

CW 26 Proposal Draft

Issue: <https://github.com/rcmcooperative/team/issues/37>

Call info:

<https://www.software.ac.uk/news/take-stage-cw26-submit-your-proposals-now>

Deadline: 16/01/2026 23:59 GMT

Submitter: Cass

Draft for Slides:  SSI

Session collaborators

Please include the following information for any additional collaborators on this session proposal (Name, Home Institution/affiliation, Email Address):

Name	Home Institution	Email	Attending CW26 (remote / in-person) ?	Open to facilitating a group (Y/N)?
Cassandra Gould van Praag	RCM Cooperative	cassandra.gouldvanpraag@rcmcooperative.com	in-person	N
Johanna Bayer	Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behaviour	hannabayer.89@gmail.com	in-person	Y
Arielle Bennet Lovell	The Alan Turing Institute, TTW	ariellebennettlovell@gmail.com	TBC	Y
Sara Villa	RCM Cooperative, OLS, TTW	svillahdez@gmail.com	in-person	Y
Emma Karoune	RCM Cooperative, The Alan Turing Institute	ekaroune@googlemail.com	remote	Y
Maryblessing Okolie	CHAOSS, OES, RSECon	okolieblessing290@gmail.com	in-person	Y

Mini-workshop or demo session title

Exploring community health metrics

Mini-workshop or demo session abstract

If your session is accepted this abstract will be made public on the CW26 webpage, so please write this as a public description containing 200-400 words.

The health of a research community is difficult to measure and communicate. Research community managers (RCMs) and those with RCM responsibilities often rely on coarse engagement data from communications channels, but these can lag behind substantive changes in engagement and miss factors relevant to the sustainability of a community. Without broad agreement and adoption of research community health metrics, it is difficult to compare between communities or individual initiatives, and share lessons around successes or challenges in engagement which are backed by scalable data. Existing shared metrics are often based on open source software or commercial communities that can have distinct motivations from research communities, and different normalised modes of working compared to research communities (for example in technology choices), which mean they cannot be directly mapped.

We propose a move towards a common language and shared methodology for measuring research community health. CW26 participants are excellently positioned to contribute to a discussion on both the practical implications of this effort, and an exploration of the ethical concerns relating to the collection of member activity, data which could be perceived as surveillance.

This workshop will bring together RCMs and community members, and contributors to existing metrics projects such as the Community Health Analytics in Open Source Software (CHAOSS) project. We will share experiences of applying community health metrics relevant to academic use cases, and identify common barriers, dependencies or rate limiting factors in their adoption into our workflows. We will work towards identifying next steps in our own practices to enable the communication of more nuanced community health data, and actions we can take collectively to move towards ethical implementation of standardised research community health metrics. We believe this work will support an improved understanding of the factors that contribute to a healthy research community, as relevant to both community managers and community funders.

Mini-workshop or demo session audience

If your session is accepted this description of the intended audience for this session will be made public on the CW26 webpage to help participants choose which sessions to attend. Please include any prerequisites for participants, expected prior knowledge/skills needed, if any software/tools need to be installed prior to the session, or if there is a maximum/expected number of participants if necessary.

This workshop is designed to build on the knowledge and experience of those who have currently or previously held some responsibility for managing a research community. We also welcome the perspectives of advocates for research communities, either as engaged contributors or sponsors.

Mini-workshop or demo session theme(s)

Which of the CW26 themes does your mini-workshop or demo session fit into? (Select all that apply.)

- ☒ Community and Collaboration
- ☐ Sustainability and Impact
- ☐ AI and data infrastructure

Mini-workshop or demo session length

Please choose the session length (30 or 60 min). 60-minute sessions are more suitable for training, tutorials, information gathering or exploring a topic, for example, and are required to include active participant engagement/interaction (inclusive of both in-person and remote participants).

- ☐ 30 min
- ☒ 60 min

To help us plan effectively, please select your preferred workshop format/s

- ☐ In-person participation only
- ☐ Remote participation only

☒ Hybrid participation

Mini-workshop or demo session description

Please describe:

1) The session's aims and outcomes

Aims:

- Understand how different communities currently measure community health.
- Familiarise participants with the CHAOSS project and metrics and discuss how they may be applied in varied contexts.
- Gain understanding and consensus around ethical concerns related to monitoring of community health.
- Seed the formation of a group of individuals interested in pursuing the standardisation of ethical research community health metrics.

Outcomes:

- Improved collective knowledge of issues and processes relevant to the measurement of community health.
- Individual “next steps” towards improvements in the way we measure health of our own communities.
- Focal point to facilitate ongoing discussions on this topic.
- Propose working on next steps of discussion on Hack Day.

2) How the session connects to the themes of CW26

The theme of CW26 is “Strengthening the Research Software Community”; We see this workshop as an essential prerequisite to understanding the strength of any research community, demonstrating and communicating changes in strength (return on investment), and being able to do so comparatively across contexts. Developing a common language and framework in this space will enable funders to more effectively understand the value of those responsible for growing and maintaining community health. This in turn will support the sustainability of our communities and the contributions of individual members.

3) How the session will run (tentative format/agenda)

Start	Activity	Comments
00:00	Welcome and Introductions	Format TBC based on number of participants (create a long and short format)
00:10	Presentation "What is community health" and ethics of surveillance (primer)	Cover simple measures (e.g. n on mailing list) are limited and highlights from CHAOSS.
00:25	Breakout discussions: What metrics do you collect? What challenges do you currently face collecting metrics? What challenges would you face in doing more?	In-person poster + post-it exercise. Parallel remote miro session. Pre-identified facilitator for each group.
00:45	Share out	One surprising or common learning from each group
00:55	Close and proposal for follow on at Hack Day.	Gauge interests for continued exploration

4) If you selected "60 minutes" for **Question 9**, please outline how you plan to facilitate active participant engagement/interaction with both in-person and remote participants

The majority of the session will be dedicated to breakout discussion and shareout, with each group supported by a pre-identified facilitator (the collaborators named here) familiar with the core topics. Discussion groups will be given a focused task to structure effective

ideation, with the resultant discussion points recorded by participants themselves through “post-it” contributions. Facilitators will be experienced in managing a diversity of voices and encouraging direct written contributions where possible. In-person groups will be facilitated by collaborators joining in person, while the online group(s) will have a dedicated online facilitator.

Throughout participants will be reminded that they are the experts of their local context, that all contributions are valuable and that their participation in this work will be attributed with their permission. This framing will provide the psychological safety required for vulnerable conversations (reinforced by the event Code of Conduct), along with appropriate intrinsic and extrinsic reward for engagement and contribution.

5) If you selected "hybrid" for Question 10, please describe how the session will be inclusive of both in-person and remote participants.

Remote and in-person discussions will be held in parallel groups to ease within-group communication, while we will work to maximise information flow between groups through appropriate resourcing and emphasis for hybrid.

- The delivery and facilitation team will have a dedicated “back stage” communications channel to ensure technical or other issues can be resolved effectively.
- Remote discussion groups will have two facilitators: one discussion lead and one technical infrastructure management.
- During introductions and discussion we will ensure that both remote and in-person groups are enthusiastically greeted and directly addressed.
- During shareouts we will ensure that speakers from both in-person and remote groups are visible and audible to each other



Any special requirements or other information you would like to include about your proposed session?

Some of our collaborator team have submitted multiple CW26 session proposals. Where a clash in programming is unavoidable, contributors will prioritise participation in sessions that they have submitted to lead. We will confirm participation when proposal acceptance and scheduling are announced, and if necessary recruit additional facilitators.