

Encouraging Newbies

Without newbies, online communities can't survive!



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1.1. Introduction

Encouraging newbies is an important process that must be present in all types of online communities, as the newcomers will replace the members who leave the community, share new ideas, trends or interests, which can help the community to grow in size and increase the level of interest. But with newcomers also comes problems. As they're new they doesn't know the rules that regulates the usage.



How to Encourage Newbies?

(imagine that you're a forum owner)



1.2. How to Encourage Newbies?

Tips for encouraging newbies

- *Offer a easy-to-use website;*
- *Create discussion, debate;*
- *Give something when they use your website (points, reputation, unique knowledge...);*
- *Interact with users.*



Dealing with Newcomers

New users = problems?



1.3. Dealing with Newcomers

Newbies are an important type of user for online communities, as they can add more value to the community, plus having new ideas.

But online communities must solve some problems when dealing with newcomers:

1. *Selection;*
2. *Retention;*
3. *Following the Community rules;*
4. *Socialization.*

1.4. Good Practices

The web is full of good and bad examples related with Encouraging Newbies topic.

The following websites are using well-defined strategies to encourage newbies:

- Amazon;
- Twitter;
- Nike+.

1.4. Good Practices

Amazon

Besides the fact that Amazon is an eCommerce website, their website is considered as an online community. Amazon have a well-defined strategy to encourage newbies. They use the power of:

- *What other customers bought (with this item);*
- *Customer reviews;*
- *Customer Discussions;*
- *See Kindle in your City (only for kindle).*

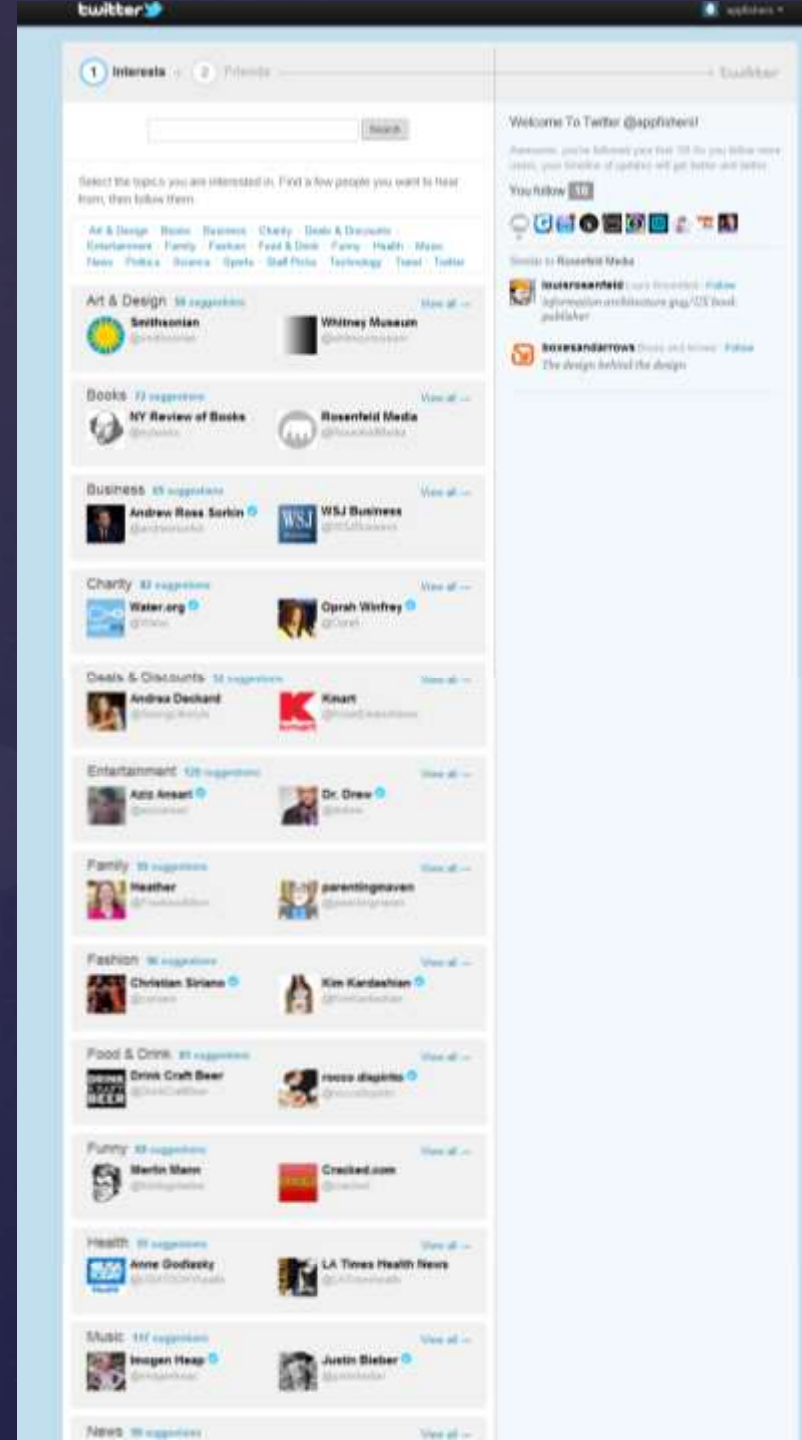
The screenshot displays the Amazon.com product page for the Kindle Wireless Reading Device. The page features a top navigation bar with the Amazon logo and search bar. The main product image shows the Kindle device next to a cup of coffee. Below the image, the product title 'Kindle Wireless Reading Device, Wi-Fi, 6" Display, Graphite - Latest Generation' is displayed, along with the price '\$139.00' and a 'FREE with Super Saver Shipping' offer. The page also includes a 'Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought' section with five recommended products, a 'Customer Reviews' section with a star rating and a 'Most Helpful Customer Reviews' section with a review by Ben Charnaych. Below the reviews, there is a 'Customer Discussions' section with a list of forum posts. At the bottom, there is a 'See a Kindle in Your City' section with links to various cities.

1.4. Good Practices

twitter

When newcomers sign up for a new user account on twitter, they will be presented with a list of interesting twitter accounts that they should follow. This list is organized by topic and it's a good way to encourage newbies.

Also the first time you use twitter.com homepage, they'll show you how things work!



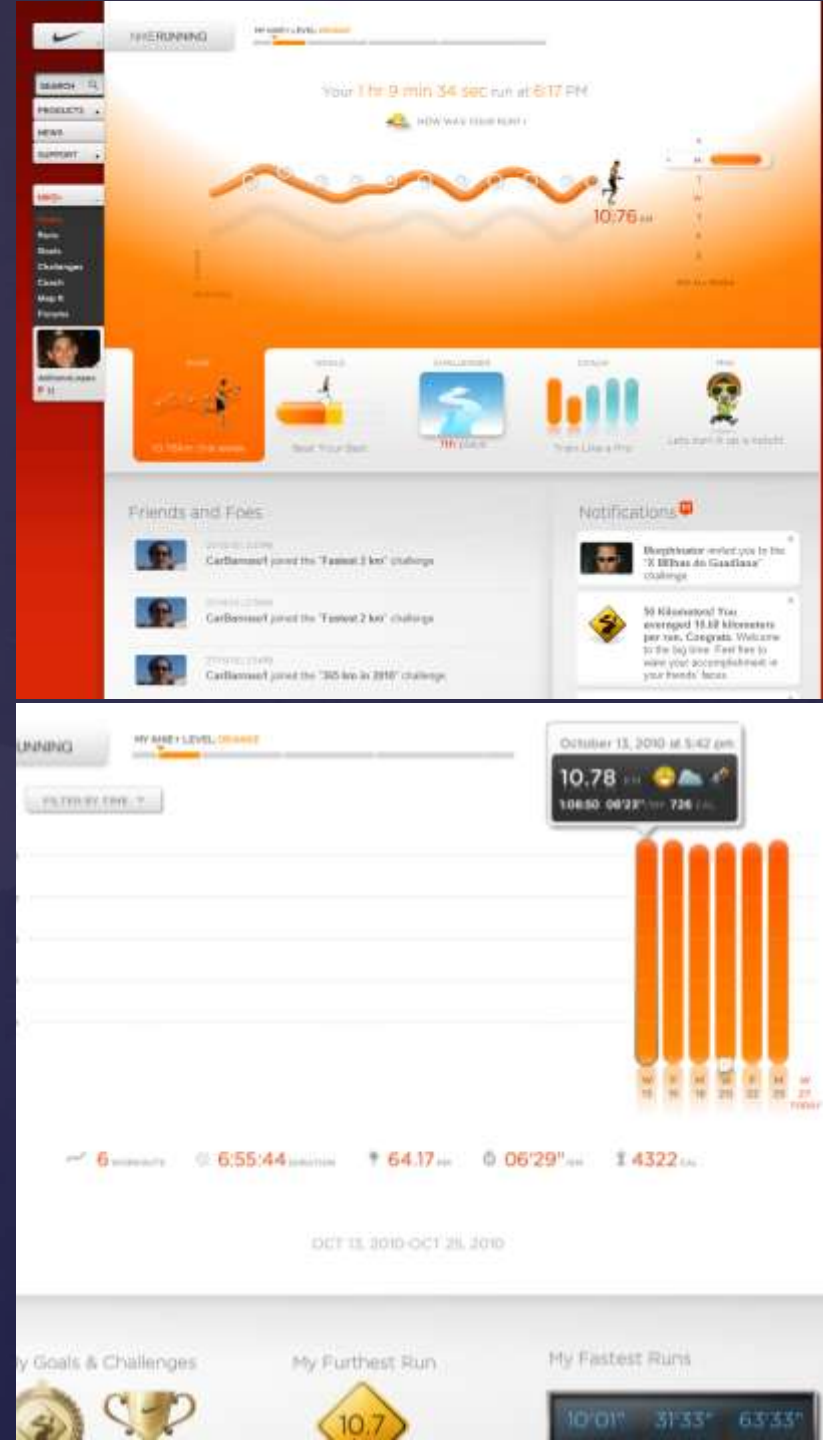
1.4. Good Practices

Nike+

Nike+ encourages newbies to participate in the community, to run and lose weight.

But How Nike+ encourages newbies?

- *Challenges;*
- *Nike+ levels;*
- *Goals;*
- *Nike+ Coach;*
- *By posting running activity feed on twitter and facebook.*



1.5. Conclusions

What I've learned about Encouraging Newbies?



1.5. Conclusions

I've learned a lot! (again)

During the last week I read and searched a lot about encouraging newbies, and what I can tell you is, encouraging newbies is an important strategy that must be present in all online communities.

Also i pointed some great examples, about how websites like Amazon, twitter or Nike+ are encouraging newbies and at the same time increasing exponentially their audience.

*Regards,
Adriano*

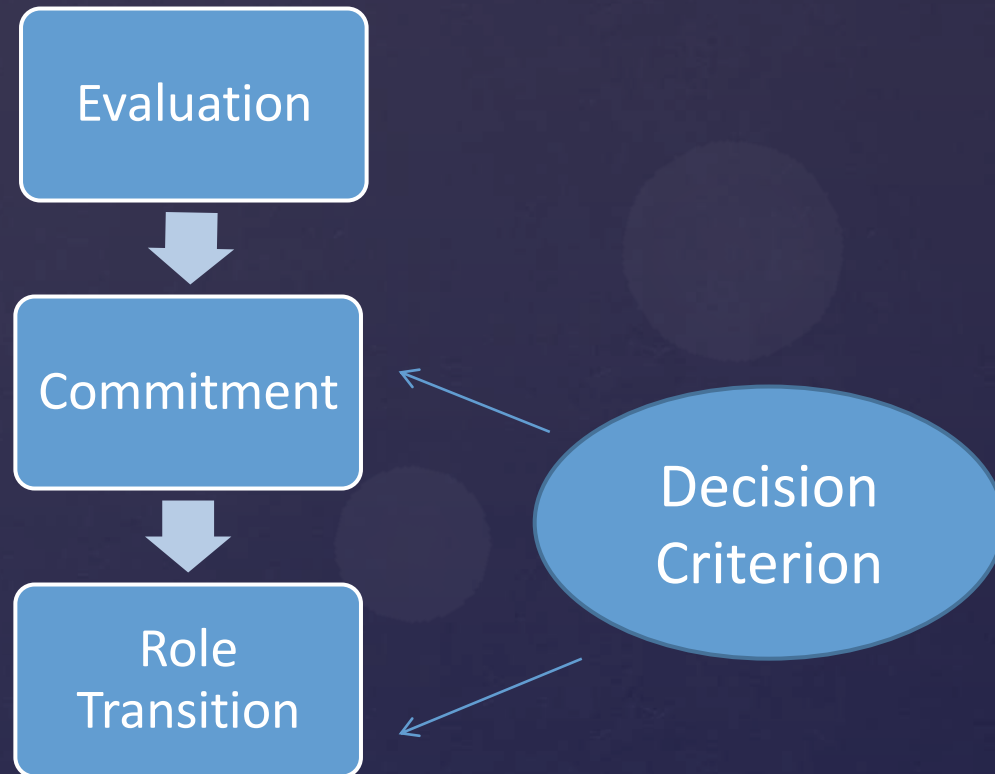


Life on the Social web

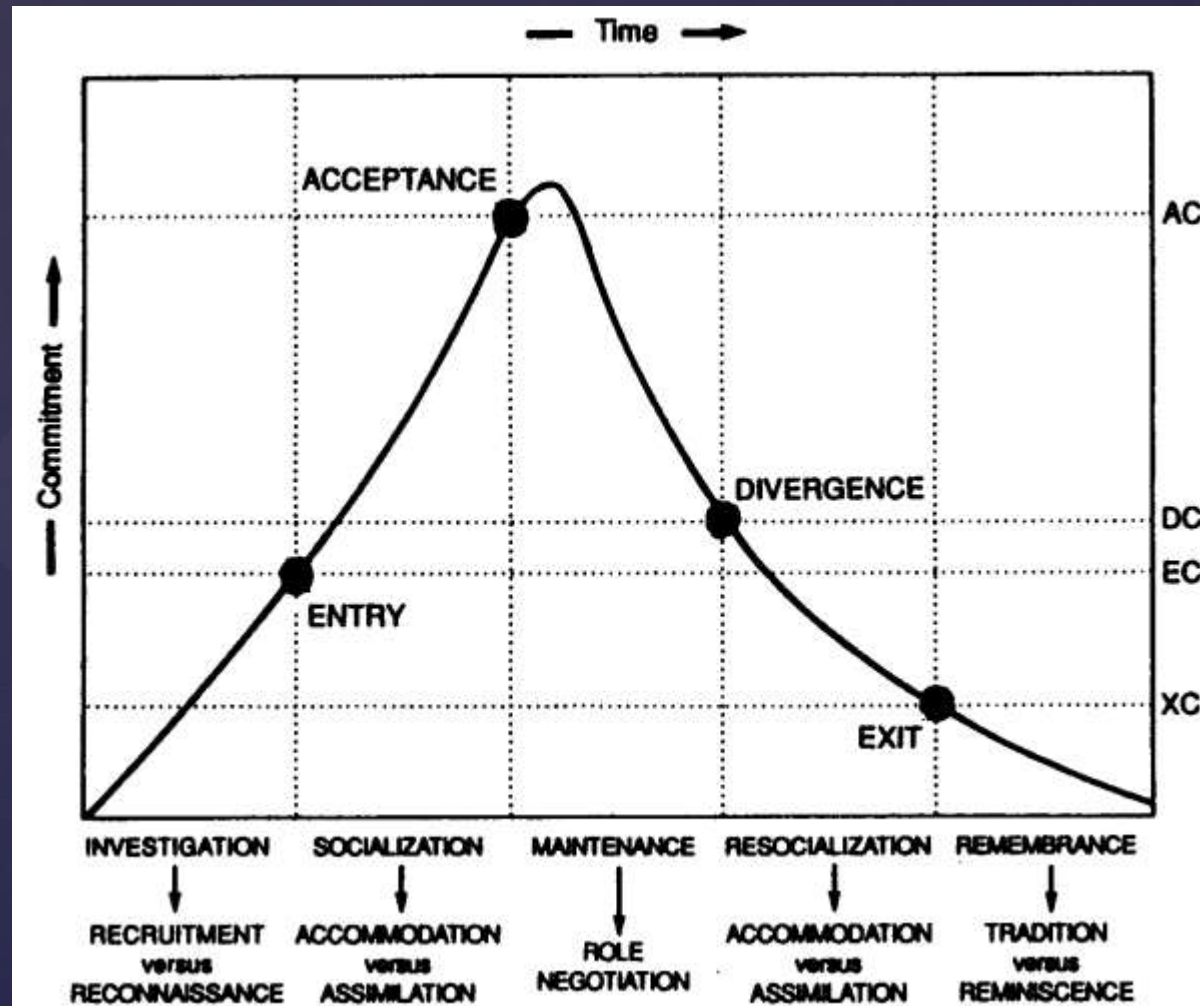
One more social career?



2.1. A model for Group Socialization

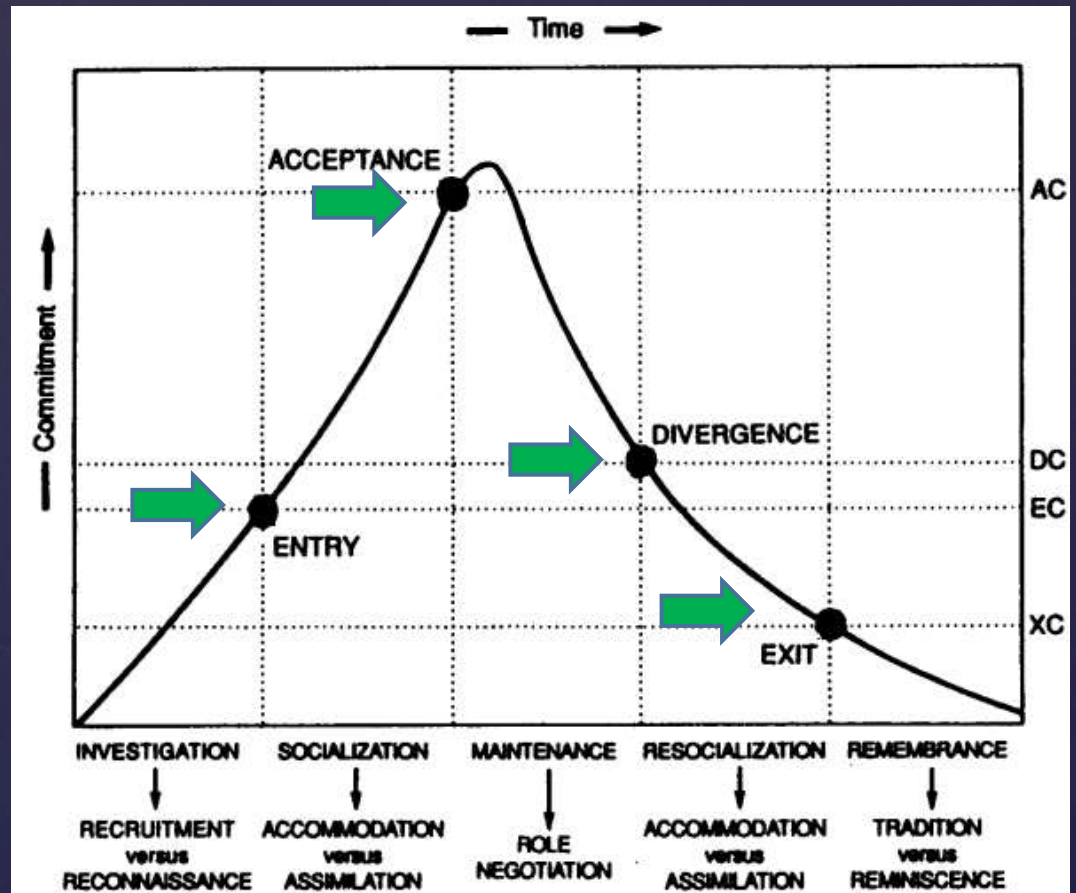


2.2. Group membership phases



2.3. Role transitions between phases

- ↳ Entrance
- ↳ Acceptance
- ↳ Divergence
- ↳ Exit



2.4. Elaborations and Extensions

↳ Group development

- ⌘ Changes over time in the group as a whole
- ⌘ 5 stages of development:
 - ↳ Forming
 - ↳ Storming
 - ↳ Norming
 - ↳ performing
 - ↳ djourning

↳ Innovation in Groups

- ⌘ Significant change that na individual produces in the structure, dynamics and performance of a group



2.4. Elaborations and Extensions

- ↯ Group Culture Transmission can be affected by:
 - ↯ the newcomers' characteristics
 - ↯ The newcomers' socialization tactics
 - ↯ the oldtimers' characteristics
 - ↯ The oldtimers' socialization tactics

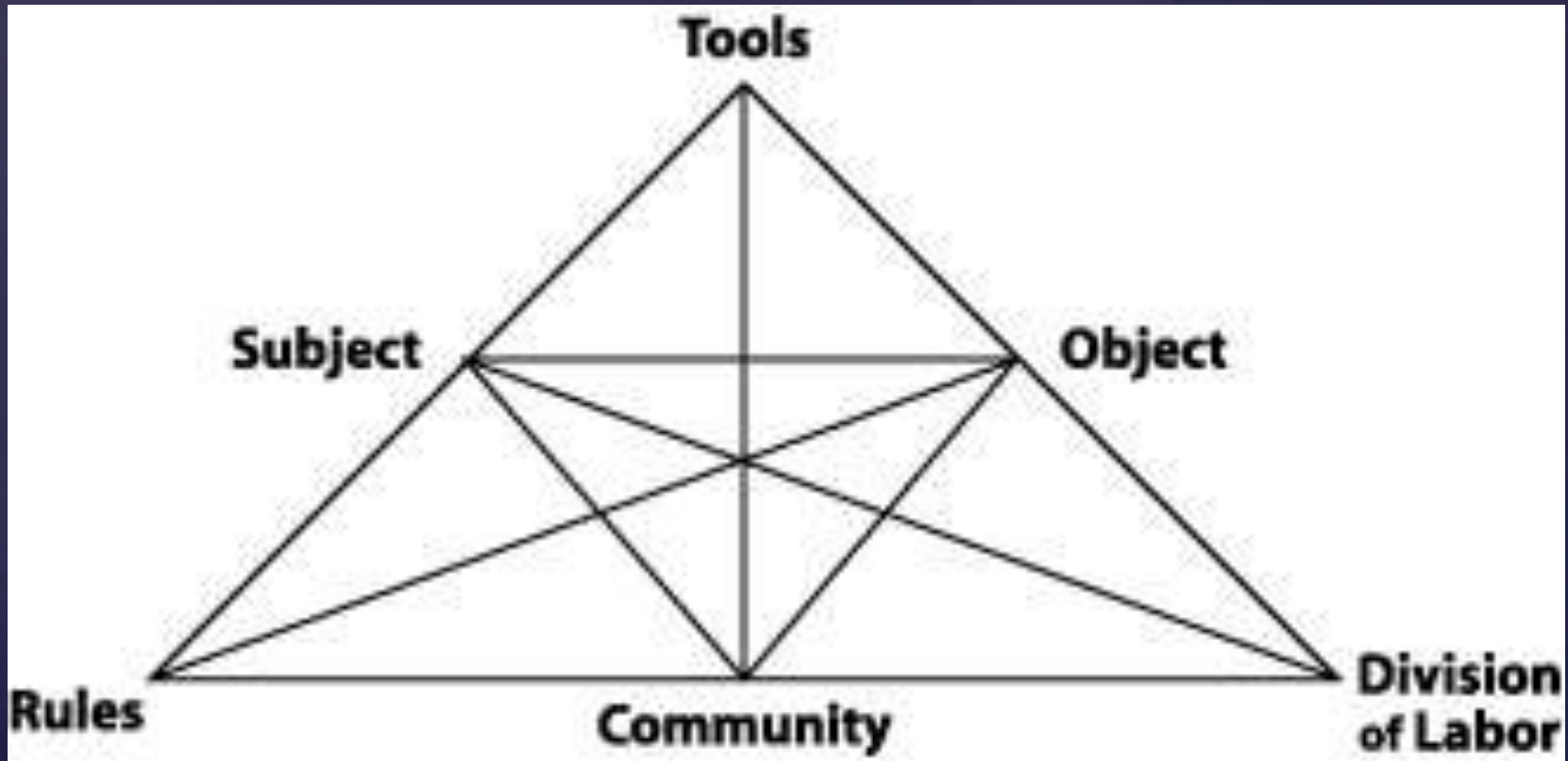


2.5. Initial phases

- ↳ Individual Reconnaissance
 - ⌘ Identify potentially desirable groups
 - ⌘ Evaluate the degree to which membership will satisfy personal needs
 - ⌘ In commitment exceeds just the entry criterion, do the steps to enter the group
- ↳ Group Recruitment ??



2.6. Legitimate Peripheral Participation Activity Theory



Shocking things
happen online

2.7. Wikipedia

- ⌘ Open-content encyclopedia
- ⌘ Firstly launched in 1995
- ⌘ Initial idea: create a place where volunteer writers would find few barriers to contributing
- ⌘ No registration needed
- ⌘ Collaborative environment
- ⌘ Voluntary environment



2.7.1. Wikipedia Success

- ⌘ Rapid growth
- ⌘ One of the most online collaborative authoring projects
- ⌘ Over 3 million articles (English)
- ⌘ Over 100 languages
- ⌘ Over 10 million articles (all languages)

2.7.2. Study in November 2004

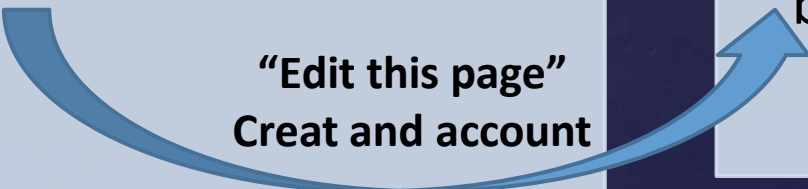
- ⌘ Interview to several Wikipedians
- ⌘ Participants had been active in Wikipedia for 14 months (average)
- ⌘ All had a daily or nearly daily activity

2.7.3. Novices Versus Wikipedians

Novices

- contribute by reading articles out of interest, noting mistakes or omissions, and correcting them.
- Access only basic tools
- Still getting to know Wikipedia

“Edit this page”
Creat and account



Wikipedians

- Expanded goals: make the community grow and improve the overall quality and character of the site.
- Access to a special tools: userpage and watchlist and a different understanding and usage of basic tools
- Confidence and member maturity influence behaviour

2.8.Virtual Teams

2.8.1. Open source software

- ⌘ creation of a public good
- ⌘ joining a developer community may not be costless
- ⌘ developers obtain private rewards from writing code for their own use, sharing their code, and collectively contributing to the development and improvement of software
- ⌘ significant barriers of understanding and contribution
- ⌘ integration of newcomers can be arduous
- ⌘ as complexity grows it gets harder and harder to join

2.8.1. OSS contributing benefits

- ⌘ ideas, bug reports, viewpoints, or code are reviewed and commented by other users
- ⌘ responsibility is of the entire community, fix bugs before formal acceptance of new code
- ⌘ learning - the group's feedback can be direct and specific to the newcomer
- ⌘ Software components helps to increase transparency, lower barriers to contribute, allow specialization and by enable efficient use of knowledge

2.8.2. Joining and contributing

- ⌘ behavioral strategies of newcomers attempting to join the developer group
- ⌘ newcomers choices of the technical areas within the existing software code where they contribute
 - ⌘ Specialization
 - ⌘ Feature Gifts

2.9. Conclusions

- ⌘ Groups may endure for months or years
- ⌘ Members join and leave at different times
- ⌘ Go through different phases and may have different roles
- ⌘ Group seeks viability by recruiting new members and discarding troublesome members
- ⌘ Time changes expectations and behaviours – individuals \Leftrightarrow group
- ⌘ Joining and contributing may balance between very easy to very difficult
- ⌘ Personal benefits may exist as a personal gain or just for the joy to contribute to a greater cause

Regards,

Barbara