

Role at the Foundation

- What I did may not be what the next person does. A lot of my work was internal management. Building systems. Communication norms. Trust within the team. Figuring out what kind of skill they needed. I have a very personal management style: be an advocate, ask the right questions, ensure quality, provide resources that the team needs to do its job.
- Impact areas I was focusing on: participation, reach, quality. Everyone has different opinions on what these mean. Strategic questions: How do you scale things for a global organization and is a volunteer organization? How do you measure your impact so that you're doing activities that are effective? How do you grow the foundation staff into an infrastructure that can support future strategic activities?
- There's still lots of easy, obvious work to do. There will be lots of non-obvious, difficult work to do. As long as we have a vast array of opportunities to significantly impact these three areas, let's look at the opportunities and prioritize.
- Learning what's going on, developing systems for evaluating opportunities.
- Going forward: they're going to re-imagine the position. The management structure might look different.

What has your interaction with members of the community?

- My experience has validated what others have told me: Small group of vocal, active volunteers. Lots of people who participate in ways that the foundation and community governance doesn't recognize, explicitly value or is even aware about.
- For meetups, you need people who are more social in person, whereas the vocal community that the foundation interacts with thrive on the online social environment. People I met at meetups were not the people I was hearing from online. And I had minimal exposure to the broader community. When the word "community" is used, it is typically only representative of less than 50-150 very vocal participants.
- I went to 5 meetups in my time here. Only two [of the people I met] I had ever seen online.
- In my limited sampling, that means there's more diversity out there, there are different motivations than we assume, we don't meet or hear from most of the community by posting on foundation-I

Tell me about priorities for outreach, communication, etc.

Outreach:

- Frank's initial approach has been to shotgun. Figure out what works. If you can scale it, try it. As volunteer, he started the academies. Evolved it into something where you could measure the impact of it to see if we're getting the impact of what we want. Is it the promotional thing? Is it to build

goodwill? Is it to build participation? He involves volunteers he knows have been working in the field. We have begun to identify priority areas to build community capacity to conduct outreach. Move it beyond the expertise of one person.

- There are also lots of people doing things that we know a little about, and things we hear about that nobody knew was happening. General foundation opinion is, that's great. We want more activity than we could possibly track. There's a lot going on that we don't touch.

Communications:

- There's a volunteer communications group. Kind of selective, but not formally. Chapters can do their own press releases. Because Jay is a one man department, his focus is reacting to media inquiries. If the BBC calls, you have to answer the phone, whether it's an important or helpful story or not.
- His involvement with the community is the list, where people say what's going on. A lot of the press happens outside of the foundation.

Are there opportunities in roles that don't currently exist?

- The ideal situation would be that the foundation trained people who could be official representatives so that more of that is farmed out to the community.
- We need to provide more support in the form of training.
- We don't have a career path for volunteers.
- An anchorman would have to learn how to edit before being on the communication team. That doesn't make sense.
- We need more staff. There have been no restrictions for what you can do in the press and only Jay/ Sue/ Erik /Board (w/support from Jay) can speak for the foundation, there isn't a tension with the community because the foundation encourages people and chapters to speak for themselves. People want support, and we haven't been able to do enough yet. Jay doesn't have enough time to push out the capacity.

What about the tension between having a professional staff and involving volunteers?

- That can be the case. That shouldn't be the case. We have a skeletal staff now. We keep the basic things running. Cary is the only one with "Volunteer" in his title right now, but he doesn't really do anything proactive with volunteers. He does switchboard. He puts out fires. There's no volunteer support in the office right now, because everyone's doing more than 100% of their time on a job that's too big for them.
- The way to involve volunteers is to support them in the staff. Volunteers don't support themselves in a sustainable way. If the movement is a volunteer run community, the foundation serves the volunteers.

- If you invite a volunteer to do something, but all the planning and background info is on the office wiki or jay's head, that's not the foundation serving the volunteers.
- I have an idea of what engaging with volunteers mean because that's my background. To me, more staff means more ways to give volunteers an opportunity to engage.
- Current volunteers are doing fine. But if we want to do more, those people can't do it. We have to open up to more volunteers.
- If the culture is, "Volunteers are here to help us do our work," it results in systems where there can be less things for volunteers to do.
- If your philosophy is, "I'm here to serve the volunteers," your job performance is ranked on how well you support the volunteers, the value is placed on building the capacity outward, then there are more opportunities for volunteers. It's a structural thing.

Just to reiterate, you see the main constraint a capacity issue?

- No. That's one of the ways. I think the bigger issue is a cultural issue within the communities.
- My assumptions: We're an insular community. Anytime you have a mature community, you have a set of rules and guidelines. Everyone who participates has agreed to that cultural norm. That's where we are today. Very strong cultural norm. It's explicit -- all online. So explicit, huge transaction cost to participating. Only get people who are willing to give up enough of their own personal culture to participate.
- What is really an inviting, welcoming environment? Right now, it's a sign that says that anyone can edit. Which was also know that that's not actually true. It also doesn't say, everyone should edit.
- If you want more participation from volunteers, you have to give them more ways to do that.
- What if you created opportunities for people who can speak? Event coordinators? Been working on creating these opportunities. If we're going to be high-performing, we have to allow other subcultures.
- We're working on creating "Wikipods." What do you do if you want to do outreach activities, but it's not appropriate for you to be a chapter. Also based on Mozilla campus reps, free software developer groups/local teams. Anyone who loves Wikimedia, any aspect. If you love us and you want to affiliate with us, and there are two of us in a room, you're a Wikipod. Working on an interface that is more inviting to a different audience. Looks like something that will intrigue those who don't already appeal to.

What can the foundation do about the culture issue?

- Educate itself about culture. Then educate its affiliates. Then provide educated voice to its community.

- The lunch conversation on foundation-I about the Portugese chapter and providing lunch. It's arrogant to even think that you are in the position to judge other people's cultural norms. Favorite response: "We're talking about lunch, not culture." [This is indication] of insularity and unfriendliness.
- "Welcome" -- it's in English. You're welcome to participate... as long as its in English.
- Start with educating and arming those who can provide an outside view.

Given that you're leaving the organization as a staff person, here's an opportunity to identify your top three priorities. This seems to be one of them. Are there other pieces?

- We need to ask big questions, not the small ones. Be intentional and try to be aware of who you're leaving out. Know what your explicit and implicit messaging is. I'd like to see everyone ask themselves that once or twice a day.