

# Network mapping and communications checklist

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## Scenario

The leaders of a network of groups, individuals and projects wants to increase the impact of their work through better communications and increased collaboration. They believe that mapping the network may provide a good basis for this.

## Purpose

The aims of the mapping and comms programme are to:

- Identify and share knowledge about the skills, knowledge and other assets in the network
- Offer members of the network the opportunity to raise their profiles, if they wish to
- Enable communication, co-operation and collaboration among all interests by adding digital tools to existing methods

## Principles

The system should be :

- Co-designed with network members to ensure it meets their needs, and gains their support
- Developed as far as possible using familiar tools and systems
- Accessible
- Designed to allow members to manage their own data
- Sustainable

## Possible system components

1. **A directory of network members**, searchable by several criteria
2. **Geomap** of members
3. **Netmap** showing interests, wants, offers, collaborations
4. **Existing communication tools** used by network members e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, blogs, Twitter etc
5. **Other spaces and tools** for communication and collaboration - examples below
6. **Mapping and communications manager(s)**, network reporters.
7. **Community of practice** to learn new methods, with training and support

## Users

The system will serve a range of interests:

- Network members wishing to find more about others, contribute, collaborate and work more effectively
- Other people interested in the services the network and its members may offer
- Funders and commissioners
- Other groups and networks interested in collaborating.

- Network managers engaged in network building and support

## Functions

The system may do some or all of the following, depending on decisions during the co-design process:

### A Network infrastructure - facilities, plans needs

- A directory and map that will help network members and others find who's who, what they are offering or requesting
- Enable network members to add content, discuss what's happening and what's needed

*Requires at least 1,2 and 4: directory, geomap and online discussion. Also need to use 3 - netmap tools. Map manager from 6 and some facilitation.*

### B Activities - news, events, conversations

- Display network events and activities
- Provide or curate news about activities and major interests in the area
- Enable contributions and conversations through existing or additional online channels

*Additionally need tools from 4 and 5 and more comms management from 6.*

### C Cooperation, collaboration, campaigns - enabling network members to see interests, wants and offers

- Find who is interested in what on a collaboration map
- Add and update their interests
- Connect with people on the map via an existing or new comms system
- Enable campaigning and organising when needed

*Netmap 3, comms 4, 5, and 6*

### D Group effectiveness and organising - increase profile and impact

- Offer training for groups in use of the system and other tools
- Enhance existing organising capacity

*All above, with community of practice 7*

## Roles, tasks, skills needed

- System designer - scope out and co-design communications and mapping system.
- Network manager - responsible for mapping and comms developments
- Facilitators

Design and development challenges are likely to include: capacity of network members to use online tools, developing a culture of sharing and trust, central management and facilitation resources

## Network tools

June Holley [lists these main comms tools for a network](#)

### Track network development

- Track network through dashboards
- Share stories

#### **Share and discuss information**

- Facebook group - discussion, news, events
- Group email - share information, discussion
- Interactive eNewsletter
- Web page discussion groups/database

#### **Capture and share ideas for innovation**

- Twitter - bring in new ideas
- ScoopIt - curate innovations on topics

#### **Build relationships and collaborate**

- Google docs for collaboration space
- Video conferencing for group work and learning
- Loomio for decision making
- Doodle or Meeting Wizard to set up meetings

## **Resources**

- [How to build network maps](#) - Drew Mackie and David Wilcox
- What's needed in a communications ecosystem by June Holley - [Download original](#). Copied to [Network communications](#)
- [Ten questions to ask a network map](#) by Drew Mackie
- [Networking does not equal network weaving](#) by Christine Capra
- [Network building toolkit](#) - Social Change Agency
- [How Communication in Networks Differs from Communication in Organizations](#) by June Holley