

Release Advisory Team Proposal

This proposal has led to the formation of the [DSpace Community Advisory Team \(DCAT\)](#)

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Issue We're Trying to Resolve

We'd like to figure out a way that repository managers or general DSpace community members can become more involved in the normal release process. "Involvement" to us means they would have more opportunities to provide feedback, and suggest new features, etc. We'd also like to attempt to lessen the burden on a Release Coordinator, such that he/she need not be responsible for both managing the technical aspects of a new release, as well as managing the communications and all requirement/feedback gathering amongst the broader community. So, our attempt is to add some additional support for the Release Coordinator, while also allowing more opportunities for non-techies to take a more active part in the evolution of DSpace.

Proposal for Community Advisory Team

(NOTE: Based on feedback from DSpace Developers "Special Topics" meeting on [10 March 2010](#), this group was renamed to be a "Community Advisory Team", instead of a "Release Advisory Team". The word "Release" seemed to imply to most that this group would be active in detailed release planning, etc.)

The DSpace Community Advisory Team will gather community feedback on new features and solution requirements, distill that information and make recommendations to the committer/developers. They will also help to encourage broader community participation in the release process and work on communications about the release.

Possible Community Advisory Team Activities

Advisory team repository managers will work with DSpace Global Outreach Committee (DGOC), Ambassadors and the DSpace community to:

1. help identify what new features are most important to community (write communications, host meetings, produce surveys, etc.) and what features may already exist as a customization at an institution that could be added into the release
2. help define feature requests (identify examples, describe requirements in detail, etc) for Release Coordinator or committers when requested
3. help identify specific users that developers can consult with during the development of a particular feature
4. test new features and encourage the community to test
5. potentially help support release manager by helping draft/write communications to listservs, etc. (Hopefully, this could allow the Release Coordinator to concentrate more heavily on tech specific problems.)
6. provide general community / repository manager feedback to Release Coordinator and committers when requested.
7. provides general advice / suggestions to Release Coordinator and committers, when requested.

It's also important to know what this Advisory team will NOT do:

- This team does not control how resources are allocated towards a specific release or new feature. However, we're hopeful that this team could eventually use its influence to help committers to locate interested institutions, developers, and testers that are willing to help develop larger-scale features.
- This team does not decide which features will be accepted into a given release. That decision still falls to the Release Coordinator and the committers group. However, this team may help the Release Coordinator and committers to define accepted features, if the developers require feedback from the community in order to scope a given feature.

Community Advisory Team Logistics

Team of 5-6 to include:

- 1-2 repository managers/administrators (could be from DSpace Global Outreach Committee, Ambassador group or anyone from the community)
- 1-2 committers/developers (one of which is the next release mgr)
- DSpace Tech Lead (Tim Donohue)
- DSpace Director of Community Development (Valorie Hollister)

Requirements:

- must be a active, working group – not just a process where ideas go to die
- members of team must work well virtually. More discussion via email/chat/virtually instead of requiring a lot of meetings
- must be lightweight – minimize "red tape", avoid bogging down development process, etc.
- need to select a team leader and someone to help with logistics/a convener (team leader=release manger? convener/facilitator=repository mgr)
- needs to be a enthusiastic team

Assumptions:

- repository managers/administrators need DSpace development to be more responsive and suit commonly identified needs
- developers want more regular, committed involvement in defining community requirements

Comments / Suggestions / Thoughts?

(Feel free to add your own thoughts/ideas/brainstorms here.)