

COMMUNITY HEURISTICS FOR CROWDSOURCING



PURPOSE

THE PLATFORM'S PURPOSE IDENTIFIES THE MEMBERS' NEEDS AND IDENTIFIES THE OWNER'S GOALS.

CLARITY

A clear purpose should describe how it identifies the members' needs and identifies the owner's goals

Is the purpose of the platform clear?
Does the platform clearly describe how it fulfills the members' needs and the owner's goals.

VISIBILITY

The purpose should be adequately visible, so newcomers see and understand what needs the platform can fulfill. It is important both to orient and entice newcomers to the community as well as to provide a common frame of reference for more seasoned members

Is the purpose visible on the platform?
Where is it displayed? Under the logo in a small slogan, or is it the first sentence you read when entering the platform? At first glance, the purpose should be visible on the platform even for regular users to be reminded everytime when using the platform.

IDEALISM

The platform has a purpose that contributes to society, justice or altruism; and thus reaches further than the platform alone

In what way does the platform fulfill a desire to improve society?
Does contributing to the platform help solve societal challenges on a local or worldwide level, including altruism and justice.



CONTRIBUTION

STIMULATING MEMBERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PLATFORM, CAN BE ONE OF THE TOUGHEST TASKS OF THE PLATFORM. THE PLATFORM SHOULD SHOW WHAT OTHERS MEMBERS HAVE CONTRIBUTED, MAKE A CERTAIN APPEAL TO THE MEMBERS BY TARGETED REQUESTS AND HAVE A CLEAR DESCRIPTION OF THE REQUEST. IMPORTANT IS THAT THE THRESHOLD BEFORE CONTRIBUTION IS ADEQUATE AND THAT THERE ARE ENOUGH INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATORS FOR THE MEMBERS TO CONTRIBUTE.

COMPARATIVE

Members should be able to compare what others have contributed and thus being able to learn the normative behavior. Members will be more likely to have a more divergent set of contributions when being able to compare themselves.

Can users learn the normative behaviour on the platform?
Is it possible to see the behaviour of other crowdworkers, for example how they contribute or interacting with requesters etc.

Can a users see contributions that were made in the past?

REQUEST LIST

A list of the requests should be present, with sorting and tracking mechanisms so members can find tasks which fits their needs and capabilities.

Is there a full list of requests?
A list of all the current requests to be completed for workers to see.

Can the request list be sorted?
Filter options, so users can easily find the best fitting requests.

TARGETED REQUESTS

Members should be invited to contribute, which can be done by targeted requests that match the interest and capabilities of the member. The status, likeability and familiarity of requester improve the change of contribution.

Are there targeted requests made towards the workers by the platform?
Asking for a certain unique capability of a worker based on a contributions in the past.



MODERATION

THE PLATFORM NEEDS MONITORING BY MODERATORS AND OTHER USERS TO KEEP THE PLATFORM A PLEASANT WORKING ENVIRONMENT. REGULATION WILL HELP TO MAKE THE EXPECTED BEHAVIOR CLEAR AND CAN BE REFERRED TO WHEN VIOLATED.

MONITORING

The platform should provide the possibility for user to report undesired behavior. In this way the community itself monitors its behavior. User should be able to control their own output of contribution and allowed to revision them.

Is it possible for users to report undesired behaviour?
By providing mechanisms that allow users to flag spam or messages or report certain users.

Can users control the output of their contribution?
For example by editing or removing the content themselves.

REGULATIONS

Regulation or policies should be available on the platform and easily found when looked for. Users can refer to them when discussion tend to get out of hand, or when posts are made that don't pursue the purpose of the platform. The regulations should be open for debate in order for further improvement. If the regulation are too prominently displayed, it may convey that the regulations are not always followed.

Are there regulations present on the platform?
Policies or terms and conditions, anything that explains the rules and rights when using the platform.

Are they placed on a correct place on the platform?
The regulations should be easily found when looked for, for example in the footer of the platform.

Are the regulations up for debate by users?
Do users have a place to gather and can discuss the rules with the owners of the platform itself?

MODERATION

Being a moderator, required a certain consistency of acting. The platform should train or inform them about the role they fulfill. Moderators can make mistakes however; members should be able to contact moderators about their acts and make an appeal if they don't agree with their modifications. Moderators should have a place to share difficult situations, so they can advise each other and act consistent throughout the platform.

Are moderators trained and consistent?
When becoming moderator on the platform, does the platform provide information about what is expected from you as a moderator. Do they pre-screen, degrade label, move or remove inappropriate message that limit the damage those messages create?

Do moderators have a place to gather and discuss certain problems?

Can moderators be contacted by users?
Is there an option to send a private message to the moderators of the platform, depending on who moderates what page. Is it also possible to send those messages to the requesters of the task, who is often also the moderator.

THRESHOLD

What steps does a visitor has to make, in order to contribute - such as making an account. If this takes too much effort, it is less likely they will contribute, but at the same time, the quality of contributions will be higher. A platform needs to find the right balance between being easy to contribute versus too extensive steps like providing credit card information before being able to contribute. When a lot of spam or non-relevant contributions are made, the threshold probably should be increased. When nobody is contributing at all, one of the factors can be that the threshold is too high. Members can play an active role in familiarizing the newcomers to the platform and thus lower the threshold.

Is the threshold for contributing just right?
A lot of spam - too easy vs no contributions - too hard, what are the steps you undertake before being able to make a contribution?

Are visitors actively guided and stimulated to make a contribution?

Either by moderators, or the system itself that provides information about how they can contribute. Making the first contribution should inviting to the visitors by the platform.

MOTIVATORS

What kind of motivations does the member have in order to contribute? Platform should be aware of what drives their members, since this can differ per platform. A distinction is made between intrinsic motivators (inherently interesting or enjoyable) and extrinsic motivators (outcomes). Providing rewards and other extrinsic motivators for requests that are intrinsically motivating, could undermine their intrinsic interest in the task and thus should be treated with care.

Are there enough intrinsic motivators for members to contribute? Learning, self actualization etc.

Are there enough extrinsic motivators for members to contribute? Awards, rewards, recognition

The extrinsic motivators doesn't influence the intrinsic motivators in any way?

If the extrinsic motivation is too low, it can negatively influence the intrinsic motivation. A task that has an intrinsic motivation, for example helping your kind neighbour in the garden all day. It is possible that you wouldn't provide the help if the neighbour offers you €5 to help in his garden all day. In this way the extrinsic motivator (of €5) influences and can overrule the intrinsic motivator, since you think €5 would not be enough for an entire day work. Unless without this offer, your intrinsic motivation of being helpful to your neighbour, would be sufficient to offer your help.

REQUEST DESCRIPTION

In the description of the required contribution, it should be clear what impact the fulfillment of the contribution will have, is it complementary or substitute? Emphasizing that a member has a unique position or capability will make people more willing to contribute. Empathy with the requester may also raise the quality of work.

Does the request raise a feeling of complementary contribution?
A contribution that adds something new to the existing contributions.

Does the request do an appeal on the unique capabilities of a certain person?
Like a certain location, specialisation, knowledge etc.

Are the requests described in a way that members can empathise with the requester?
Say who they are, why they need to have the task completed, what it is used for etc.



MEMBERS

WHAT WOULD A PLATFORM BE WITHOUT ITS MEMBERS? MEMBERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO BUILD UP AN IDENTITY ON THE PLATFORM USING A PROFILE. FOR LONG LASTING COMMUNITIES, THE PLATFORM SHOULD RECRUIT AND TRIGGER NEW MEMBERS TO CONTRIBUTE. THE PLATFORM SHOULD STIMULATE THE CURRENT MEMBER'S INVOLVEMENT THROUGH INCREASED LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION.

SELF PRESENTATION

Members need a profile where they can present themselves. The profile could display elements such as: profile picture, biography and topics that the user is interested in. When a platform shares privacy sensitive information, like someone's weight loss, it should be possible to create a pseudonym. Personalizing features and activities satisfy people's need to develop individual style and create a social statement through the design of their personal community Web space.

Do users have their own profile, which is visible for others to see?

Does the profile offer sufficient personalizing features?
Features like adding a profile picture, information about location, age, gender, education, expertise, a biography etc.

Does the platform's purpose match the member's profile?
For example on a professional platform, one would expect a close relation with the person in real life (mostly for trust building). But on a platform about losing weight, it should be possible to create an anonymous profile, for respecting privacy.

DEEP PROFILING

The platform should support deep profiling capabilities which it can achieve with: reputation or ranking systems, interaction archives and tools that provide an indications of who did what. The platform can provide "a perceived fit between a focal person's belief of his or her identity and the recognition and verification of this identity by other community members".

Is there a possibility for deep profiling?
A person that is very active and experienced on the platform should be easily recognised as such, compared to a newcomer. Does the platform offer mechanisms to display the worker's contribution to the platform. Ways of recognizing this user in the form of displaying the amount of contributions made, competitions won or even providing certain rewards for their contribution to the platform.

Are members acknowledged and verified by other members or the platform of their believed identity?
An example are the endorsements of LinkedIn made by other members about the skills you have. Or the owners of the platform build mechanisms that teach more about the person's identity based upon their involvement in the platform.

LIFE CYCLE

The platform should be able to facilitate the membership life cycle consisting of: Welcome its visitors, instruct your novices, reward your regulars, empower your leaders and honor your elders.

Does the platform welcome their visitors?
New to this platform, read here how to use it, FAQ, tour, Getting started

Does the platform instruct their novices?
Training, meet and greet, introducing oneself to others.

Does the platform reward their regulars?
Reward them for continued involvement, offer new opportunities to keep them challenged and interested.

Does the platform honor its elders?
Showcasing them as a role model on the platform

RECRUITMENT

A community should continuously seek new members, not only for it to grow, but also to sustainable. The platform should actively recruit new members by external communication and promotion. Seeing which friends already use the platform (by Social Media), will raise the likelihood from them to join the platform as well. Present members should be aware of the importance of newcomers, by inviting members to the platform and by interacting in a friendly and stimulating way.

Does the platform recruit new members, by using its existing members?
Asking existing members to recruit member in trade of certain benefits or showcase which friends are already member to the new member with Facebook likes. Or given certain benefits for inviting friends.

Does the platform promote itself on other media channels?
By using advertisements are being featured in articles.



PLATFORM

THE PLATFORM SHOULD PRESENT ITSELF TO ITS MEMBERS WITH AN UNIQUE POSITION COMPARED TO COMPETITORS, HAVING GOOD AESTHETICS, A TRUSTWORTHY REPUTATION AND MOTIVE. THE PLATFORM SHOULD OFFER TOOLS THAT HELP FULFILL ITS PURPOSE. THE MEMBERS CAN CREATE CERTAIN RITUALS OVER TIME AND THEIR ACTIONS SHOULD BE VISIBLE, GIVING A FEELING OF A POPULATED SPACE.

UNIQUENESS

With ever rising amount of crowdsourcing platforms, the platform should serve an unique purpose that other platforms don't offer

Does the platform serve a unique purpose that other platforms do not seem to offer?

AESTHETICS

A better looking platform, means that people expect it to be better. The platform should provide a professional user experience, and shouldn't encounter any technical difficulties.

Is the platform's visual design professional?

Is the platform's user experience professional?
No errors or unexpected behaviour

MOTIVE

The motive of the creators of the platform has to be clear to the members. An "about" page of its initial creators and their motivation of creating the platform, will help for members to understand this motive.

Does the platform have a page that describes its initial purpose of existence (history)?



COMMON GROUND

THE PLATFORM SHOULD OFFER MECHANISMS THAT SUPPORT MEMBERS TO FIND COMMON GROUNDS. ON THE PLATFORMS, MEMBERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO SUBDIVIDE FROM THE COMMUNITY IN INTIMATE SUBGROUPS TO ACCOMMODATE GROWTH AND PREVENT BECOMING TOO DIVERSE.

SUB GROUPS

The ability for member to separate themselves from the community as a whole, will maintain a sense of intimacy as the community expands. A subgroup will raise the identity-based commitment to the community as a whole, if it is in line with the general purpose of the platform. The platform should facilitate mechanisms that increase the likelihood that people will encounter the same kind people.

Can members separate themselves into a subgroup?
A subgroup can be a group of workers that have contributed to the same request, which would be rated as "semi", since the members can't really separate themselves into their required subgroups. A "top" is rated when members also have the option to create subgroups without the explicit permission of the platform owners.

Are there mechanisms present in the platform that increase the likelihood that one will encounter people with similar interests?
Identifying certain groups with the same interests and automatically put them together using the platform's mechanics. Like a list of all logo designers on a graphic design platform.

DIVERSITY

If the members of the platform, have a too diverse interest in the platform, it can lower the commitment to the platform and drive members away. The platform should be aware of the diversity and when necessary create subgroups.

Can you easily identify different types of users?
Workers, requesters, moderators, platform owners, visitors etc.

Are the users of the platform similar enough and not too diverse from each other?
Too diverse groups should be put into subgroups for the community to stay strong. A lack of diversity can lead to contributions that are all the same.

EVENTS

The platform should organize events to reinforce the purpose and values of the community. Events will to define the community, remind members what they have in common and what their community is all about

Does the platform organise events that reinforce the purpose of the platform?
Coming together every year, or organizing local convention, meetups with members etc. Can also be broadcast or live events.

RITUALS

Incorporating community rituals into the platform will make the members feel at home. Having certain rituals will lay the foundation for a true online culture.

Does the platform have ways of interacting that are unique and linked to the platform?
For example using a certain group name for its workers like Tankers for mechanical work, or the use of symbols, rituals for newcomers or any other way of interaction that users of the platform will truly understand and know the meaning of.

TOOLS

The platform offers tools that contribute to fulfilling its purpose. Think about making a contribution, communicating, collaborating etc. Supportive tools can be the reason that the members will become part of the community and add to the uniqueness of the platform.

Does the platform offer tools that contribute to fulfilling its purpose?
Offering a way to upload your contributions, mechanisms that allow requesters to see these contributions.

Does the platform offer extra tools to assist users in making unique contributions that match the platform's purpose?
For example, Prolific has a worker demographic sorting tool that help researchers to see the exact number of workers of their target group.

Can you give feedback towards the owners of the platform?
Is there a button or page that helps you give them feedback in how they can improve the tools of the platform.

REPUTATION

Articles of the platform in the news, support by celebrities, winning awards all contribute to a positive reputation of the platform. Showcasing the achievements of the platform, helps to understand the value the platform offers and can raise expectations about future success. Platform owners could show the growth of the platform, amount of contributions made and the amount of years it has been established.

Does the platform have a positive reputation?
Certain awards or acknowledgments by other websites.

Does the platform showcase its achievements?
For example the growth of community, amount of contributions, money paid to the workers etc.

VIRTUAL CO-PRESENCE

Finding an empty online community will have little motivation to interact in it. The platform should give the impression that is a populated space and needs a critical mass to do so. This can be done by a list of the platform's (online) members, adding time marks to posts and showcasing the latest contributions.

When present on the platform, is there a clear feeling of other members actively using the platform?
For example displaying the latest contributions, adding timestamps or showing which members are online.