15th meeting - plenary of IA CoP meeting in Budapest
June 18 - 20, 2012

Report and recommendations

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Overview

This is a consultative report after the 17th plenary meeting of the Internal Audit Community of Practice (IA CoP) that took place in Budapest, Hungary between June 18 - 20, 2012. It was the first plenary meeting that took place without the outgoing CoP chair. A temporary chair and vice-chairs had been agreed on at a previous working group meeting with a view to elect a new chair in agreement with the full plenary at this meeting.

It is at this turning point in the history of the IA CoP that I make some brief reflections and recommendations about the processes that are in place and recommendations for taking it forward. The recommendations come under five key headings:

1. Coaching internal leadership
2. Managing membership pages and documents in the wiki
3. Mapping the ways of belonging to the community and its use of online tools
4. Making strategic use of the value-creation framework
5. Produce a narrative of the IA CoP

Coaching internal leadership

My experience of successful communities of practice good internal leadership is one of the most important factors for its success. With the leaving of the previous Chair, Tomislav, the IA CoP has to learn to work in new ways and with a distributed leadership across several languages. It is a big challenge for any community, particularly as learning in communities of practice is a relatively new way of doing things and one that most educational and institutional structures have not prepared people for. The new internal leadership needs support and coaching to help their community of practice to flourish.

What's in place
There is a new chair and vice-chairs; there is an active Executive Committee and three Working Groups. There is a fairly mature practice of sharing leadership of the meetings through leadership groups (Agenda activists, Community keepers, Social reporters, Institutional brokers)

Recommendations

- **Coaching.** Be intentional about develop the capacity of new chair, vice-chairs and Exec Com to cultivate the learning partnership between members of the IA CoP. They need to be coached in ways that will help them create high value for time for members in the plenary sessions and working groups - with a view to sustaining the high-energy nature of this community of practice and its sustainability.

- **Sandwich coaching.** I suggest that the working group or plenary meetings are sandwiched by coaching sessions i.e. a day of coaching before the meeting, with the learning applied during the meeting, and a day after the meeting for reflections and design of the next steps of coaching.

Managing membership pages and documents in the wiki

The IA CoP wiki has become a central place for members to find out about each other (individual membership page and country pages) and to access the documents and the shared memory of meetings. However, as the community grows, more meetings take place (both plenary and working groups), more documents are created, and the less easy it is to navigate or to find what a member is looking for. The logistics vice-chair needs help in creating a manageable, well-archived, easily retrievable wiki using all the features available for doing this in Wikispaces.

What's in place
There are an impressive number of resources shared by members of the community and documents being created by the Working groups. The previous Chair started an excellent discipline of entering everything in the wiki, making very good use of visuals and of wiki features such as templates and tables

of content. Google Analytics is embedded in the wiki which is collecting a very good source of data about members use of the wiki.

Recommendations

- **Create a wiki team.** There needs to be an overall plan to map, archive, tag (classify in multiple categories) and summarize the pages and resources in the wiki so that they continue to be useful rather than being lost. There are a number of ways this can be done, but it needs a committed group of people who belong to the community (a cross-language working group) to take it on. The team, led by the vice-chair on logistics needs support to learn to use all the features in the wiki (and associated tools) and to understand some of the Web2.0 principles that will help to keep the wiki a rich resource for the community.

- **Time in agenda for wiki coaching.** There should be some time allocated in the working group meetings to help people know how to use the wiki with confidence and to develop practices around using the wiki for sharing what they are doing for the wider community.

Mapping the ways of belonging to the community and its use of online tools

There are a number of different ways that people feel they belong to the IA CoP, such as IA CoP member (at the plenary), Exec Com member, working group member, member of a leadership group (e.g. social reporter). There are also a number of different ways that people can use different online tools and modes of communication for participating in the IA CoP. (e.g. wiki, email, Facebook). As these modes of belonging and points of access start to proliferate members can start feeling anxious about what they are missing or what they don't know. At the same time processes and tools can start to be unnecessarily duplicated. It would be very helpful to map the different modes of belonging and the different access points to the CoP. The benefits would be twofold. It would be a way which could be used as a way to help orientate members (especially newcomers) and it would be a way of making sure that new processes and tools are not duplicated. It would also be useful to map the different forms of belonging and access points in different languages.

What's in place

The IACoP spaces for belonging and for accessing its activities is only just starting to become problematic. It would not be difficult at this stage to find out all the different ways of belonging and different access points.

Recommendations

- **Knowledge ecology map.** Create a map of the different ways to belong to the community and the different tools and entry points for accessing the connections and resources.

- **Knowledge ecology orientation.** Provide orientations for members, especially newcomers, using this knowledge ecology map.

Making strategic use of the value-creation framework

The CEF has produced a report about PEMPAL communities of practice using the value-creation framework[1]. It was used as a retrospective review through the collecting of "success stories". The framework, however, was written to be used in more strategic ways, using quantitative and qualitative indicators to monitor the value of community activities and how they relate to a country's success. It has also been used in other communities as a way of opening up - in members' minds - the possibilities of ways that the community activities and its productions can change their practice and the performance of their organization.

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[1] Wenger, E., Trayner, B. de Laat, M, (2011) "Promoting value creation in networks and communities: assessment framework". Ruud de Moor Centrum, Open Universiteit, The Netherlands. Available for download: http://wenger-trayner.com/resources/publications/evaluation-framework/

What's in place

The CEF has already produced a publication based on the framework of "success stories"[2]. Some members, particularly from the Exec Com have a notion of some of the language. For example, Lljerka used it in her opening as chair person at the last meeting, and when Maxim told a story at the Exec Com meeting other members were quick to identify it as a "success story" and to tell him to put it in the wiki.

Recommendations

- **Coach CoP members to use the value-creation genre for reporting on country progress.** Integrate the use of the value creation stories in member's report back on progress since last meeting. Community members have often requested more time for hearing about the progress from each country. If members were taught to use the genre of a value-creation story, this report back would create a rich learning opportunity for other members as well as a source of data for an evaluation.

- **Use qualitative indicators for a more rigorous evaluation.** The rigor of the value-creation framework comes in using both quantitative and qualitative indicators to monitor the value of community activities. Developing the indicators of value at each different cycle (immediate, potential, applied, realized and reframed) should include both quantitative (e.g. data collected through google analytics) and qualitative (e.g. focus group interviews)

Produce a narrative of the Internal Audit CoP

The IA CoP has developed a rich history of activity and inactivity, success and ongoing challenges. This history has been captured in all sorts of places including the wiki, my reports, slide-shows and photographs by social reporters, the CEF webpage. However, there is a lot of the story that is hidden in people's memories and, in particular, in the "little black book" of Tomislav who jotted down everything from notes on content to direct quotes of members that made him laugh. The story of IA CoP, which documented the challenges along the way and how they were overcome, would provide an invaluable resource for a number of different audiences:

- newcomers to the IA CoP
- existing members
- for the other two CoPs in PEMPAL
- sponsors and future sponsors

A well-written narrative would enhance the reputation of the IA CoP among Internal Auditors in general, in the region and in the world. It would also document a living case of a successful community of practice for sponsoring organizations. It would develop a self-consciousness by members of the community about its own learning. Moreover, it would help to articulate and document some of the key learning of the IA CoP and be a reflection on the transferable practices for other CoPs.

Recommendations

- Engage someone who has an insider/outsider's perspective to research and prepare a case study about the IA CoP. It would be a narrative that included the voices of past and present members as well as other stakeholders and which was validated by community members. I would be very interested in taking on such an assignment.

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[2] CEF publication "Success stories: promoting and assessing value creation in communities of practice. Available for download: http://www.pempal.org/data/upload/files/2012/06/pem-pal_success_web.pdf