



**Maaïke de Jong**  
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- SOFTWARE AND CODE
- OPEN SCIENCE
- RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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## COULD YOU INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO OUR READERS? TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND THE COMMUNITY YOU MANAGE.

Hello, readers! My name is Maaïke and I'm a scientific community manager and project lead at the [Netherlands eScience Center](#), the national centre for innovative software solutions in academic research. Our organization collaborates with researchers across all disciplines to create high-quality open software for academic research and to give training in digital skills. Open science is a big part of our mission. We stimulate the development of sustainable and reusable software that supports the reproducibility of research results. Our community includes researchers, research software engineers, academic support staff, and policy makers with an interest in research software. Some of the things I enjoy in my free time are nature, music, art, and (free)diving.

## WHAT WAS YOUR PATH TO SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT? WERE YOU TRAINED AS A SCIENTIST OR DID YOU COME BY ANOTHER ROUTE?

I have a background in biological research, with an MSc in ecology and a PhD in evolutionary biology. After my PhD I first worked as a postdoc in Finland, followed by a Marie Curie fellowship in the UK, primarily focusing on adaptation to climate change. After 10 years of research, I shifted my focus towards open science. I worked for the Dutch Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) as a project manager for five years before moving to my current position at the eScience Center. Throughout my career, I've always enjoyed community engagement, and it has gradually become more central to my work.

## CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUR ROLE? HOW DO YOU TYPICALLY SPEND YOUR TIME?

My responsibilities include:

- **Leading development** of a [research software directory](#), including managing a team of developers and external collaborations
- **Engaging software directory stakeholders**, setting up collaborations, organizing outreach events, giving presentations, and creating content that communicates our goals
- **Coordinating the working group** developing national guidelines for [software management plans](#)
- **Networking and collaborating** with the Digital Competence Centers of the Dutch universities and other research organizations
- **Participating** in relevant national and international networks and working groups, for example, the (Dutch) National Programme Open Science
- **Organizing workshops** and other events, speaking at conferences and giving presentations
- **Collecting and analyzing** data on our community activities

## LOOKING BACK ON THE LAST YEAR, WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE PROJECT YOU'VE WORKED ON?

My favorite project of the past year (and ongoing) has been leading the team that is developing the research software directory, a content management system that promotes the visibility, impact, and reuse of research software. To develop the service with input from the research community, we've recently set up collaborations with several major national and international research organizations. I'm also very excited about the working group developing national guidelines for software management plans, which we set up late last year (in collaboration with the Dutch Research Council). We aim to finish these guidelines before the summer, with lots of community engagement around it.



#### KEY

- INTERPERSONAL
- PROGRAM MANAGEMENT
- PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
- COMMUNICATION
- TECHNICAL



#### MAAIKE'S SKILLS WHEEL SIGNATURE

The CSCCE skills wheel is composed of five core competencies, with nine skills within each competency. Skills wheels are a common way of visualizing and curating information about skills that also allow for the creation of a job "signature" or "fingerprint" based on the particular skills in use. This wheel is representative of the skills Maaïke used over the last 12 months.

► For more information, see [the CSCCE skills wheel](#).

## DO YOU SHARE COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT DUTIES WITH ANYONE ELSE? WHERE DOES YOUR POSITION FIT WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

I'm fortunate to be part of our wonderful community team with three other community managers. We all have slightly different focuses and roles within our community, but we often work together on projects and events, which is a lot of fun. The team has a central position in the organization, collaborating with our research software engineers, programme managers, tech leads, and other colleagues. We also work together closely with our communications team.

## WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT BEING A COMMUNITY MANAGER?

There are so many things I like about this work: I really enjoy working in academia, connecting with people who have various scientific backgrounds and interests, and talking and thinking about science every day. It's exciting to see what's happening at the forefront of research across all disciplines, and how digital methods are pushing the boundaries of what's possible in research. I especially like the cooperative nature of the work and the way I'm contributing to open science. Making research more accessible, collaborative and inclusive is something that really motivates me.

## WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU HAVE FACED AS A SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY MANAGER? ARE THERE WAYS IN WHICH YOUR ROLE COULD BE MADE EASIER – SUCH AS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES OR SOMETHING ELSE?

The biggest challenge is time management. There is so much to do as a community manager! That's a good thing, because it makes it clear that what we do is useful and in demand. But this means that our community team occasionally has to say no to things (for example, requests to give workshops and presentations or participate in working groups), which can be difficult.

## AND ZOOMING OUT A LITTLE, WHY DO YOU THINK COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS IMPORTANT TO SCIENCE? HOW HAVE YOU SEEN ACTIVE MANAGEMENT IMPROVE YOUR COMMUNITY?

I think community management is essential to changing the way we do science, from an often individualistic and competitive culture to a more open and cooperative way of working. In our community I see that active management helps researchers find ways to improve their digital skills and connect with experts and others with an interest in research software. This empowers them and can really benefit the quality and increase the scope of their research. I also see an increasing awareness at the policy level about the importance of software and digital skills in academic research and as key components of open science.

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This case study is part of a series created by the Center for Scientific Collaboration and Community Engagement.

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