

Information Management Resource Kit

Module on Building Electronic Communities and Networks

UNIT 5. ONLINE FACILITATION

LESSON 6. FACILITATION TASKS

NOTE

Please note that this PDF version does not have the interactive features offered through the IMARK courseware such as exercises with feedback, pop-ups, animations etc.

We recommend that you take the lesson using the interactive courseware environment, and use the PDF version for printing the lesson and to use as a reference after you have completed the course.



Objectives

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- describe in detail what “facilitation tasks” and related activities are;
- identify daily, weekly and monthly tasks required in the facilitation of an online discussion.



Introduction



Besides **support tasks**, which are more technical and organizational (e.g. members' subscriptions, problems with attachments or bounces, etc.), there are **facilitation tasks**, which deal with the regulation of the discussion, the creation of an encouraging environment and the mediation of conflicts.

In this lessons you'll explore the main facilitation tasks:

- 1) **building trust**
- 2) **encouraging participation;**
- 3) **maintaining focus;** and
- 4) **mediating.**

Building trust

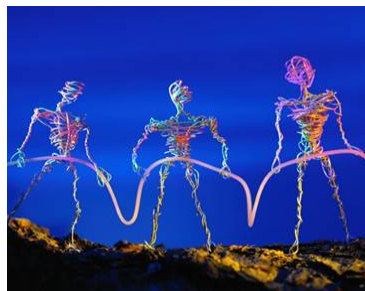


In order for members of an online community to participate freely, offering their opinions and experiences, they need to **trust that the space is safe** and that their contributions will be respected.

How to build trust in an online discussion?

A good set of ground rules will go some way toward making sure that members respect each other's voices, but more needs to be done by the facilitator to build trust...

Building trust



Another critical aspect to building trust is **improving relationships between people**.

Help people get to know each other both professionally, and (at least to some extent) personally.

Encouraging strong relationships:

- 1) get people to introduce themselves, and share some personal details; and
- 2) encourage people to create personal online profiles, if possible, or provide an online web space of their own and share it.

Building trust

The facilitator must lead by example, and “model” ways of communicating that help to build trust...

1) Respect members' inputs to the discussion by:

- acknowledging the input;
- including the input in summaries and content; and
- dealing with members who do not respect other members' input.

2) Value all inputs and be non-judgmental:

In cases where the inputs are construed as deliberately offensive, refer the member back to the ground rules.

3) Be transparent in decision-making:

Be open and transparent about decisions regarding the community. Encourage input and ownership of the community, by the community.

Furthermore, because an online space leaves a written record of interaction (and because many people have access to the content), there are some additional considerations about **confidentiality**:

- Are list archives publicly available, or available only to members?
- Do members have to seek permission before forwarding or cross-posting messages?

Issues of confidentiality must be covered in the community's ground rules.

Encouraging participation



A new online community may need some time to get to the point where all participants feel comfortable about contributing to the discussion.

Even an established community which has had inspiring discussions for months may suddenly lose momentum and fall silent.

In these, and other cases, it is your role to **motivate and encourage** the participants.

Let's discover how...

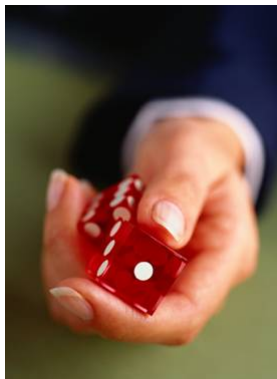
Encouraging participation

Thandi has just taken on the facilitation of the Southern African Extension Workers Network. The list is very quiet.

What are some of the activities you could advise her to use to enliven the list and keep it active?

Please write your answer in the input box and press "Check Answer".

Encouraging participation



In order to ensure a lively online space and to keep your list active you can...

- assist someone who isn't a good online communicator;
- be a good online communicator;
- include new people;
- draw people in;
- develop new discussions;
- share information and resources;
- summarize and synthesize postings.

See interactive lesson to download
"Online exercises to encourage participation"

Encouraging participation

Assisting someone who is not a good online communicator

You can assist someone who is not a good online communicator in several ways:

- contacting them **in private** to provide tips and feedback;
- **ask the person to post to you first**, so you can give advice on communicating online; and
- using posting guidelines or ground rules as a reference.

You could also paraphrase what they have said and ask other group members to comment, for example: *"What I hear Thembi saying is that it's very difficult for women working in this field. Do other group members have similar experiences?"*

Encouraging participation

How to be a good online communicator

Communicating well online is something you learn by experience. The best way to learn is to try. Some things to think about:

- Make the subject header as descriptive as possible about the message content: not just *"Report"* but *"Report on Internet Access in Nigeria"*. That way, people can more easily decide what messages they want to read.
- Stay on topic.
- Avoid capital letters ("HELLO, MY NAME IS ALICE. IN YOUR LAST MESSAGE YOU MENTIONED"). This can look like shouting to other participant.
- When you respond to a message, keep the original subject heading intact (unless it is no longer relevant to the message content).
- Accessing and down-loading messages can be expensive, so keep your messages short (for example, no longer than 600 words).
- Exercise tolerance and respect toward other participants whose views may differ from your own. You may disagree with a posting, but do not write *"You must be crazy"*.
- When you would like to have a personal discussion, or feel offended by a particular message, please send a message to the individual involved only.
- Remember that satire and sarcasm are difficult to communicate well online.

Discussions are organic, and how they develop depends on the participants. Be aware that you are in a dialogue, and allow the online conversation to flow.

Encouraging participation

Including new people

Pay attention to the postings of new participants, because they might need support with netiquette guidelines (the online etiquette) or they might just feel like outsiders.

You can get in touch with them by private email to ensure they are feeling up to speed on what is happening, what is expected and how to post.

Moreover, you can include them in the discussion trying to involve them through their personal experience. For example:
"Thembi, just to bring you up to speed, we've been discussing the possibility of a campaign around food security in Uganda. I seem to remember that your network organized a similar campaign in Tanzania a few years ago. Can you tell us something about it?"

Encouraging participation

Drawing people in

Draw participants in by posting new topics and including suggestions about how they can respond.

In order to encourage responses:

- put a deadline to post by;
- conclude the posting with a question and exact instructions for how to respond;
- support those who are responding by sending rewarding messages about their contribution;
- ask those who are not posting if they are having problems or are hesitant for some other reason.

An example of message you could write to draw people in, is the following: *"Thembi, you work with a telecentre training team. Can you tell us a bit about the types of group you train?"*

Encouraging participation

Developing new discussions

Just like you used seed topics to get things going in your workspace, you can also use them to maintain interest.

For instance you could:

- forward relevant items to the list, with your analysis and some questions included; or
- start a topic requesting something from everyone, such as resources they have found useful.

For example: *"I've noticed a lot of people referring to "open source software" recently. What exactly is it? And are group members also using it?"*

Encouraging participation

Sharing information and resources

Encourage participants to bring their own knowledge in the group and to share relevant resources they find online or offline.

For example, *"I came across this web site the other day. It's got excellent training resources which other group members may find useful. Do you know any site similar with this, or any other kind of valuable resource?"*

Encouraging participation

Summarizing and synthesizing

Summarizing and synthesizing are excellent ways to engage new members and stimulate discussion among longstanding community members.

In order to maintain interest and participation, regularly summarize and synthesize discussion to date. Then ask prompting questions to take the discussion to the next stage.

Encouraging participation

A key function for a facilitator of an online dialogue is **managing silence**. One of the first things people report when they begin posting to a list is the frustration they feel when no one responds to their messages.



People are sometimes hesitant to respond to things unless they have something substantive to say. If someone agrees with the gist of a posting, they may not respond because they feel a posting containing only "Good idea!" is a waste of everyone's time. Instead, they'll wait till they have new insight or information to offer.

Sometimes people are silent because they are unsure what the message means and don't want to look silly asking a clarifying question. Or, it may be that the person posting the message hasn't been clear about the kind of response they are looking for.

As a facilitator, you can test your interpretations of why people aren't posting or seed the discussion to move the discussion forward. "Seeding" means putting in some comments (content, questions) that help stimulate response from the group.

Encouraging participation



In order to give everyone an equal chance to participate in the discussion, your role as facilitator includes balancing **possible differences in time and skills...**

Time

In many online spaces the discussion is **asynchronous**. Participants will contribute to the discussion at times that are convenient for them. Time zone differences can also play a role. Make sure discussions do not move ahead before all participants have had a chance to contribute.

Posting cycles over time: an example

On the cassava marketing list, there are people who work in offices and who are online everyday. They are frequent contributors to the list, posting **several times a week**. Sometimes they will get a strong discussion thread going that generates 20-30 messages over 4 days.

Other members of the list are field agents. They are online at most **once a week**. When they get back to the office, they find huge piles of messages, which often discourage them from reading. Sometimes when they have something to contribute, they stay silent, feeling it is "too late" and the discussion has already moved on.

In groups with this much diversity in how often people read and participate, it is helpful to consider some options like:

- asking the office-based agents to slow down a bit;
- create a side list for the office-based agents and post regular summaries to the full list; or
- create a weekly digest just for the field agents and actively encourage them to respond, regardless of when a discussion started or appeared to end.

Encouraging participation



Language and computer/Internet skills influence an individual's level of participation in an online discussion.

If the discussion is imbalanced because of these differences, try to help the participants understand the level of diversity in time and skills among the group. Ask participants to make allowances for differences and be considerate.

In order to encourage people with diverse skill sets to participate:

- ensure that contributing to the discussion is intuitive and easy,
- make sure that good help files are available, and
- that other participants are understanding and supportive of those who are still learning.

Sometimes you may need to use a more drastic method, and temporarily introduce a rule that will limit the contributions per participant per day or week. This will force some to wait until other participants have been able to post their comments too.

Maintaining focus

Maintaining focus in the online discussion is one of the main tasks of a facilitator. Focus helps groups achieve their goals, and ensures that precious time and attention is used for the group's benefit.



Maintaining focus means that you have to deal with:

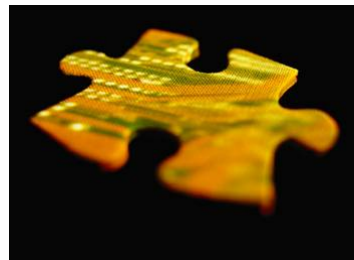
- **off-topic messages**, contributions such as announcements of events or a discussion of something that is in the news but that has nothing to do with your online discussion; and
- **information overload**, too many messages are exchanged per day and people get irritated and some may even leave the discussion or temporarily retreat from the discussions.

Let's see how to manage these situations...

Maintaining focus

Deal with off-topic messages in a resolute but friendly manner:

- **explain what you consider off-topic** (don't use examples from the list, this may embarrass people);
- **contact the originators of the off-topic messages privately** (off-list) and explain your concerns; and
- if there are many kinds of off-topic messages coming from several different people, **send a message to the list restating the purpose of the discussion.**



Sometimes off-topic messages generate **new and important threads**. An "emergent" ideas could start as off-topic, but become productive. These can be managed in different ways, depending on the medium.

How to manage "productive" off-topic messages

- In e-mail, you can put the new idea into a "holding" pattern or "parking lot", and then re-introduce it later. You could also ask a subgroup to discuss the issue separately and report back to the group.
- In web based discussions, you can open a new discussion topic.
- In a blog environment, you can use a different tag or category.

Maintaining focus



Maintaining focus is easier if you have control over the messages that are sent to the discussion. You may decide to switch to **moderated mode** in order to **prevent off-topic messages** from disturbing the discussion.

Switching from a public discussion forum (to which everyone can subscribe) to a **closed discussion forum** (in which every subscription will be checked before approval) is also **helpful against spam** and participants who are not serious participants in the discussion.

Switching to moderation

Before switching an unmoderated list to moderated mode you must:

- alert the participants of your intention,
- ensure that they agree with the new policy, the reasons for it, and how it will be implemented; and
- ensure that you will be available to approve messages quickly.

You may need a backup facilitator in place who can approve messages in case of any planned or unplanned absences.

Sometimes it is better to start a list off as moderated and then, if everyone is abiding by the ground rules, remove the restriction later on in order to free up some of your time.

Maintaining focus

Help the participants deal with **information overload** by doing the following activities:

- **summarize and synthesize regularly**, so that it will be easier for members to move on from one topic to the next ([see box](#));
- **organize messages under a specific subject heading**, so that all the messages within a conversation are grouped together in chronological order within the archive;
- **suggest to participants who feel overloaded that they switch their subscription to *digest mode***, if possible, so that they will receive only one message per day containing all the messages posted to the list during that time period.



An important task of the facilitator is to help the participants in **moving on from one topic to the next**.

Posting clear **summaries or a synthesis** of the discussion on a regular basis will help the participants to decide if more needs to be said on the topic or if agreement or consensus has been reached.

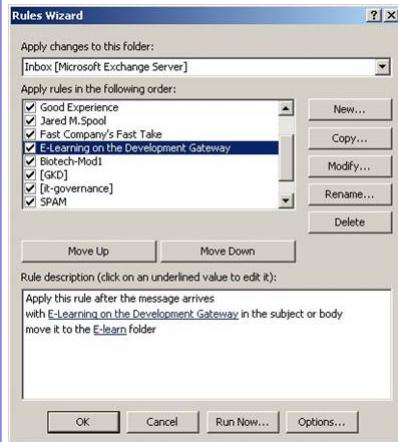
Posting regular progress reports is especially helpful in long discussions with broad participation, and those which cover a wide range of complex issues.

Give these messages a subject name that is different from all other messages (such as "Facilitator's Summary #1:...") so participants – especially ones that join at a later stage in the discussion - can locate them easily.

Maintaining focus

Using e-mail filters

One way to handle information overload is to create your own e-mail filters.



A filter is a set of conditions against which all incoming e-mail is compared. When an e-mail arrives that matches the criteria you have chosen, the message will automatically be moved, deleted or forwarded. The rules to set the filter are often based on keywords in **To**, **From**, **Subject** or in the message itself. This is very useful for sorting out mail tagged as spam.

However, e-mail filters are not just for "junk mail". Creating an e-mail filter for newsletters you subscribe to helps keep your in-box clean, while ensuring you can easily locate and read this information when you have time.

Some examples of rules:

- If a message arrives from "FAO-Biotech-News", move it to my "Biotech" folder;
- If a message arrives with the words "ItrainOnline Announcements" in the subject line, move it to my "Itrain" folder.

How you do this will depend on your email programme. It will generally be under Tools or Special, then Rules or Filters.

Maintaining focus

Some discussions have a broad topic and a very general purpose. What is off-topic thus might become a discussion in itself.

As an example, let's look at a discussion on the future of the International Permaculture Society (IPS)...



Some of the newer, and younger, members propose that the IPS take a more activist approach towards damaging agricultural policies and practices.

In order to make their point, these members start sending a flood of messages to the discussion forum regarding bad practices and links to other activist networks and events.

Maintaining focus

Some members send you off-list messages complaining about the information overload. Another member argues on the list that activism will discredit permaculture.

A whole new discussion flares up around activism.



What do you do?

- **good use of subject headings** will help organize the discussion in clear sub-themes or threads;
- **establish a different space**, a new list or a Web site, for announcements and links;
- **propose a time limit** on the discussion of activism, with one of the active proponents of this topic as co-facilitator, and with the goal of highlighting the key issues;
- **use stronger facilitation** to keep the discussion on activism within the discussion topic; and
- **re-visit the groups' purpose** and see if it is time to reexamine and refresh it.

Please write your answer in the input box and press "Check Answer".

Maintaining focus



Some of the participants of your online discussion are complaining about information overload. Moderation is your only remedy against spam and other off-topic messages.

True

False

Please click on the answer of your choice.

Maintaining focus

- 1) building trust
- 2) encouraging participation
- 3) maintaining focus
- 4) dealing with conflict

Facilitating for focus is also about the following elements:



- use of **good guiding questions** to keep a topic moving forward;



- **clarity in framework and direction:** how the topic is introduced; and



- **cross-linking** for related but non-central topics.

Dealing with conflict

Because you can't see body language or hear tone-of-voice online, it is often hard to tell when a discussion is turning into a conflict.

Here are some guidelines to **differentiate conflict from healthy debate** in an online space – if you answer 'yes' to any of these questions, you will need to intervene:

- Is an argument between two people dominating the online space?
- Is one person dominating the space to the exclusion of other voices?
- Are other members being silenced, sidelined or ignored?
- Is the tone of the messages insulting, personal or judgmental?
- Is there excessive use of punctuation such as exclamation points!!! CAPITAL LETTERS (which can signify that the person is SHOUTING), and angry-looking "smilies" @???
- Is the language being used aggressive, sarcastic, belittling or silencing?
- Is the tone of the messages contrary to the values of your community e.g. sexist or racist?

Dealing with conflict



Mediation is a dispute-resolution process that involves a neutral third party who encourages the parties to discuss the problem and come to a possible solution.

Mediation doesn't mean that all parties will get exactly the results they want – but it should mean that they reach a compromise or agreement that all parties will respect.

As a facilitator, you will need to decide whether you want to:

- act as the third party to mediate a conflict; or
- take other steps to end the conflict (such as asking the parties to leave the online space).

Dealing with conflict

Once you realize that what is taking place in your community is not an healthy debate, but a **conflict**, how will you deal with it?

Here are some basic troubleshooting techniques:

- working behind the scenes;
- working 'live' in front of the community;
- use reflection, re-phrasing, summarizing;
- hiding or deleting/erasing posts;
- banning.



See interactive lesson to download the document "Avoiding online conflicts"

Dealing with conflict

Working behind the scenes

If a member is violating community guidelines, or other members have expressed concern about a participant, you can start by trying to **clarify the situation** by quietly **contacting this member** by e-mail, or even by phone.

This can save face for the member in question as well as for the facilitator.

Dealing with conflict

Working "live" in front of the community

Some communities value knowing what is going on and may be less trusting of "behind the scenes" interventions. When working on a problem in front of the community, it may feel as if you are working "without a net."

The stakes increase as people's reputations are put on the line. If problems are resolved in public, there should be a clear procedure for conflict resolution.

Dealing with conflict

Use reflection, re-phrasing and summarizing

These are useful tools for mediating a discussion and help to focus, guide and frame interactions.

A simple technique such as using open-ended questions (i.e. "how" and "why", not yes or no answers) can be used to reflect the essential arguments of postings.

Furthermore, try to use **"I" language** to demonstrate that you are expressing what you are experiencing, rather than saying **"You"** and implying you understand the intent or action of another.

For example: "As I read this latest thread on gender in development, I feel that the woman's point of view may not be represented." (rather than: "You are totally ignoring the woman's perspective.")

Dealing with conflict

Hiding or deleting/erasing posts

When members post something that is against community guidelines (spam, obscenities) you can either hide or erase posts.

Posts with large sound or image files may be hidden to keep from slowing down the systems of users with slower Internet connections.

Erasing posts should only be done in extreme circumstances, and for clearly stated purposes, to avoid issues of censorship.

Dealing with conflict

Banning

Banning is when a member is denied access to a community.

Members should only be banned according to the stated processes of a community.

In private communities, this is fairly easy to do. In public communities - where members can register with free e-mail addresses - this is not always an effective solution.

Dealing with conflict

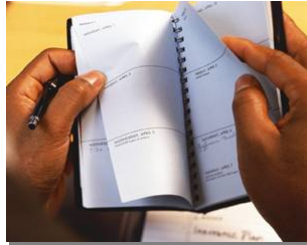
Tips for dealing with difficult situations

In any space – whether on or offline - differences of opinion are likely to occur. To make these differences contribute to a healthy debate and a resolved outcome, they must be managed and facilitated.

Here are some tips for dealing with difficult situations:

1. don't intervene too quickly, give members some space to debate before you intervene;
2. use clarification and reflection to assist members to 'listen' more carefully (for example, sentences starting with *"Am I right in saying that you mean ... when you said that . ?" "I'm not sure I understood you correctly when you said..."*);
3. be flexible: if the discussion warrants more time, assign more time to the current debate, and post a message to this effect;
4. use summaries to close debates when they seem to be going nowhere, and acknowledge differences in opinion;
5. help people understand why others are having difficulty with them;
6. avoid point-by-point defenses which usually only escalate problems;
7. use your administration tools (i.e. deleting posts) lightly and carefully; and
8. don't assume a lack of response means dissent or assent, seek explicit responses.

Daily, weekly and monthly tasks



The facilitation of an online discussion includes many tasks that are routine.

Some of these tasks need attention every day (**daily tasks**) or every week (**weekly tasks**). Others need attention on an as-needed basis (**monthly tasks, other tasks**).

Let's see some examples of task schedules that include both support and facilitation tasks.

Daily, weekly and monthly tasks



Daily tasks

Facilitation tasks	
1. Welcome new members	Welcome them and make sure they understand the discussion guidelines and the information about how to use the online discussion space.
2. Prevent flames/conflict	Read all contributions to the discussion. Read between the lines.
3. Deal with requests for help or information	Try to answer these messages immediately. Let the person know you are working on it if it will take more than 24 hours to find an answer.
4. Moderate	If you are facilitating a moderated discussion, you need to read all messages and send them on to the discussion space without delay. You need to deal with a problematic message immediately. Contact the sender off-list and discuss a possible solution or reject the message.
Support tasks	
5. Deal with subscribe and unsubscribe requests	Subscribing and unsubscribing members will need to be checked continuously when you are facilitating a private discussion. In public discussion, the software you are using may enable you to automate this process.
6. Solve technical problems	Do your best to find a solution to every individual's problem, whether it is a genuine technical issue on your side, or a lack of knowledge on the part of the participant.
7. Bounces and vacation messages	Help people whose messages were bounced back to understand what the problem is. The reason is often that they sent messages from an e-mail address different from the one used to subscribe to the discussion. Explain that automatic vacation messages should preferably not be sent to the whole discussion list, only to the person who has sent a message.




See interactive lesson to download and print a table summarizing all the daily tasks

Daily, weekly and monthly tasks



Weekly tasks

Facilitation tasks	
1. Animate discussion	Make sure that the discussion is constructive and productive. Use a variety of facilitation techniques.
2. Search for and share external information resources	Provide context and background information to the discussion. When participants ask for information, check if other participants are responding; encourage them to share their responses with the list, when appropriate. If nobody is responding, post a message to let everyone know you are following up.
3. Synthesize and summarize	Send weekly summaries to the discussion forum and synthesize different ideas and opinions in order to create common ground.
4. Check discussion objectives	Check the meeting's agenda and see if discussion is progressing as expected. If you foresee problems, contact the project coordinator and discuss your options.
5. Manage information flows	Deal with off-topic messages; discuss the number of messages; explain how to change individual settings to digest mode, if applicable.
Support tasks	
6. Check latest virus and spam news	Encourage members to keep their anti-virus and anti-spam software up-to-date. Point them to additional information on computer security, if needed.


 See interactive lesson to download and print a table summarizing all the weekly tasks

Daily, weekly and monthly tasks



Monthly tasks

Facilitation tasks	
1. Write and share progress report	If you are facilitating a discussion group over a longer period, it is important to write monthly progress reports, including key statistics. Share the reports with the community, as it helps to build group identity. The reports are also helpful for newcomers to the community.
2. Check and update discussion guidelines	Each discussion has its own dynamics. You may discover that the discussion guidelines you started with are too general or too specific. Adapt to the needs and interest of your community.
Support tasks	
3. Update membership list	It is important to keep a check on the membership list of your community. This may give you an indication where people are located, what their interests are, if your community needs to increase membership, etc.
4. Check and update welcome or information file	The welcome or information file should be sent automatically to all members of the online community when they subscribe. This message contains all the information about how to participate in the discussion, using the software selected for the discussion. Changes need to be reflected in the file.

 See interactive lesson to download and print a table summarizing all the monthly tasks

Daily, weekly and monthly tasks



Other tasks

Facilitation tasks	
1. Look for lost participants	There are different reasons for why participants might disappear from the online discussion. Their computer or Internet access may have broken down, or they may be travelling. They could be upset with another participant or do not feel comfortable in the discussion anymore. Check out what is happening and report back to the online community if necessary.
2. Encourage silent participants off-list	Many issues are dealt with off-list, in private messages not sent via the online community. Don't hesitate to contact participants privately and let them know their contribution is valued.
Support tasks	
3. Liaise with technical support	Make sure you check in regularly with the technical support of your online discussion space, even if there are no immediate technical problems. Make sure they don't forget about you and that they have the capacity to respond if a technical problem does arise.



See interactive lesson to download and print the table above

Managing your time

It is difficult to predict how much time you will spend on each of the tasks mentioned in the task schedules.



If you are facilitating a **private online discussion** for a particular community over a set period of time - for example the annual meeting of an organization or an online conference - all these tasks can keep you occupied **full-time**.

If you are facilitating a **large community**, you may need to find another person to take over support.

Public online discussion groups with a large membership are difficult to facilitate. Participants come and go, and several discussions may take place at the same time. **Co-facilitation** may be the best solution, as public discussion groups rarely have funding for a dedicated facilitator. Working with a group of facilitators makes it possible to split the group into several smaller groups according to themes. In that situation, one of the responsibilities of the facilitators is to update the other discussion groups.

Job aids

From here you can download and print documents that can help you in your work.



Facilitation tasks and routine - Template



Online exercises to encourage participation



Summary

- Facilitation tasks concern:
 - building trust;
 - encouraging participation;
 - maintaining focus in the online discussion; and
 - dealing with conflicts.
- The tasks of a facilitator can be divided into daily, weekly and monthly tasks.
- Good management of your time as a facilitator will help to build an effective online community.

If you want to learn more...

Online resources

King, M. ; Cowan, R. Tips on Facilitating a Social Change Email List
<http://democracygroups.org/maillinglisthowto.html>

ITrain. Mailing list facilitation: How to support people working together online
http://www.bellanet.org/itrain/dsp_document_dl.cfm?doc_file_id=53

ITrain. List Facilitation; Community of Practice.
http://www.bellanet.org/itrain/materials_en.cfm

Berge, Z.L. The Role of the Online Instructor/Facilitator
http://www.emoderators.com/moderators/teach_online.html

Boettcher, S. 5 Ways You Can Prevent Online Community Flames
http://www.workz.com/cgi-bin/gt/tpl_page.html.template=1&content=1218&nav1=1&

Green, L. 1998. Playing Croquet with Flamingos: A Guide to Moderating Online Conferences
<http://www.emoderators.com/moderators/flamingoe.pdf>

Friedman, M. Building Trust Online.
http://www.workz.com/cgi-bin/gt/tpl_page.html.template=1&content=2144&nav1=1&

Full Circle Associates. Online Community Toolkit.
<http://www.fullcirc.com/community/communitymanual.htm>

James, M. and Rykert, R. From Workplace To Workspace: Using Email Lists to Work Together
http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-9369-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

Munro, K. Conflict in Cyberspace: How to Resolve Conflict Online
<http://www.survivors-treehouse.net/Conflict%20In%20Cyberspace.htm>

If you want to learn more...

Online resources

Full Circle Associates. Online FacilitTips
<http://www.fullcirc.com/community/facilitips.htm>

Full Circle Associates. Holding questions
<http://www.fullcirc.com/community/holdingquestions.htm>

Resources for Dialog and Deliberation
<http://www.thataway.org/resources/index.html>

Full Circle Associates. Avoiding conflict online
<http://www.fullcirc.com/community/avoidingconflict.htm>

Additional reading

Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making *Kaner, Sam, Lenny Lind, Catherine Toldi (Contributor), Sara Fisk (Contributor) and Duane Berge. 1996. New Society Publishers*