How Modern News Aggregators Help Development Communities Shape and Share Knowledge

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As a society we need to let go of this individual genius narrative, which drives the desire to track the lineage of ideas & assign credit.
That desire is ultimately pathological. 😞

Maria Gomez @mariadiscaindia - May 29
interested in attending a conference focused on technology of the ears? Join us on June 28th in Barcelona for XConf, built by technologists, for technologists. The event is held across one day, with Ribbons, Panels, and keynotes. Check out the agenda here.
Read the Java Programming Tutorial, find Java Programming Examples and learn some Java Programming basics in the cattle drive.

Mosey on in and pull up a stool. These discussion forums are the heart and soul of our Java community. Our bartenders keep the peace, and folks are pretty friendly anyways, so don’t be shy!
Developers sharing knowledge is among **the best things** we have as a community!
(and the way they get together changes over time...)

**Community of practice:** "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly".

*Lave and Wenger (1991)*
SQL for Data Analysis Workshop (for Beginners) || AMSTERDAM || 6 June 2018 || Super Hands-on Workshop to go from Zero to Hero with SQL for Data Analysis in 1 day

Schizophrenia is considered a disorder of the mind, influencing the way a person thinks, feels and behaves. But latest research shows that organs, other than the brain, also change at the onset of the disease. Psychology

John Carmack: My Steve Jobs Stories

[Discussion] Dear Industry Researchers: "If researchers are not incentivized to do reproducible research (or penalized for not doing so), something is flawed in the industry." Discussion

React in patterns - A book about common design patterns used while developing with React. It includes techniques for composition, data flow, dependency management and more

Transgender in academia?

On the weekend I wrote about the "Testing Context", An easier way to write Unit Tests in .NET

Python online course oriented around excel automate/ data analysis
My Keybase proof [reddit:mauricioaniche = keybase:mauricioaniche] (4QHgXBjwRoFTh9dTBlVHaiyGQXqpiYZ07oXBbbCSO8) (r/KeybaseProofs)

What do we (not) know about Domain-Driven Design? (medium.com)

Refactoring a method so it doesn't query the database? (r/softwaretesting)

That makes sense to me. I commonly make my domain code as testable as possible. This basically means isolating it from any infrastructure.

Then, later I write the glue that puts everything together (eg database, logic, etc).

Initial insights on how developers use r/programming (medium.com)

Software engineering != computer science (drdobbs.com)

Why I left academia (parts 1, 2, 3) (allisonharbin.com)
We follow communities
We get points (karma)
We share links
You comment on someone else's post.
Developers really use it!
We should understand how modern news aggregators are used by software developers to curate and disseminate knowledge!
Research Questions

RQ1. What *motivates* developers to participate in programming-related news aggregators?

RQ2. What are the *characteristics of the content* posted in programming-related news aggregators?

RQ3. What suggestions do the participants have to *improve the community* and features of programming-related news aggregators?
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Interviews with 22 active members

Survey with 99 users

Manual analysis of 600 posts (CL=95%, CI=6%)
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P9: "It’s particularly interesting when the consensus differs from the conclusion I came to regarding the article."

P14: "If you wanna share something and get people’s opinion, it’s a very quick way to do it. I started using Reddit to get feedback about my blog post."

Motivation to post: To promote their own work, get feedback, and see different opinions!
You have a crowd that you *never* had before!
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You need followers!
P12: "My main goal is to keep in touch with what happens in the industry. Especially as our industry is really really wide and university is more focused on theory. So, I need to find other sources to see other technologies".

P4: "I only have time to work with a single stack. [In Reddit] you see perspectives from people that work on different stacks".

Motivation to read: Get in contact with what's going on in the sw development world.
To help other people to find the "best" content.

P14: "Because I'm interested in other people's opinions."

Motivation to upvote: To help the community to curate the content.
P12: "if I downvote a comment, it's because it's terribly off-topic or really offensive and it doesn't add anything to the discussion".

Do not downvote simply because I disagree.

Motivation to downvote: To help the community to curate the content.
Gamification is still tricky!
(for the good and for the bad!)

Indirect effects:
- motivates some to participate
- you are respected if you have a lot of karma
- Indication of how good a post is
- P14: "you can get karma by basically just being a troll."
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Discussed technologies (Reddit)

- Programming Languages (~52%)
- Libraries/Frameworks (~30%)
- System software (e.g., OS, DB) (~20%)
- Software Tools (IDEs, package managers) (~10%)
- Application software (~10%)
- Hardware/Gadget (~5%)
Sources

- Blog posts
  - Personal posts way more than company blogs
- Software home pages
  - GitHub is the most common source
- Also (but not very popular): YouTube videos, Q&A sites, Wikipedia.
- Scientific sources: only on HackerNews
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Community needs better curation and moderation!

Ignore users that are always negative.

Not to let derailed discussions go to the top of the website.

Complex posts may attract fewer upvotes (thus, less publicity).

Aggressive users (almost all participants mentioned it)
- Not engage with trolls
- Avoid flame wars. P18: "if you are in a heated conversation, take a step back and ask yourself why".
- Avoid (posting) click-baits
- Read the comments of good posts
- Be critical

Watch out for the pitfalls.
Look beyond Stack Overflow and formal documentation as sources for developer knowledge.
Future work

Study a different sample
(our sample was focused on core users; the periphery is also interesting)

Improve gamification, curation, and moderation mechanisms
R/Programming and Hacker News shape and are shaped by software development communities of practice.

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