

# How to support participation and quality contribution on websites for crowdsourcing cultural heritage

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# The Questions

What are the aspects of design that influence participation and contribution quality on websites for crowdsourcing cultural heritage?

Which aspects of design are more influential than others?

How could websites for crowdsourcing cultural heritage better support participation and quality contribution?

# Potential benefits of crowdsourcing

- Promote and stimulate interest in collections
- Signal the institution's openness and approachability
- Achieve goals that are otherwise too costly and labour-intensive
- Better reflect the diversity of visitors
- Tap into expertise outside the institution
- Engage visitors in new ways
- Raise the profile of research
- Demonstrate relevance
- Enable new research questions to be explored

# Common challenges

- Crowdsourcing is still in an experimental phase and projects aren't always cost-effective
- Common project constraints include limited time, resources and expertise
- Guidance for designing and evaluating websites for crowdsourcing cultural heritage is limited and fragmented

# A (Proposed) Solution

A set of 21 design principles that draws on existing guidance for:

- Highly interactive websites (Petrie & Power, 2012)
- Online communities (Kraut & Resnick, 2012; Preece & Shneiderman, 2009)
- Crowdsourcing (Howe, 2009)
- Crowdsourcing cultural heritage (Hansen et al., 2013; Holley, 2009, 2010; Lascarides, 2012; McKinley, 2012, 2013; Romeo & Blaser, 2011)

Available from <http://nonprofitcrowd.org/crowdsourcing-heuristics/>

# How influential are these design principles on participation and contribution quality?

Online questionnaire completed by 251 respondents, which included:

- Former, current, and prospective users of websites for crowdsourcing cultural heritage
- People from NZ, Australia, UK, USA and elsewhere
- People affiliated with the cultural heritage sector, tertiary institutions, and other professions

## How could websites for crowdsourcing cultural heritage better support participation and quality contribution?

A sample of 20 websites was evaluated using the new design principles. The sample encompassed:

- **Multiple host types:** galleries, libraries, archives, museums, research institutions, and collaborations
- **10 common process types:** transcribing, recording/creating content, tagging, correcting/modifying content, contextualisation, cataloguing, commenting, critical responses and stating preferences, georeferencing, linking, and mapping
- **6 common asset types:** text, image, ephemera/intangible cultural heritage, geospatial, numerical or statistical information

# How to support participation and contribution quality on websites for crowdsourcing cultural heritage

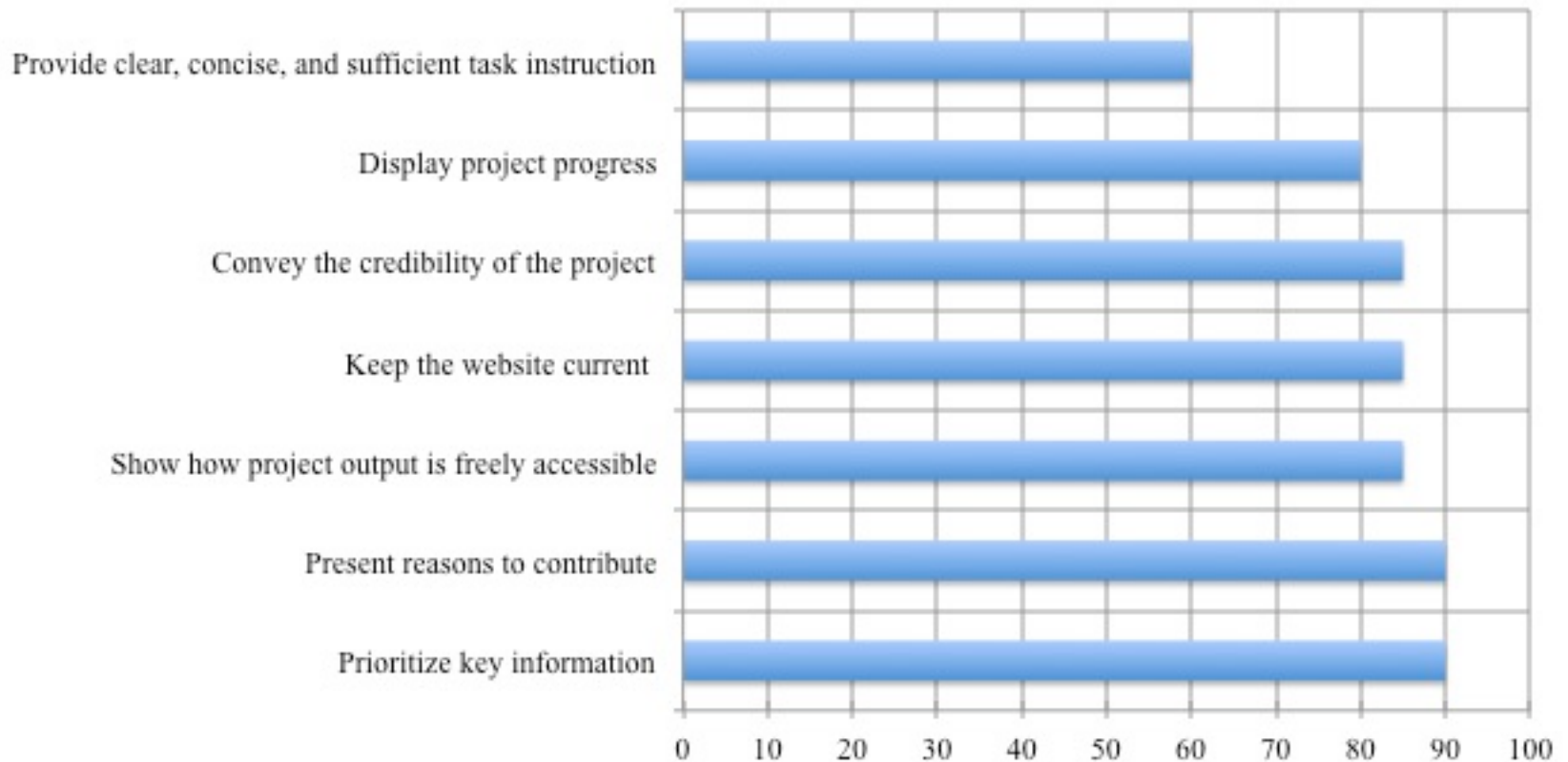
1. Inform users
2. Support users
3. Engage users
4. Nurture and sustain the user community



# How to inform users

- Provide clear, concise, and sufficient task instruction
- Show how project output is freely accessible
- Keep the website current
- Prioritize key information
- Present reasons to contribute
- Display project progress
- Convey the credibility of the project

# Opportunities to inform users more effectively



Percentage of sample that fully complied with design principles for informing users

# Ancient Lives: An example of clear, concise, and sufficient task instruction

TRANSCRIBE MEASURE

Zoom

Rotate

Toggle

Auto

Delete

Colour

Map

**Marking a Greek character** CLOSE

Click on a character's center point to mark the location. You can reposition this by dragging, if you need to.

Don't worry about completely covering the character, we only need its center point.

Back Next Play example

Σ Εε Ρρ Ττ Υυ Θθ Ιι Οο Ππ

Αα Cc Δδ Φφ Γγ Ηη Ξξ Κκ Λλ

Ζζ Χχ Ψψ Ωω Ββ Νν Μμ

Hover over keyboard for character examples

/ \* ^ ñ ± > ° /

L > ✖ ±

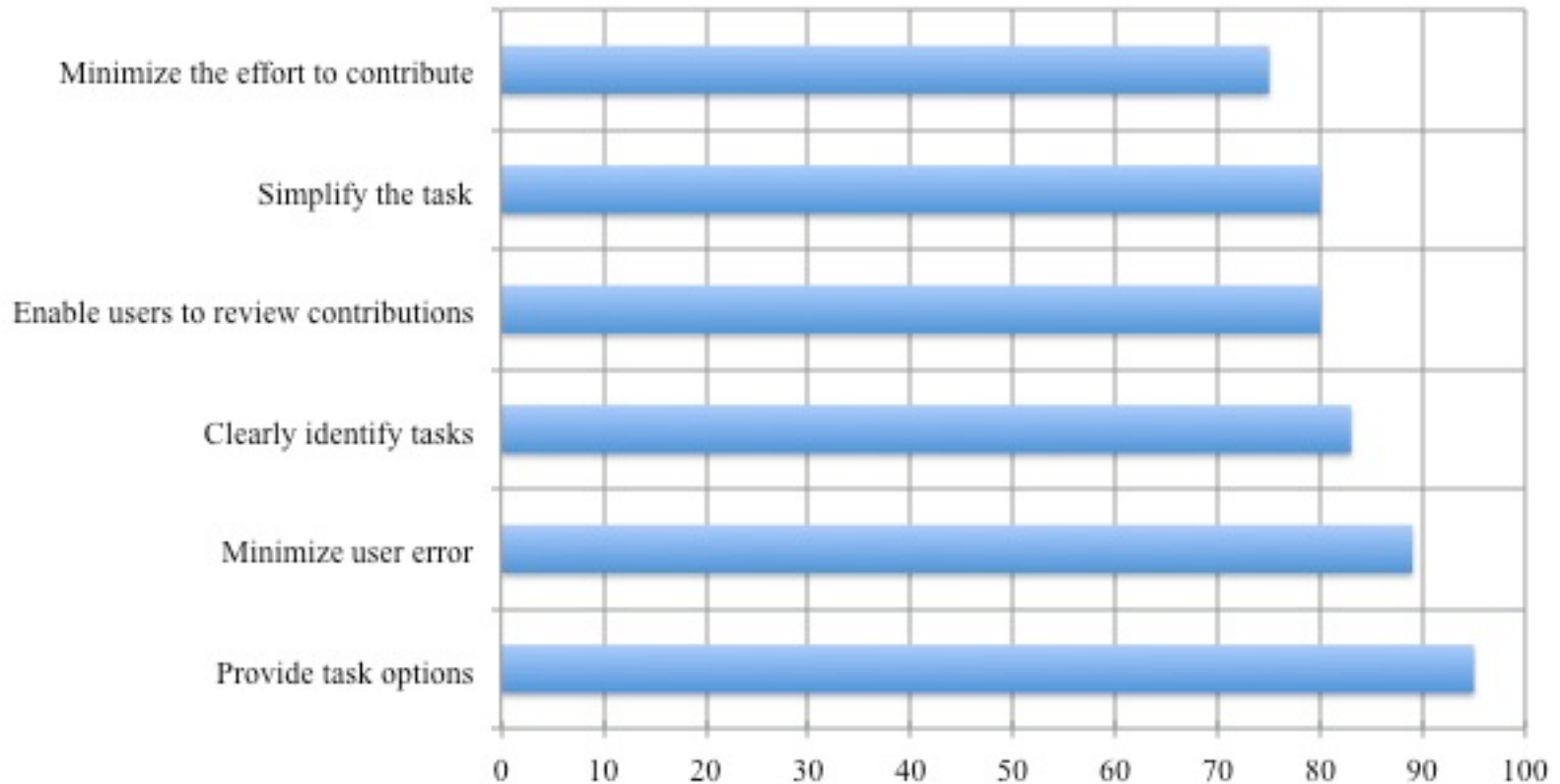
ACCENTS **SYMBOLS**

FAVOURITE **ISSUE**

# How to support users


- Minimize the effort to contribute
- Minimize user error
- Enable users to review contributions
- Clearly identify tasks
- Provide task options
- Simplify the task

# Opportunities to support users more effectively



Percentage of sample that fully complied with design principles for supporting users

# Europeana: An example of minimizing the effort to contribute



europæana  
1914-1918

Home **Add your story** Browse

donellemckinley@gmail.com Select a language ▾

**My stories** **My account** **Sign out**

## Step 1 - Telling your Story

Contributor : donelle

Click on the section titles below to open and close them; each section contains additional information you can add to your story.

[Cancel](#)

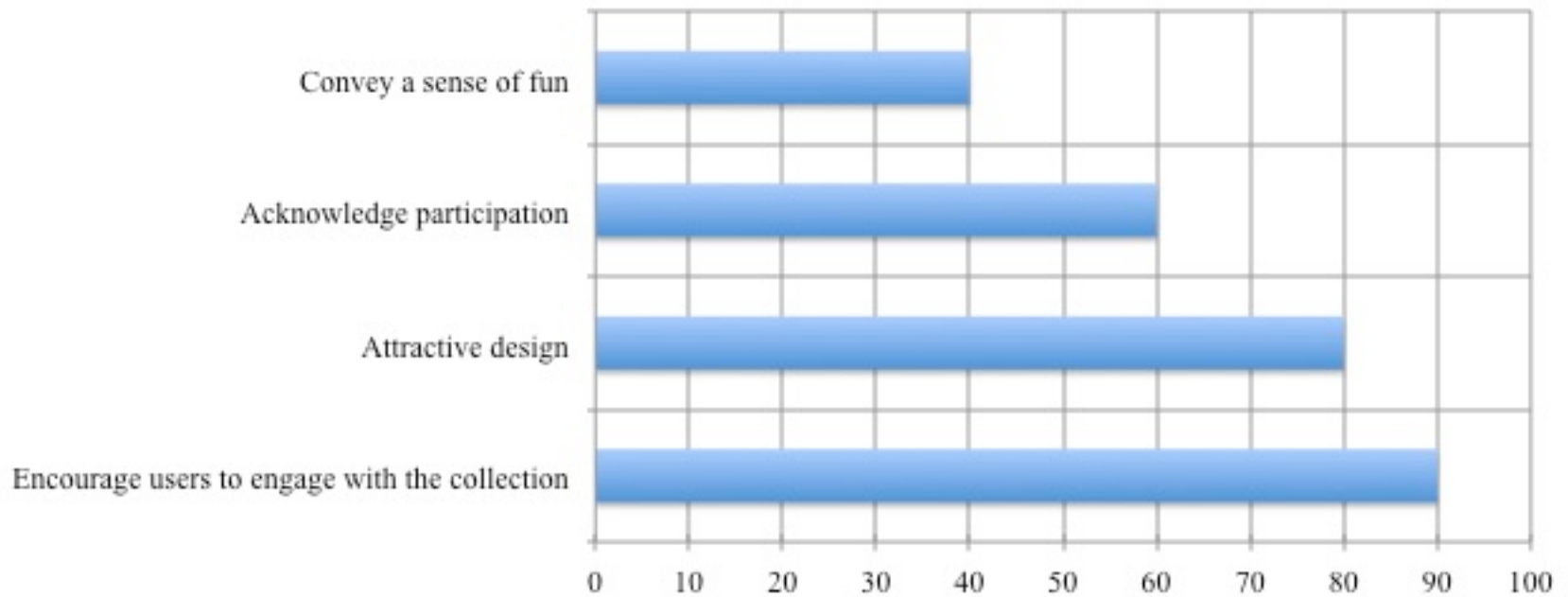
By clicking on "Save story draft", you will be led to the following contribution step

**Step 1 of 3**

# How to engage users

- Attractive design
- Acknowledge participation
- Encourage users to engage with the collection
- Convey a sense of fun

# Opportunities to engage users more effectively



Percentage of sample that fully complied with design principles for engaging users



# Your Paintings Tagger: An example of acknowledging participation

The screenshot shows the 'Your Paintings Tagger' website. At the top, the user 'Donelle McKinley' is logged in, with 29 paintings tagged and a 'Yellow Tagger' badge. The main navigation includes 'Things', 'People', 'Places', 'Events', 'Subjects', 'Types', and 'Styles'. The current page is for the painting 'Still Life with Fruit'. A modal window is overlaid with the following content:

**Thank you for your Tags**

Thanks a lot.

The insight, inspiration and joy that art can provide can be found within Your Paintings.

By adding tags, your contribution will open up new paths of discovery.

Thank you from the National Museums Northern Ireland for all of your help.

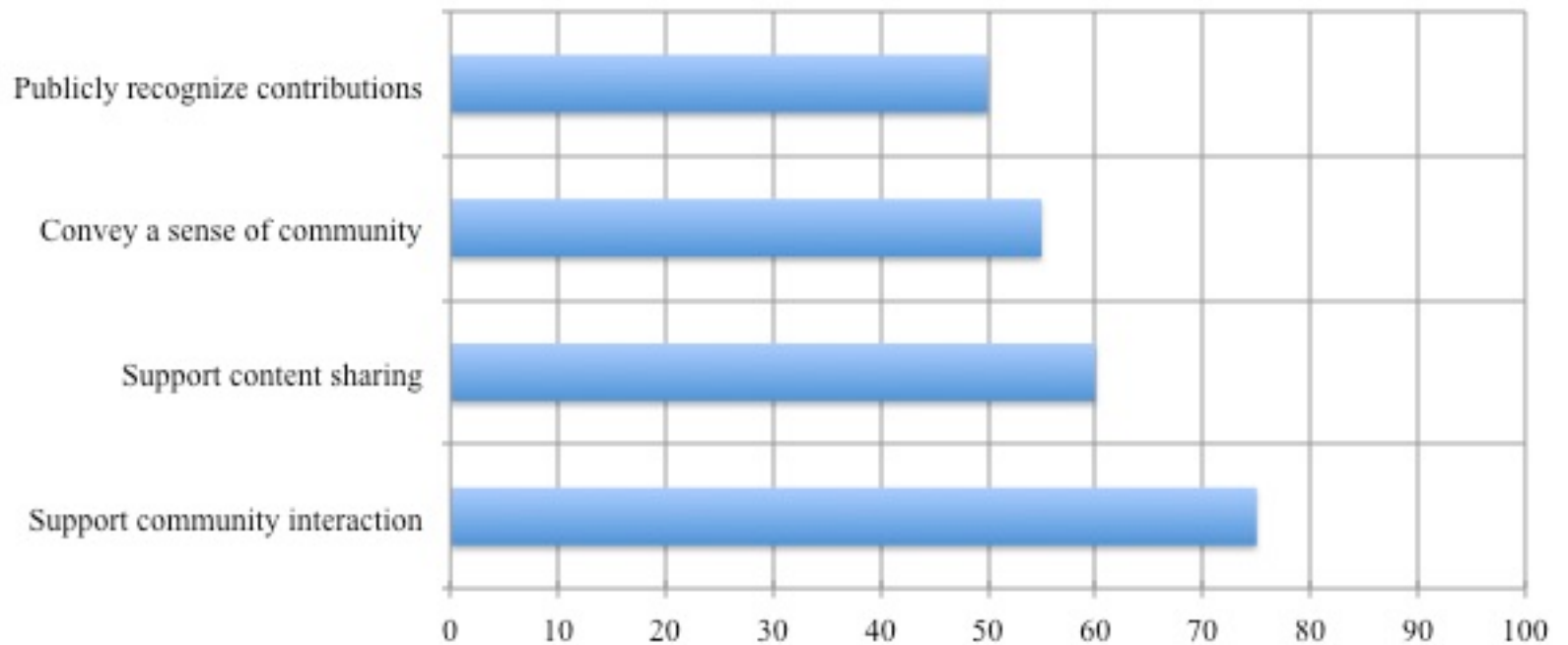
Clifford Harkness  
*Head of Collections Management, National Museums Northern Ireland*

The modal also features a small image of 'The Three Dancers by John Luke' and a close button in the top right corner.

## How to nurture and sustain the user community

- Convey a sense of community
- Support community interaction
- Publicly recognize contributions
- Support content sharing

# Opportunities to nurture and sustain the user community more effectively



Percentage of sample that fully complied with design principles for nurturing and sustaining the user community

# Old Weather: An example of conveying a sense of community

The screenshot shows the Old Weather website interface. At the top, the logo "oldWeather" is on the left, and a navigation menu includes "HOME", "VESSELS", "TUTORIAL", "TRANSCRIBE", "ABOUT", "DISCUSS", and a highlighted "donelle" button. The main content area features a heading "Old Weather currently has 21 vessels" with the subtext "Browse the vessels and choose one to follow". Below this is a list of six vessel cards, each with a small image, name, type, a progress bar, a star rating, a flag icon, crew count, and a "Transcribe this vessel" link. The sidebar on the right is titled "Filter your search" and contains a search box, a "SHIP FORUM INDEX" section with a link to an index, and a "DIFFICULTY RANKINGS" section with five star-based categories and descriptions.

Vessel Name	Type	Progress	Rating	Flag	Crew	Link
Albatross (1884)	Steamer	Low	1 star	US	101	<a href="#">Transcribe this vessel</a>
Albatross (1890)	Steamer	Low	1 star	US	304	<a href="#">Transcribe this vessel</a>
Albatross (1900)	Steamer	Low	2 stars	US	92	<a href="#">Transcribe this vessel</a>
Bear	Cutter	Medium	2 stars	US	189	<a href="#">Transcribe this vessel</a>
Concord	Gunboat	Low	2 stars	US	514	<a href="#">Transcribe this vessel</a>
Jamestown (1844)	Cl...	Low	2 stars	US	29	

**Filter your search**

SEARCH VESSELS BY NAME

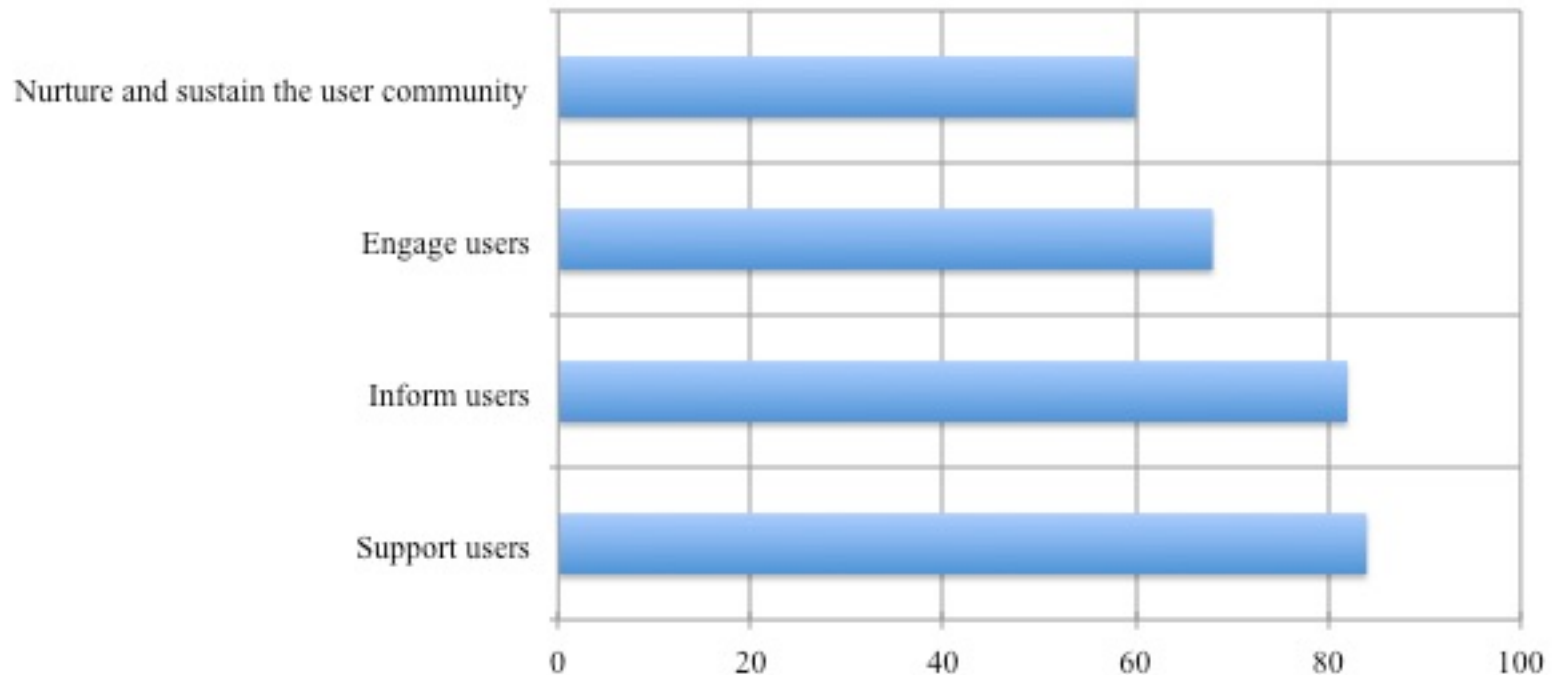
SHIP FORUM INDEX

Visit [\\*\\*\\* Index - Use this to find your Ship \\*\\*\\*](#) on the forum to see examples of transcribed log pages and get advice

DIFFICULTY RANKINGS

- ★ Easy log – excellent for new transcribers
- ★★ Intermediate log – good for all transcribers
- ★★★ Challenging log – suitable for experienced transcribers or new transcribers willing to take on a challenge
- ★★★★ Very challenging log – suitable only for experienced transcribers because of highly variable formats

# Opportunities to better support volunteer participation and quality contribution



Percentage of sample that fully complied with design principles in each category

# Thanks!

For the full set of design principles and other crowdsourcing resources visit [nonprofitcrowd.org](http://nonprofitcrowd.org)

For research updates and all things crowdsourcing cultural heritage follow [@nonprofitcrowd](https://twitter.com/nonprofitcrowd)

## References

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