
Working Recommendations [SAMPLE]: Next steps in collaboration

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This document outlines the recommended follow-up actions – as practical ‘next steps’ - for a final phase of collaboration between Storycircle and [Social Enterprise] (Oct 2012-March 2013). Storycircle hopes to work directly with [Social Enterprise] on supporting specific activities designed to meet the overall aims for the [Community Practitioner] programme. Following the broader findings, collective discussions and our more detailed recommendations (made in Sections 1 and 2 of the full Interim Report [CONFIDENTAL]), this final phase would be aimed at working towards [CPO4] “enhancing public engagement with [Community Practitioners’] web content” as a priority. This will be approached in three steps:

- STEP 1: Refining [CP] site metadata (Oct 2012)
- STEP 2: Improving [CP] site functionality (Oct-Dec 2012)
- STEP 3: Conducting ‘Curated Content’ experiments (Jan-March 2013)

Our intensive work together over the past year has given us familiarity with [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] resources and working practices and the wider context within which [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] works to promote community perspectives. We have learned about what works well, and what can hold back good ideas that might otherwise work; we have also got a better sense of the time and resources needed for experiments of the sort now proposed.

Once the starting-points for these experiments are agreed between [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] and Storycircle, we propose to start work immediately on the next steps, continuing our action research approach as a ‘critical friend’ to [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE]. This research approach will require on-going tracking of progress, and undertaking organisational-level reflections. Specifically, this will require Storycircle to conduct:

- Periodic interviews and recorded discussions with key [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] staff
- On-going collection and analysis of data on core outcome indicators
- Interviews with a national sample of CRs

This research is intended to complement [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE]’s wider processes of reflection and planned action undertaken within the [Community Practitioner] Outcomes Framework for the period (April 2012-March 2013).

STEP 1 – [CP] SITE METADATA

Finding	Metadata for content and [CPs]/groups is inconsistent, affecting user ability to navigate site and [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] ability to follow site activity
Action	Update metadata structure at back-end of CR site. Focus on ways metadata might better describe: A) <i>content</i> ; and B) [Community Practitioners] and Groups
Timeframe	ASAP, October - mid-November 2012
Key Staff	[NAMES]
Details	<p>Metadata on Content: The themed categories are quite general (eg. ‘Arts, Music and Sport’ is too broad) and could be further refined to better reflect the nature of content. Other types of ‘Collection’ might be identified in current content that could be included.</p> <p>Metadata on Individual CRs: Profiles do exist but at present do not link with fields in [CP] database, some of which might be very useful. Significant proportion of uncompleted current fields in profiles, such as CR biography, that would could be further encouraged to be completed.</p> <p>Metadata on CR groups: ‘Groups’ are a mixture of themes such as ‘climate change’, places such as ‘Manchester’ and unclear names such as ‘[project name]’. Similarly ‘Areas’ contain three locations in Yorkshire, have some counties such as ‘Norfolk’ but not others, some English regions such as ‘North West’ but not others, and a broad one for ‘Europe’. Not clear how areas relate to what content is about, or where [practitioners] are based.</p>
Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update metadata structure for site content and apply to current body of [CP] content. • Update guidance and upload page to account for changes. • Include [CP] database fields within Drupal
Benefits	This step will ensure that data describing existing content and [CPs] best reflects the most important things users might want to know about them. Improving the back-end structure by refined metadata of [CP] site content will provide a basis for Steps 2 and 3 to focus on enhancing user engagement with the front-end of the [CP] site.

STEP 2 – [CP] SITE FUNCTIONALITY

Finding	Limited site functionality to enable users to connect to others, or curate content themselves. Limited scope for [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] to curate content on current site.
Action	Embed additional site functionality and tools (which use updated metadata structure) to enhance front-end/public engagement with site. Specifically, address ways to enhance: A) user exploration of [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] defined ‘collections’ of content; B) systematic means for finding/connecting [CPs] and [CP] groups.
Timeframe	October-December 2012
Key Staff	[NAMES]
Details	<p>Functionality for Exploring Content: There is significant potential for site users to curate content themselves (‘bottom up’ content curation) provided some key design changes are made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic way would be to allow users to refine their search for content by enabling multiple types of metadata to be selected, thus providing a more flexible user experience, e.g. where they can look for content that is defined as ‘Comedy’ AND ‘Norfolk’ AND ‘Video’ and see the results. There might be a specific page called something like ‘Explore Our Content...’ that invites users to be curious and exploratory and where all such drop-down menus could be included (thus simplifying user journeys <i>towards</i> finding and interacting

	<p>with content).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing a <i>user-generated</i> tagging system would establish a strong ‘bottom up’ approach to content curation. An excellent example of this would be the ‘Visitor Tagging’ approach used by the Horniman Museum, which uses ‘tag clouds’ to encourage users to explore their collections through things like ‘Tag of the Week’ or ‘Random Tag’, and allows all users to build their own tags for all content (rather than just those you upload content). This tagging system might also work at the point that content is uploaded by enabling [CPs] to select from existing tags (made as recommendations <i>to</i> users <i>by</i> other users), and could be supported by updated guidance on these pages. More generally could use <i>interactions</i> with content - such as viewing or rating/liking - to encourage public engagement via highlighted content features on the home page, eg. sections on ‘Most Viewed Stories’, ‘Most ‘Liked’ Stories’, or ‘Most Rated Content’. If users can see how their collective interactions are shaping how content appears, it is likely this will further enhance their engagement with the site. <p>Functionality for Connecting [CPs] to Site Users and to Each Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A way for users to connect themselves might be achieved by linking the [CP] database used to administrate accreditations with the user profiles on the [CP] site, and then including some of these fields as part of the search/explore function. The site could have a ‘Find a [Practitioner]...’ or ‘Meet the [Community Practitioners] page, where they can be searched (ideally in combination) by their location, interests and specialisms, [CP] group affiliation, or their current accreditation level. Might also consider a basic interactive map of [CPs] and/or [CP] groups to allow users to find people in their area or in areas of interest in a way that is a bit more interesting than a drop-down menu. For example the Media Trust’s Newsnet site has a ‘Member Directory’ and map, which invites users to “connect with people in your area or by interest”: this could be adapted and perhaps improved for use on the [CP] site.
Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storycircle/[SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] meetings to discuss functionality (Oct 2012) [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] to implement additional functionality (Nov-Dec 2012) [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] to update guidance and promotion of new functionality in time for site re-launch (January 2013?) Storycircle to review implementation and track them through [CP] site analytics
Benefits	<p>This step will ensure that the [CP] site has the functionality to <i>enable</i> users to explore [CP] content, and connect with each other. Such back/front links would also generate compelling data for reporting this outcome [CPO4] e.g. a tag cloud/word frequency would also work for reporting outcomes [CPO3] and [CPO4].</p>

STEP 3 – ‘CURATED CONTENT’ EXPERIMENTS	
Finding	Very little [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE]/‘top-down’ curation at present time. Very low levels of active user engagement at thematic level. As a result, [CP] content tends to be ‘static’, not ‘dynamic’.
Action	Design 3x ‘content curation’ experiments to be run on monthly basis, the first two by ‘Guest Curators’ (as ‘lateral’ content curation) and the last, by [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] with advice from Storycircle
Timeframe	October-December 2012 (Planning), January-March 2013 (Implementing, once Steps 1 and 2 completed)

Key Staff	[NAMES]
Details	<p>Guest Curators: Building on the plans for a ‘guest blogger’ currently being discussed. The idea would be to use an invited guest with particular specialisms/expertise to curate the [CP] content into a featured theme on the [CP] site. A good example of this are the Lux ‘Online Exhibitions’ which feature curated content from their moving image collections. Developing this approach further, [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] could plan coordinated interactions that enhanced public engagement with this curated content. Role of curator needs to be defined.</p> <p>Scheduled Programme: Setting ‘assignments’ for themed monthly content front-page in advance. Pose questions. Requires planning series of these over next few months. Can be by theme, practice, area, person etc.</p> <p>Co-ordinated web presence: use new functionality to enhance public/user engagement with content, and could play a role in nurturing interaction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent space on CR site. Possibly home page as main ‘shop window’ (or possibly on the [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] blog, or linked). • Use improved site functionality to further focus user interactions/commentary/connection around featured theme. • Draw together interactions between curator and wider audiences, and across wider web presence (using FB, Twitter, [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] Blog. Could use Storify to draw together multi-media web content – such as additional commentary, contributions, content etc. around the featured theme (this would create ‘multiple authorship’ of a shared story). • Link to wider web-presence e.g. using the [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] blog and mailing lists to pull in [CP] content, or even to link to other organisations web stories etc. (e.g. could link [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] blog entry on stroke care to Stroke Association pages and to other [CP] stroke-related content).
Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE]/Storycircle to identify 2x appropriate guest curators and featured themes. • [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] to implement monthly experiments with Guest Curator and/or internally • STORYCIRCLE/[SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] to track impact of experiments through web analytics
Benefits	<p>Step 3 tests ‘in-the-round’ [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE]’s potential for curating content on the CR site. Building on the technical improvements in Steps 1 and 2, this step will generate important learning about a wider curatorial role that [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] might play in enhancing public engagement with community reported content. Bringing in guests in this way would generate learning from external/independent expertise, so providing a foundation from which [SOCIAL ENTERPRISE] can consider how to build and sustain curatorial capacity in-house.</p>