



Back to the Future of Online Community:

*A brief history of where we have been
and where we are going*

Vanessa DiMauro,
CEO Leader Networks

LEADER NETWORKS
www.leadernetworks.com

Why am I telling the community history story?

I have seen the history unfold!

- Community builder since 1991 – an academic researcher and management consultant (CEO of [Leader Networks](#))
- Worked with 260+ online communities. Over 20 million members across 110 organizations, 10,000+ online community managers trained.
- And believe that unless we understand the past, we can't advance in the future.

I believe in sharing what I've learned

- ✓ 3 books, 4 eBooks and 150+ reports
- ✓ Been a source of community evolution for many channels... *Harvard Business Review*, *The New York Times*, *Forbes*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Economist*
- ✓ I teach Knowledge Management [at Columbia University](#) (and run a community consultancy).

About Leader Networks

- Leader Networks is a research and consulting firm that helps companies use digital and social technologies to gain competitive advantage. We work alongside our clients to develop digital business strategies, launch new digital products and business models, create and grow online communities, and craft social selling campaigns and operations. Our efforts pay off – by enabling organizations to better engage their customers, drive new product and service innovations, reduce costs, and boost shareholder value.
- Our clients include some of the world's best-known companies – from Cisco Systems, Hitachi, Hewlett-Packard, and Royal Dutch Shell to Fidelity, Thomson Reuters, Company, and the World Bank. They also include forward-thinking associations like The Children's Hospitals Network and National Congress of State Legislators.

Where We Are Going Today

1. The history of online community
2. Remarkable happenings in our industry
3. Trends that shape the future



Online Community: Where it all began...

- 1950's and 1960's marked the Russian Arms Race and the US was behind.
 - Russians tested an atom bomb (1949), tested the first hydrogen bomb (1953), and launched Sputnik into orbit (1957). Russians beat the Americans into space.
 - US was concerned that there was no centralized network for "Command and Control" if a crisis occurred.
- US government created an organization called the **"Advanced Research Projects Agency" (ARPA)** to create the centralized communication network.



ARPANET

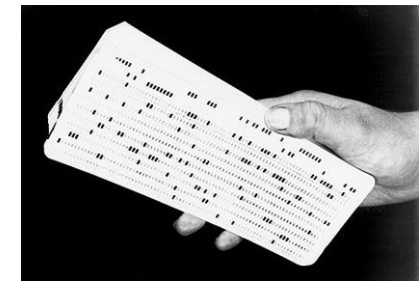
- The Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET) was a packet switching network and the first use TCP/IP.
- The vision was to connect networks with other networks and create an "Intergalactic Computer Network."
- The National Science Foundation created NSFnet that was only open to government and research organizations until early 1990's.

The Very First User Guidelines

It is considered illegal to use the ARPANet for anything which is not in direct support of Government business ... personal messages to other ARPANet subscribers (for example, to arrange a get-together or check and say a friendly hello) are generally not considered harmful ... Sending electronic mail over the ARPANet for commercial profit or political purposes is both anti-social and illegal. By sending such messages, you can offend many people, and it is possible to get MIT in serious trouble with the Government agencies which manage the ARPANet.

Supercomputers

- The government awarded a contract to Bolt Baranek and Newman to build Interface Message Processors (IMP) in 1968.
- They used Honeywell DDP-516's with 12K *memory* as the connection and interface device.
- These computers were placed at four colleges. UCLA, Stanford, UCSB and the University of Utah were the first universities to interconnect these “super computers.”

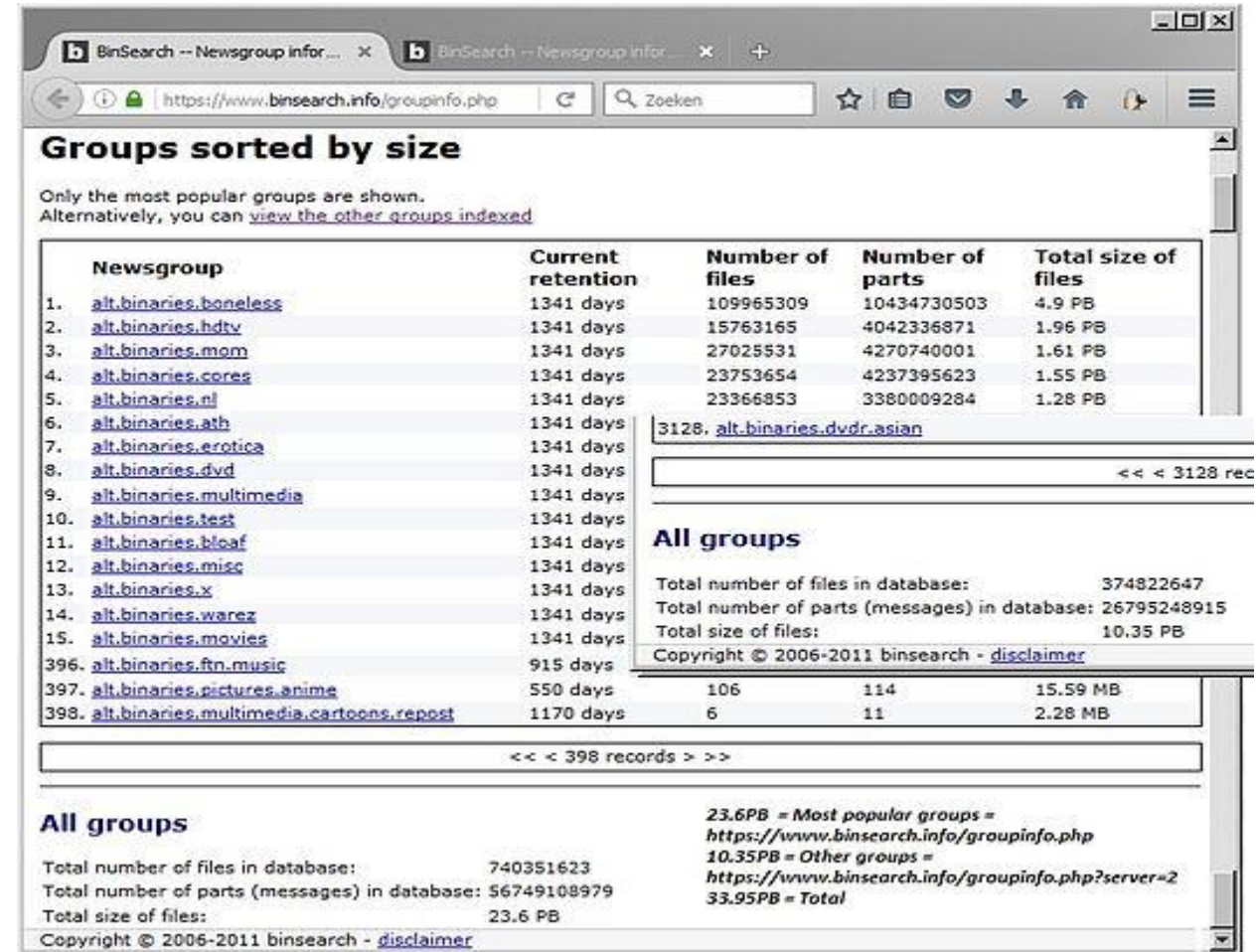


A VT Terminal 100 Personal Computer



BBS, Chat Groups and IRCs

- Usenet News, like a bulletin board, provides open areas for discussion of topics clustered in hierarchies.
- Chat systems, instant messaging and texting systems are synchronous (live)
- *Like Twitter only organized better!*



The screenshot shows the BinSearch website interface. At the top, there's a browser window with the address bar showing 'https://www.binsearch.info/groupinfo.php'. Below the browser window, the page title is 'Groups sorted by size'. A note states: 'Only the most popular groups are shown. Alternatively, you can [view the other groups indexed](#)'. The main content is a table with the following columns: 'Newsgroup', 'Current retention', 'Number of files', 'Number of parts', and 'Total size of files'. The table lists 15 newsgroups, with the first five being the most popular. Below the table, there's a section titled 'All groups' which provides summary statistics: 'Total number of files in database: 374822647', 'Total number of parts (messages) in database: 26795248915', and 'Total size of files: 10.35 PB'. At the bottom, there's another 'All groups' section with more detailed statistics: 'Total number of files in database: 740351623', 'Total number of parts (messages) in database: 56749108979', and 'Total size of files: 23.6 PB'. The page also includes a copyright notice: 'Copyright © 2006-2011 binsearch - [disclaimer](#)'.

Newsgroup	Current retention	Number of files	Number of parts	Total size of files
1. alt.binaries.boneless	1341 days	109965309	10434730503	4.9 PB
2. alt.binaries.hdtv	1341 days	15763165	4042336871	1.96 PB
3. alt.binaries.mom	1341 days	27025531	4270740001	1.61 PB
4. alt.binaries.cores	1341 days	23753654	4237395623	1.55 PB
5. alt.binaries.nl	1341 days	23366853	3380009284	1.28 PB
6. alt.binaries.ath	1341 days			
7. alt.binaries.erotica	1341 days			
8. alt.binaries.dvd	1341 days			
9. alt.binaries.multimedia	1341 days			
10. alt.binaries.test	1341 days			
11. alt.binaries.blog	1341 days			
12. alt.binaries.misc	1341 days			
13. alt.binaries.x	1341 days			
14. alt.binaries.warez	1341 days			
15. alt.binaries.movies	1341 days			
396. alt.binaries.ftn.music	915 days			
397. alt.binaries.pictures.anime	550 days	106	114	15.59 MB
398. alt.binaries.multimedia.cartoons.repost	1170 days	6	11	2.28 MB

3128. [alt.binaries.dvdr.asian](#)

<< < 3128 rec

All groups

Total number of files in database: 374822647
Total number of parts (messages) in database: 26795248915
Total size of files: 10.35 PB
Copyright © 2006-2011 binsearch - [disclaimer](#)

<< < 398 records > >>

All groups

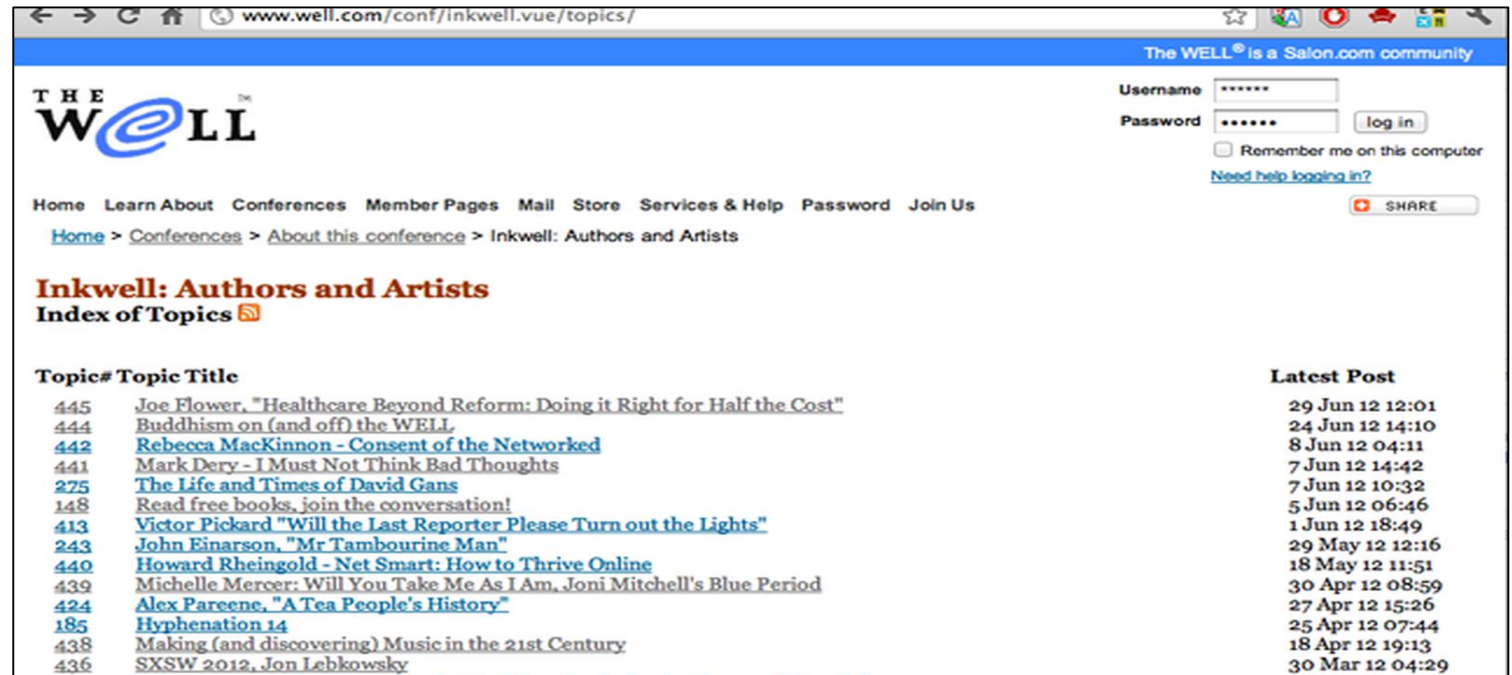
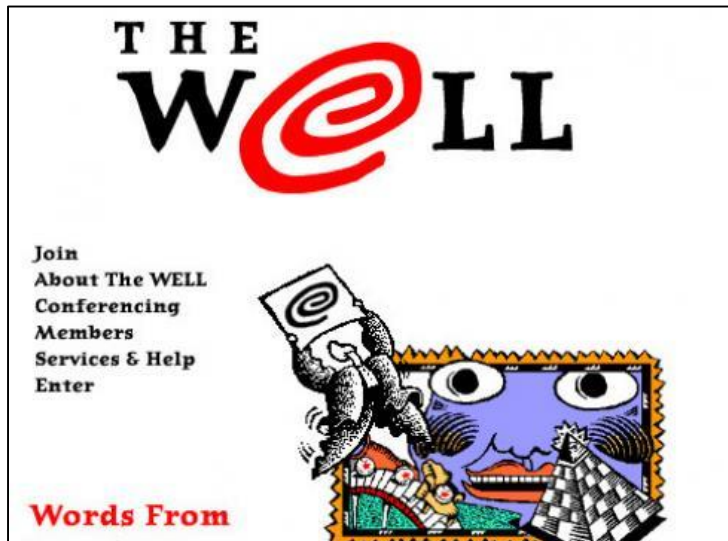
Total number of files in database: 740351623
Total number of parts (messages) in database: 56749108979
Total size of files: 23.6 PB
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23.6PB = Most popular groups = <https://www.binsearch.info/groupinfo.php>
10.35PB = Other groups = <https://www.binsearch.info/groupinfo.php?server=2>
33.95PB = Total

By FlippyFlink - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=18375196>

The Well Was the First Online Community

Stewart Brand and Larry Brilliant founded the Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link in 1985, starting with a dialog between the writers and readers of the Whole Earth Review.



1980's – 1990's: Educators and researchers were the first to embrace community

We wondered...

How does it work?


What can we learn?

Who benefits?

What should we call it?

What does community mean
to culture and society?

[Web](#) [Images](#) [More...](#)



Vanessa DiMauro
CEO, Leader Networks
Online Community, Social Business, Netnography
Verified email at leadernetworks.com - Homepage
My profile is public


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Citation indices

	All	Since 2011
Citations	133	35
h-index	6	4
i10-index	4	1



[Co-authors](#) [Edit...](#)

Gloria E. Jacobs

<input type="checkbox"/>	Title	+	Add	More	1-14	Cited by	Year
<input type="checkbox"/>	Collaborative electronic network building					33	1995
	V DiMauro, G Jacobs Journal of Computers in Mathematics and Science Teaching 14 (1-2), 119-131						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use of telecommunications for reflective discourse of science teacher leaders					31	1994
	V DiMauro, S Gail Journal of Science Education and Technology 3 (2), 123-135						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fostering reflective dialogues for teacher professional development					17	1994
	W Spitzer, K Wedding, V DiMauro TERC						
<input type="checkbox"/>	The new symbiosis of professional networks: Social media's impact on business and decision-making					13	2009
	D Bulmer, V DiMauro Society for New Communications Research						
<input type="checkbox"/>	The social consumer study					9	2014
	V DiMauro, D Bulmer The Society for New Communications Research						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Active Readers--What Benefits Do They Gain from an Educational Telecommunications Network?					8	1995
	G Jacobs, V DiMauro						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Executive summary from the society for new communications research study: The new symbiosis of professional networks: Social media's impact on business and decision-making					6	2009
	D Bulmer, V DiMauro Journal of New Communications Research 4 (2), 93-100						
<input type="checkbox"/>	An electronic conversation talking about science					6	1995
	D Muscella, V DiMauro Journal of Information Technology for Teacher Education 4 (2), 165-183						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Filling in the professional gaps: Active teacher participation on a telecommunications network					4	1995
	V DiMauro, G Jacobs Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San ...						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student teachers on LabNet: Linking preservice teachers with a professional community					3	1997
	D Hammer, V DiMauro Electronic Journal of Science Education 1 (2)						
<input type="checkbox"/>	LabNet: an electronic forum to support teaching science					2	1995
	D Muscella, V DiMauro Formerly available online at: http://www.coe.uh.edu/insite/elec_pub...						
<input type="checkbox"/>	The Social Mind					1	2012
	V DiMauro, P Auditore, D Bulmer Society for New Communications Research						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Using Online Communities in Professional Associations						2011
	V DiMauro Information Outlook 15 (4), 18-20						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Using Online Communities in Professional Associations						
	Professional online communities come in different forms and serve different purposes, but they all allow members to connect across time and space and enhance their skills and knowledge. V DIMAURO						

[<](#) [Show more](#) [>](#)

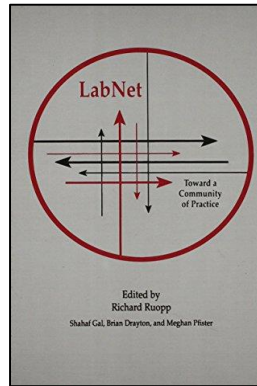
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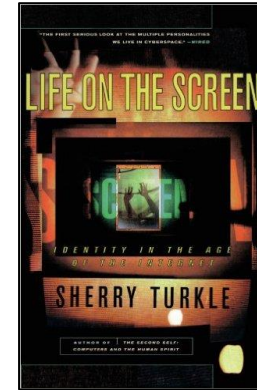
Online Community Foundations

Pre-World Wide Web

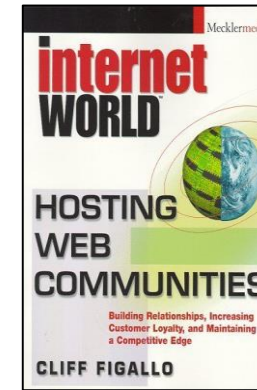
1997



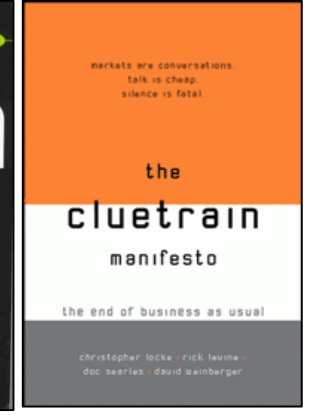
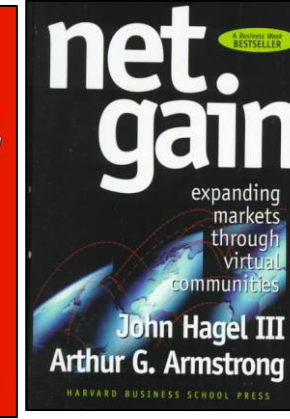
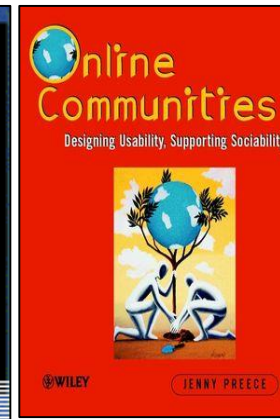
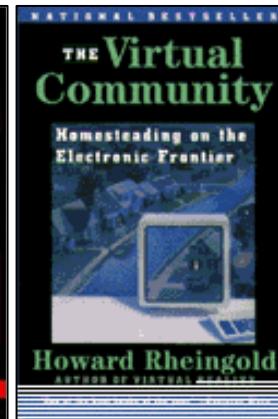
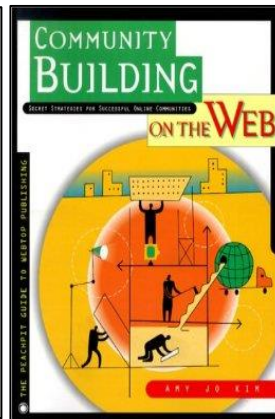
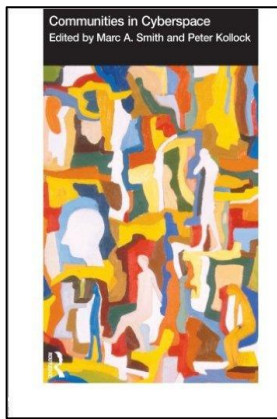
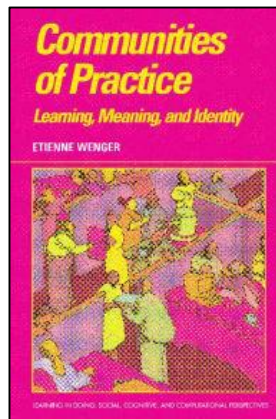
1997



1998



Early 2000's Post—World Wide Web



LabNet was a prototype teacher-support project developed by TERC, and funded by the National Science Foundation, is dedicated to understanding the impact of online learning and knowledge transfer. The first three year phase of LabNet began in January 1989 and ended in mid-1992.

“The most notable use of new technology in the LabNet project is telecommunications—computer-to-computer communication via telephone lines.”

source: <https://www.scribd.com/document/72668105/Zhao-Review>

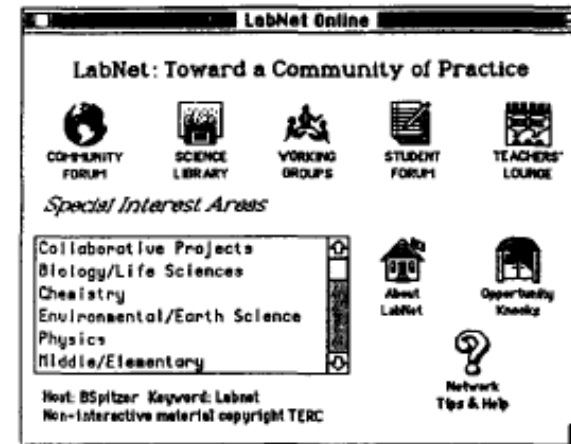


Fig. 1. Map of the LabNet area on AOL.

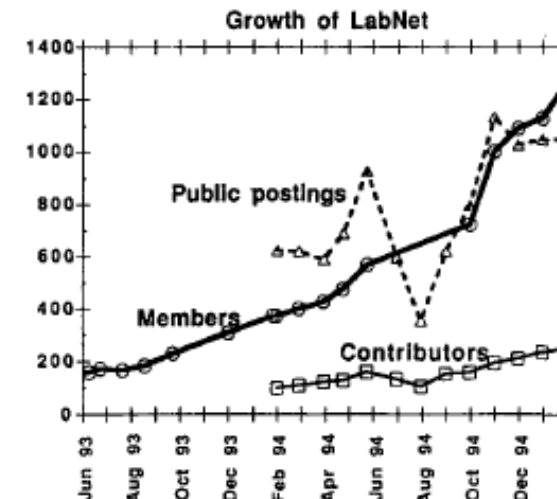
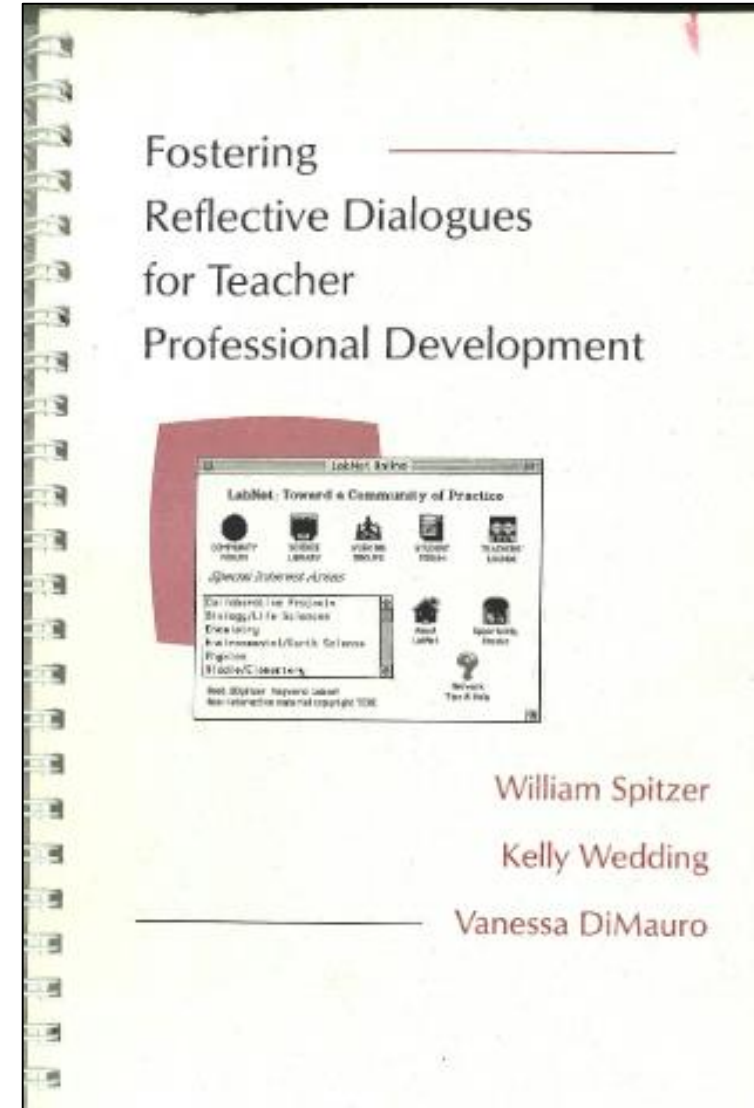


Fig. 2. “Members” represents the number of teachers who have access to the LabNet area on AOL. “Public Postings” represents the total number of postings per month to the public message boards. “Contributors” represents the number of teachers each month who have posted at least once to a public message board during that month.

The First Manual For Online Community Facilitation (1993)



The SEE Method for Community Facilitation

Explicit goals: Helping members to SEE

To create a vibrant, network that takes place largely online

Support Knowledge Exchange

Encourage Being Visible Online

Enable Access to Tools and Resources

Moderator Tactics to Help Members **SEE**

Main goal	Key action
Discover members	Introduce self and email them short overview of group Give members a go-to resource (you)
Educate members	Offer monthly tour or informal discussion to members to help them get involved
Involve members	Ask individuals for documents, opinions, posts and interviews to share with the community
Connect members	Point people to valuable resources, discussions and resources on a quasi-personalized way to help
Reward members	Reinforce community-enhancing behaviors by thanking members, featuring members, sending “knowledge-gifts” or access to special events.

Howard Rheingold

Howard coined the term "virtual community" in 1993 in his book [The Virtual Community](#) which documented his experiences on The Well community and the cultural and political implications of a new communications medium.



Enter The World Wide Web

“The World Wide Web (abbreviated WWW or the Web) is an information space where documents and other web resources are identified by Uniform Resource Locators (URLs), interlinked by hypertext links, and can be accessed via the Internet.”

Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web in 1989. He wrote the first web browser computer program in 1990.



The Web inspired the proliferation of community via AOL, Delphi and other browser-based commercial platforms.

Cambridge Information Network - 1995

- CIN was the world's largest exclusive online community for CIOs and other senior IT executives
- Over 10,000 members from over 50 countries, 3000 members in Europe
- CIN members represented over \$300+ billion purchasing power

The screenshot shows the Cambridge Information Network (CIN) website interface. The header features the CIN logo and the text "cambridge information network". Below the logo is a navigation menu with links to CIN Today, Discussions, Peers, Resources, and Think Tank. The main content area is titled "Electronic Procurement" and includes a welcome message to Ed Baum dated June 17, 1999. A "SPECIAL FEATURE" section titled "What We've Found" displays results from a Think Tank benchmark on Knowledge Management. Below this is an "INTERACTIVE" section with links to "Fending Off a CEO", "An SAP Question", and "Rate Your Vendors!". A "HEADLINERS" section at the bottom features the headline "Going Customer Centric". On the right side, there is a "RECOMMEND" section titled "CIN to a Colleague" and a "QUESTION OF THE WEEK" section titled "RESULTS" with a bar chart showing the distribution of responses for the question "What groupware product do you use?".

CIN
cambridge information network

navigation

- CIN Today
- Discussions
- ▼ Peers
 - Peer Main
 - Advisor Corps
 - Member Directory
 - Member Connect
 - CIN Buzz
 - Member Columns
 - Focus On...
 - Events
- ▼ Resources
- Think Tank
- ▼ Partners
- Search/Site Map
- Contact Us

Cambridge Information Network
is a division of
Cambridge Technology Partners

Electronic Procurement

CIN Today Discussions Peers Resources Think Tank

Welcome Ed Baum
June 17, 1999

SPECIAL FEATURE

What We've Found
Results from the Think Tank benchmark on Knowledge Management are in!

INTERACTIVE

Fending Off a CEO
This member is having a hard time with a CEO who always wants to quantify the ROI on IT.

An SAP Question
Had any experience with SAP installations? This member's looking for some good advice.

Rate Your Vendors!
Sing praises or flame in this discussion -- compare notes on vendors with your peers.

HEADLINERS

Going Customer Centric
Don't wait until Y2K is over to turn your attention to

RECOMMEND
CIN to a Colleague

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

RESULTS
What groupware product do you use?

Lotus Notes: 30%

Microsoft Exchange: 51%

Novell GroupWise: 10%

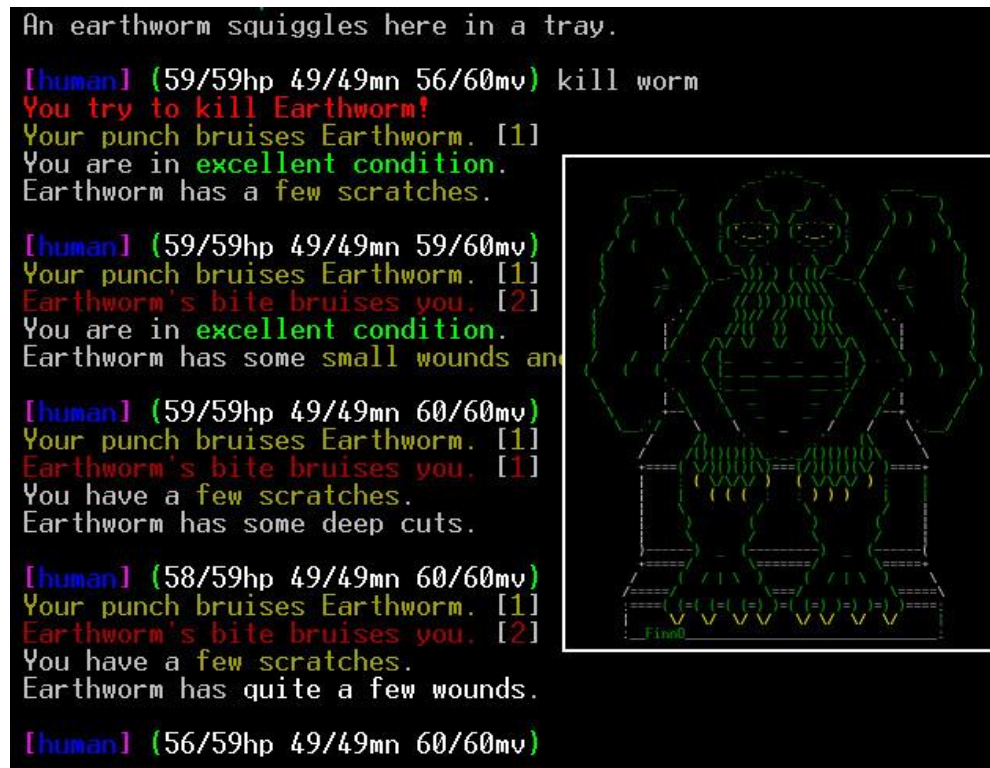
Other or none: 9%

257 respondents

Submit your own QOW

Gaming

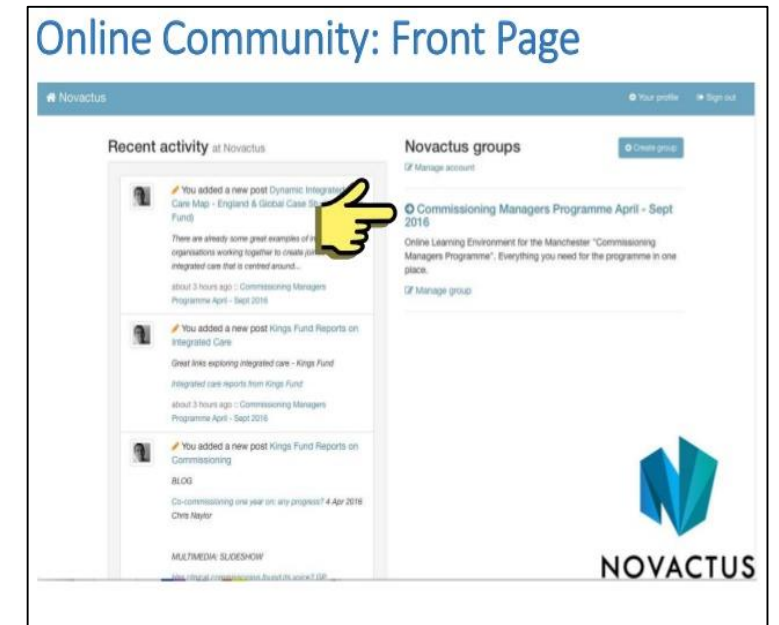
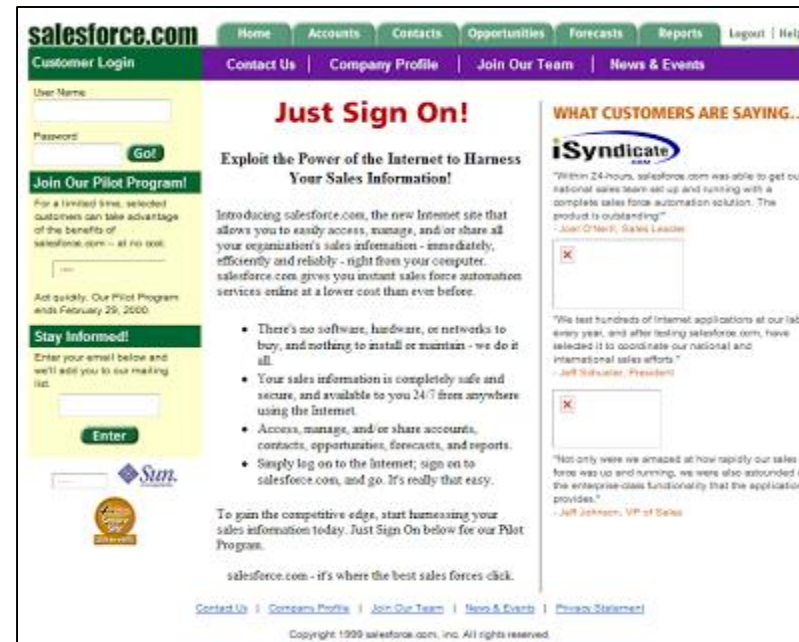
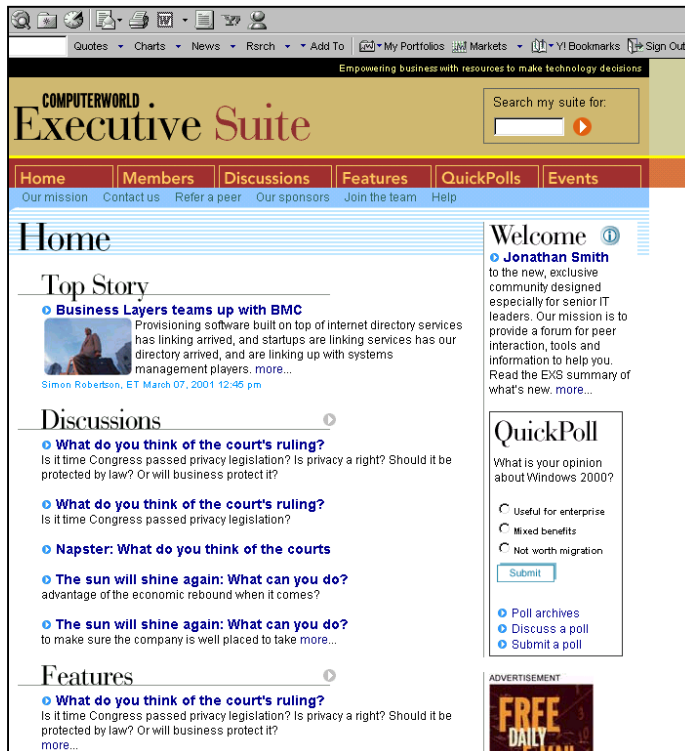
We went from this....



To this...



Community Goes Commercial!



VerticalNet: The First Community Bubble

Founded in 1995, Verticalnet became famous during the Dotcom bubble for its \$12 Billion valuation in early 2000, at a time when the company had few tangible assets and a revenue stream of only \$112.5 million.

At the peak of its valuation, VerticalNet operated a few B2B portals, plus more than 50 internet business-to-business trading communities as well as professional communities.

The screenshot shows the VerticalNet website homepage. At the top is the VerticalNet logo and a navigation bar with links: ABOUT VERTICALNET, EXECUTIVES & DIRECTORS, JOB OPPORTUNITIES, BUSINESS COMMUNITIES, EDITORIAL STAFF, and IN THE PRESS. Below the navigation bar is a banner with the date May 25, 2012, and contact information. The main content area features a 'Front Page' section with a 'Welcome' message and links to 'Investor Relations' and 'Contact VerticalNet'. A sidebar on the left lists various business communities: ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES, COMMUNICATIONS, ENVIRONMENTAL, FOOD & PACKAGING, FOODSERVICE/HOSPITALITY, HEALTHCARE/SCIENCE, PUBLIC SECTOR, and SERVICE. Below this is a 'Browse Our Entire Directory of Communities' link. The main text area describes VerticalNet's mission since 1995, emphasizing 'Leading Business To E-Business' and listing three key features: Targeted communities, Targeted content, and Targeted solutions. A 'Latest News' section on the left mentions a report on Triple-Digit Revenue Growth in the first quarter. On the right, there is an image of two people working on a computer, with the text 'CONTENT COMMUNITY' and 'COMMERCE' overlaid.

VerticalNetSM

HOME www.verticalnet.com • 215-328-6100 • Fax: 215-784-1968 • E-mail: info@verticalnet.com May 25, 2012

Front Page Welcome Investor Relations Contact VerticalNet

Visit VerticalNet's Online Business Community Index:

- ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES
- COMMUNICATIONS
- ENVIRONMENTAL
- FOOD & PACKAGING
- FOODSERVICE/HOSPITALITY
- HEALTHCARE/SCIENCE
- PUBLIC SECTOR
- SERVICE

Browse Our Entire Directory of Communities

Latest News:
4/26/00 -
• VerticalNet Reports Triple-Digit Revenue Growth In First Quarter
[[Read More...](#)]
4/10/00 -

Since 1995, VerticalNet has been the home of e-business to business... building and managing centers of business on the Internet for diverse industries and meeting diverse business needs by delivering:

- **Targeted communities** - where professionals and companies in a particular industry will find fast, efficient business information, interaction, and transaction opportunities.
- **Targeted content** - from the latest industry news and insights, to wide-ranging product and supplier information, to online education and career opportunities.
- **Targeted solutions** - for increasing sales and reducing costs through effective online business connections and e-commerce avenues.

Leading Business To E-BusinessSM

CONTENT COMMUNITY

COMMERCE

all working to create a global online marketplace through which buyers

Online Customer Communities: 3 Models



Professional Collaboration

- **Goal:** Helping customers solve longer-term issues that involve your products/services
- **Methods:** Participation in studies; providing white papers and other articles; holding webinars; etc.
- **Typical community hosts:** Firms whose customers are professionals who need to share information to stay current in their fields



Shop Talk

- **Goal:** Helping customers troubleshoot transactional problems with your products/services
- **Methods:** Organized discussion forums that allow viewers to share knowledge
- **Typical community hosts:** IT companies whose customers help other customers solve technical problems



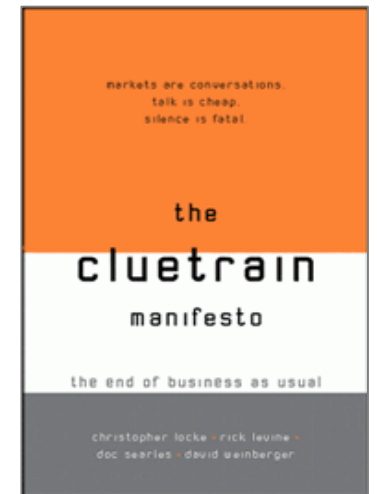
Information Dissemination

- **Goal:** Keeping customers informed on your products/services and how to use them
- **Methods:** Company-written blogs with comments; using Twitter and other social media tools to broadcast information
- **Typical community hosts:** Regulated industries, topics where engagement is unlikely to be high

Source: DiMauro, V & Gal, S (1994). Use of telecommunications for reflective discourse of science teacher leaders. [Journal of Science Education and Technology](#) June 1994, Volume 3, [Issue 2](#), pp 123-135

Cluetrain Manifesto

1. Markets are conversations.
6. The Internet is enabling conversations among human beings that were simply not possible in the era of mass media.
33. Learning to speak with a human voice is not a parlor trick. It can't be "picked up" at some tony conference.
34. To speak with a human voice, companies must share the concerns of their communities.
35. But first, they must belong to a community.
36. Companies must ask themselves where their corporate cultures end.
37. If their cultures end before the community begins, they will have no market.
38. Human communities are based on discourse — on human speech about human concerns.
39. The community of discourse *is* the market.
40. Companies that do not belong to a community of discourse will die.





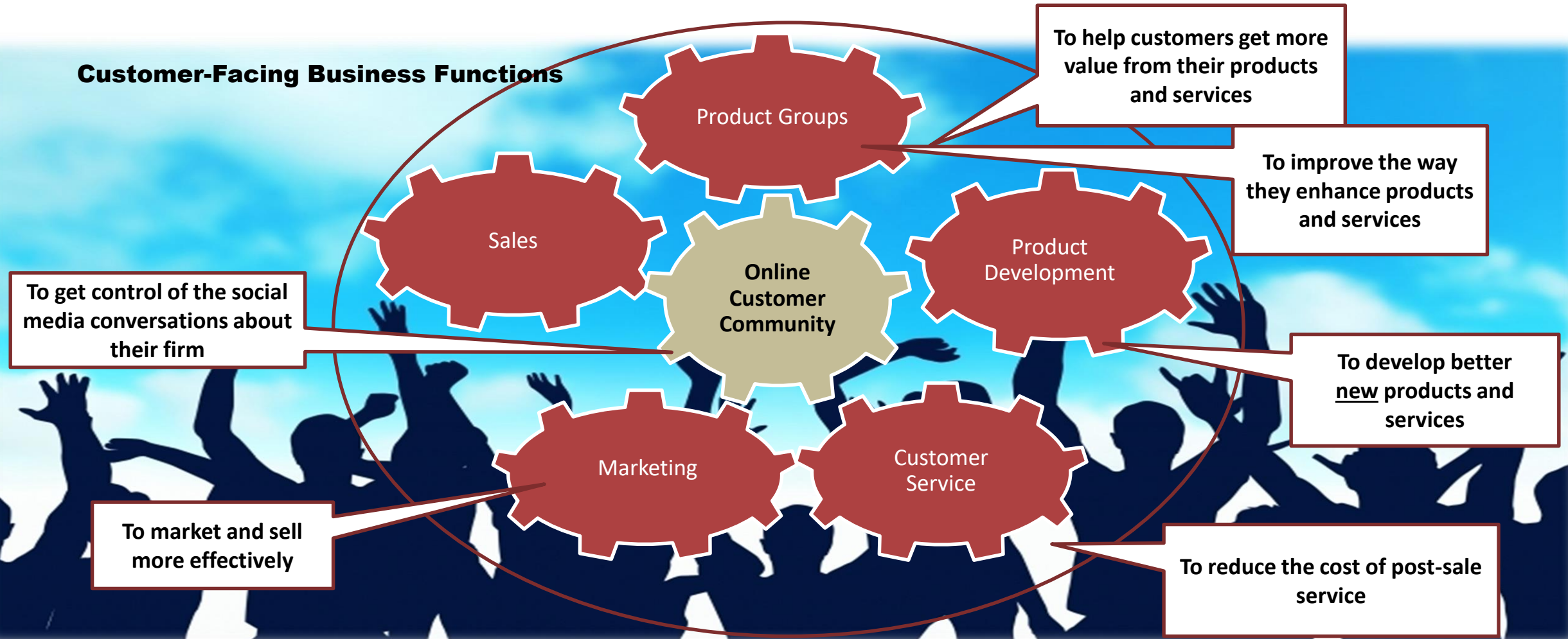
WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED ABOUT COMMUNITY OVER THE DECADES?



INTENTIONAL

From Research and Experience, We See Six Reasons Why Firms Launch Online Customer Communities

Customer-Facing Business Functions



Online Community Trajectory

@vdimauro

Milestones

Launch Phase - Operational

- Design platform features & functionality
- Engaging, retaining & growing membership
- Content co-planning
- Community best practices roadmap

Planning Phase - Strategic

- Business plan
- Member requirements
- Competitive benchmarking
- Positive positioning & validation

Growth Phase - Ongoing

- Community growth planning
- Transition planning
- Governance and metrics

Grow and Monetize

- Inadequate customer support
- Member fragmentation
- Weak community leadership
- Missing performance metrics

Launch

- Technology delivery failure
- Poor membership outreach response
- Content planning delays
- Insufficient member engagement resources

Beta Launch

- Incorrect ROI assumptions
- Misaligned membership requirements
- Competitive overlap
- Brand confusion

Risks

Where We Are Going

- ❖ Shift toward universality, diversity and access
- ❖ Return to human factors
- ❖ Measurement and standards
- ❖ Governance and centralization (e.g. federated)
- ❖ Integrated

Useful, Usable and Engaging



Select Resources and Research On Online Community From Leader Networks

- [The Business Impact Of Online Communities](#)
- [Keys To Community Readiness and Growth Study](#)
- [The Social Consumer Study](#)
- [Customer Intimacy on Steroids: Why B2B companies need to build customer communities](#)
- [Your Roadmap to Building Online Community](#)
- [The Big List of B2B Online Communities Infographic](#)
- [Digital Transformation Strategy Map](#)

Overview of our Services

Read more here:

<http://www.leadernetworks.com/how-we-help-you>

Define or refine your digital strategy

We work with your team to articulate where you want to go – and outline the operational steps to get there.

- [Strategy Fast Track](#)
- [Online Community](#)
- [Social Selling](#)
- [Employee Engagement and Advocacy](#)
- [Partner Engagement](#)
- [Inclusive Marketing](#)
- [Content Marketing](#)

[Find out more](#)

Implement your strategy and deliver results

We help you build digital solutions that create value for your audience and advance your business goals.

- [Customer Experience](#)
- [Business Alignment](#)
- [Business Impact](#)

[Find out more](#)

Improve ROI for your existing digital business strategies

We look at what you're doing now – and uncover ways to get bigger and better results.

- [Digital Centers of Excellence](#)
- [Online Community Health Check](#)

[Find out more](#)

Ensure ongoing digital advantage

We keep your finger on the pulse and help you identify new digital opportunities.

- [Future Proofing Advisory Services](#)
- [Custom Research](#)
- [Thought Leadership Content](#)
- [Speeches and Events](#)

[Find out more](#)

[Learn more about the Leader Networks team's credentials and expertise.](#)

THANK YOU!

LEADER NETWORKS

Social Business Research, Strategy & Operations

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