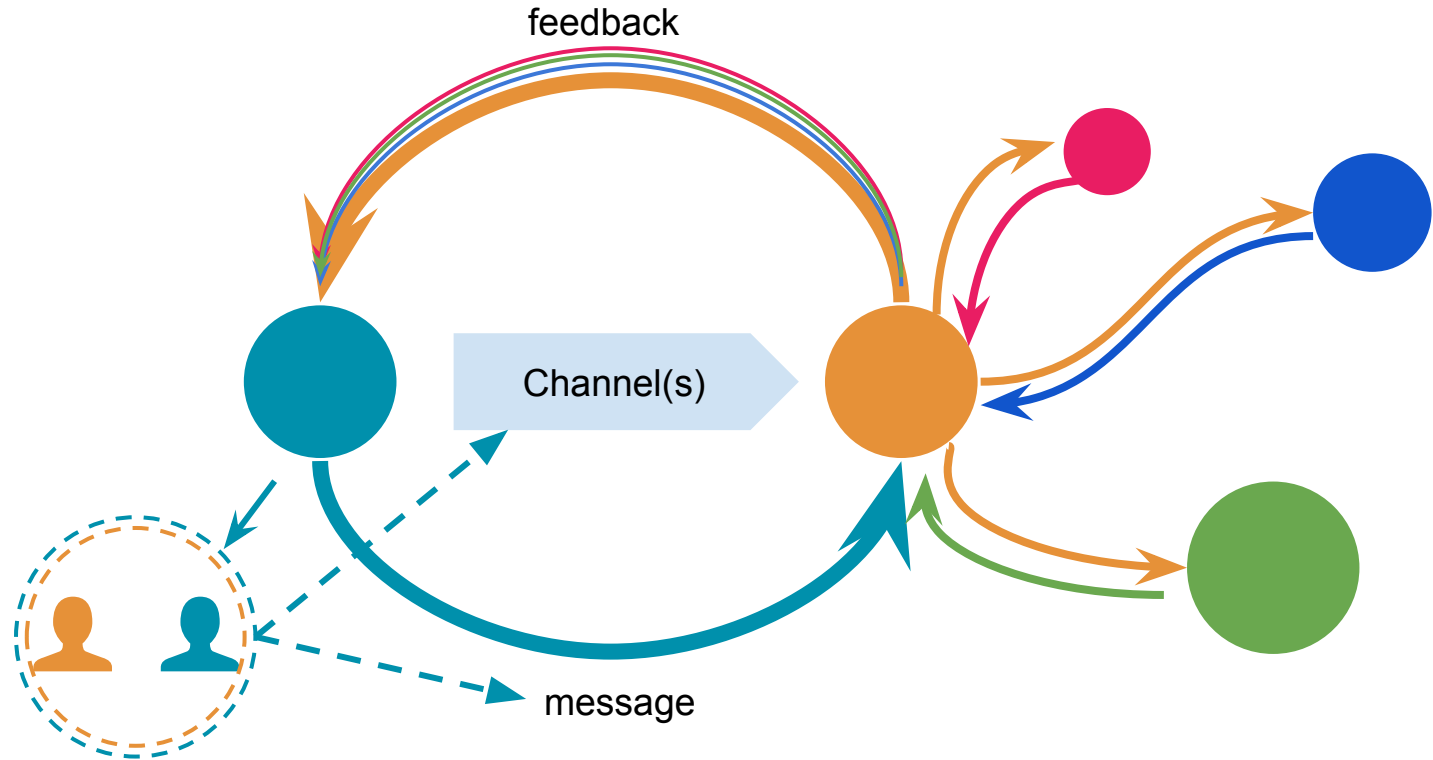
- to **transmit information** (from one source to another), and
- to **have in common** (to share something with someone else).



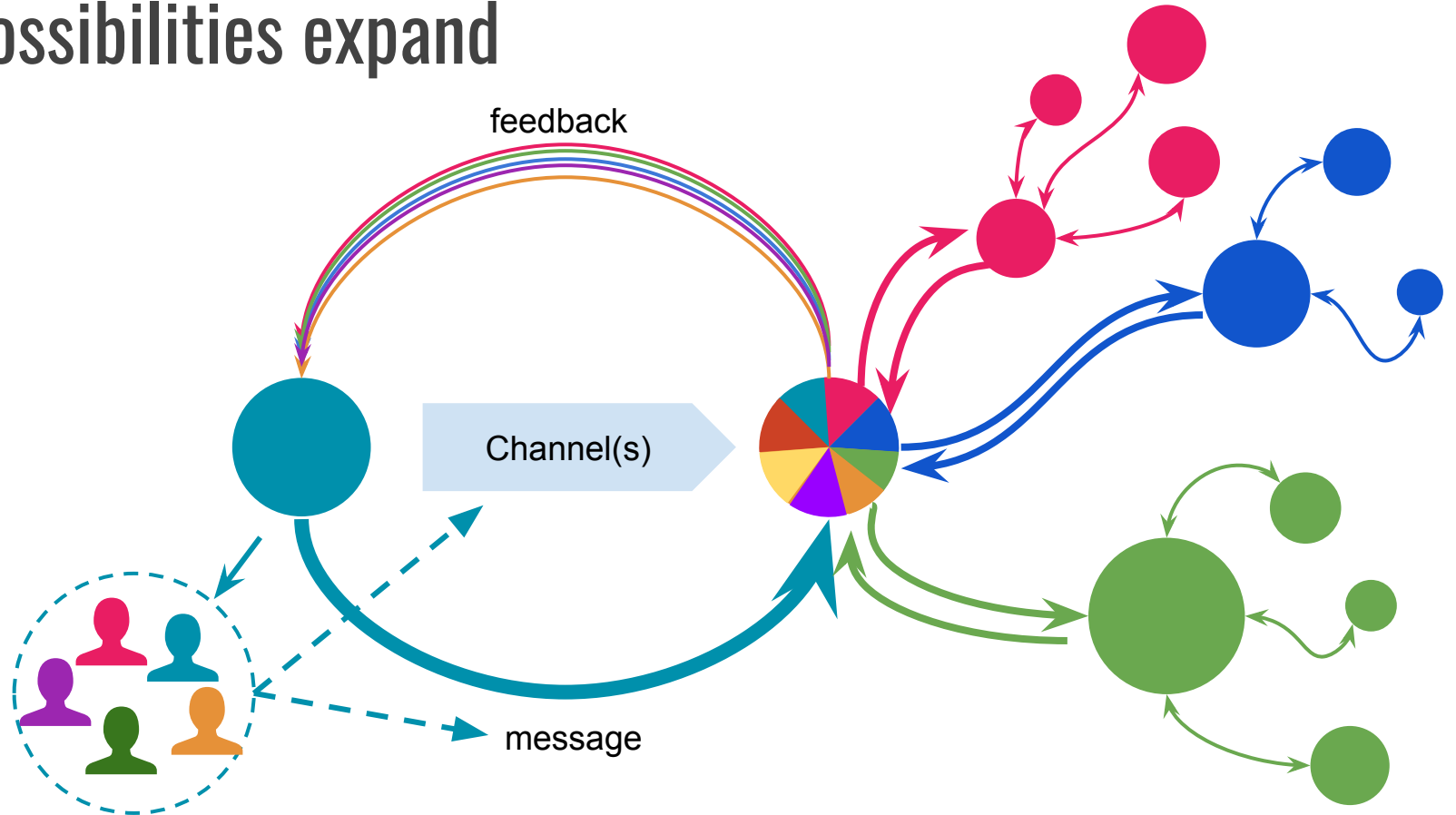
# Traditional communication cycle



# Adding the participation factor



# The possibilities expand



# Case Study: 100 Wiki Days

A personal challenge that became  
an epidemic.

- In the handout, you can see the journey from a personal challenge to a passion shared by many.
  - **Open communications** is key to keep everyone engaged and motivated.
  - **Empowering participants** is identified as essential to expand the challenge.
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When should I  
involve others in my  
communication  
workflows?

# Three stages of a photo contest

- [https://etherpad.wikimedia.org/p/Participatory\\_Communications](https://etherpad.wikimedia.org/p/Participatory_Communications)

- **Design.** In this stage, you create the project from the name, to the activities that will take place, rules for engagement, etc.
- **Implementation.** The project in action!
- **Evaluation / Report.** Usually after the project finishes, you assess what worked well, and what could be improved. You also decide whether to implement it again.



# Activity 1

Identifying communication needs.

- Break up in **3 groups**, one for each stage of a photo contest.
- Work together to **identify all the different communication tasks** that take place in the stage you are working on.
- Add your items to the list on **etherpad:**  
[https://etherpad.wikimedia.org/p/Participatory\\_Communications](https://etherpad.wikimedia.org/p/Participatory_Communications)

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How do I involve  
others in  
communication  
tasks?

# Four techniques for participatory communications<sup>[2]</sup>

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- **Interviews.** This method provides high level of detail, and can be done with only one person, or in small groups. *(5 participants, 1 hour each)*
- **Open feedback.** This method is similar to a Talk Page: participants leave comments on a predefined topic. Example: [Re-design of Global Metrics](#). *(10 participants, 15 minutes)*
- **Structured feedback.** This method involves setting up specific questions or prompts that you need input on for your project. Example: [Leadership development dialogue](#); [Wikimedia Resource Center navigation](#). *(10 - 15 participants, 30 minutes each)*
- **Surveys / vote.** This method allows you to reach critical mass, and have high level of detail. Example: [Program reports](#) ([voting doc](#)) *(200 participants, 5 minutes each)*

# Channels for participatory communication

Tool	
Talk pages	
Google Documents	
Online conference tools (Hangouts, Skype, Blue Jeans)	
Etherpad	
Social networks	
Survey tools (Google Forms, Qualtrics, Survey Monkey)	

# Channels for participatory communication

Tool	Sync/A sync
Talk pages	Async
Google Documents	Async
Online conference tools (Hangouts, Skype, Blue Jeans)	Sync
Etherpad	Sync
Social networks	Async
Survey tools (Google Forms, Qualtrics, Survey Monkey)	Async

# Channels for participatory communication

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Sync/A sync</b>	<b>Document history</b>
Talk pages	Async	Yes
Google Documents	Async	Yes
Online conference tools (Hangouts, Skype, Blue Jeans)	Sync	No / Limited (allow recording)
Etherpad	Sync	Yes
Social networks	Async	Limited
Survey tools (Google Forms, Qualtrics, Survey Monkey)	Async	Limited



# Channels for participatory communication

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Sync/A sync</b>	<b>Document history</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Talk pages	Async	Yes	Text / Images
Google Documents	Async	Yes	Text / Images
Online conference tools (Hangouts, Skype, Blue Jeans)	Sync	No / Limited (allow recording)	Audio / Video / Text
Etherpad	Sync	Yes	Text
Social networks	Async	Limited	Audio / Video / Text
Survey tools (Google Forms, Qualtrics, Survey Monkey)	Async	Limited	Text / Graphics

# Channels for participatory communication

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Sync/A sync</b>	<b>Document history</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Public/Non-public</b>
Talk pages	Async	Yes	Text / Images	Public
Google Documents	Async	Yes	Text / Images	Both / Link needed
Online conference tools (Hangouts, Skype, Blue Jeans)	Sync	No / Limited (allow recording)	Audio / Video / Text	Both / Link needed
Etherpad	Sync	Yes	Text	Public / Link needed
Social networks	Async	Limited	Audio / Video / Text	Public / Non-public
Survey tools (Google Forms, Qualtrics, Survey Monkey)	Async	Limited	Text / Graphics	Non-public

# Channels for participatory communication

Tool	Sync/A sync	Document history	Medium	Public/Non-public	Good for
Talk pages	Async	Yes	Text / Images	Public	Open, inclusive, public discussions, idea generation and approbation, collecting feedback
Google Documents	Async	Yes	Text / Images	Both / Link needed	Drafts of specific documents, media strategies, exchange of lists with personal contacts, other documents containing private/sensitive information
Online conference tools (Hangouts, Skype, Blue Jeans)	Sync	No / Limited (allow recording)	Audio / Video / Text	Both / Link needed	Real time, fast, operative discussions / planning within a relatively small group of people. Brainstorming.
Etherpad	Sync	Yes	Text	Public / Link needed	Brainstorming, taking notes of real time meetings, collaborative editing of shared content in real time
Social networks	Async	Limited	Audio / Video / Text	Public / Non-public	Fast, operative discussions and coordination (i.e. real-time events), outreach to and engagement with external audiences
Survey tools (Google Forms, Qualtrics, Survey Monkey)	Async	Limited	Text / Graphics	Non-public	Collecting detailed feedback by predefined questions and choice of answers; may collect personified or anonymous answers, private/sensitive information

# Channels for participatory communication

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## Communication channels' "Diversity / Effectiveness" ratio

Some topics are so broad, long-term and require feedback from different stakeholders, that larger number of diverse channels may be needed (e.g. the Wikimedia movement strategy itself).

Most often, though, you will need few - but effective - communication channels; do not artificially diversify channels, as not all of them will suit your needs, but once opened all will need your attention and maintenance effort. Keep the "Signal / Noise" ratio as high as possible.

Choose the communication channels wisely, depending on:

- the scope of the topic,
- the number, and
- the diversity of the expected group of contributors.

# Have a specific request

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- Be clear about the feedback you are looking for, and how you are going to use contributions from other people.
- Outline the steps or requirements for engagement.
- Give a timeframe for contributions.



**Jeff Elder**

1 de marzo a las 6:41

Is there a great woman from your nation who is often overlooked and deserves recognition during Women's History Month? If you post a bit about her, a link to her Wikipedia article, and tag or link to your Wikimedia group's Facebook page, we'll try to give her and your group love from the main Wikipedia page!



**Samir Elsharbaty** compartió un enlace.

14 de marzo a las 11:41

Are there any nice PHOTOS from an event you've held recently that you would like to share on the blog's community digest? i.e., women's history month editathons, workshops, meetups, etc. If yes, please drop it here, or a link to where it lives, with 1-2 lines about the event. It doesn't need to be a long story with lengthy details. A nice photo with a descriptive caption will be quite informative. You can also send us your photos at [blogteam@wikimedia.org](mailto:blogteam@wikimedia.org).

# Related issues

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- [Linus' Law](#)
- [Wisdom of the Crowd](#)
- [Cunningham's Law](#)
- [Voting is Evil](#)

Don't forget: There are [conflicting Wikipedia philosophies](#)

Beware of:

- [Eternal September](#), [Godwin's Law](#), [Streisand Effect](#)

# Activity 2

Opening communication tasks: a strategic decision.

- Work in pairs.
- You will be assigned a **project** to work on. You can relate this to a real project, or an imaginary one from this program type.
- With the **communications needs** identified in Activity 1, choose which of these you will open for participation, and how.
- **Be prepared to share why** you think that specific need is a good candidate for participatory communications.



Open conversation





Stay in touch!

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# Citations

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[1] Definition of the verb “to communicate” taken from Wiktionary:

<https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/communicate>

[2] Some of the techniques shared have been mentioned on Comunia’s Communication Manual for NGOs:

<http://www.comunia.org.ar/manual-com-org-soc.pdf>