Paula Andrea Martinez
Community Manager
Multiple Roles

▶ SOFTWARE AND CODE
▶ OPEN SCIENCE
▶ INFRASTRUCTURE ORGANIZATION

> " Community management is like a motor constantly moving, where every part moves differently but for the same purpose. "

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

My name is Paula Andrea Martinez. I am the Software Project Coordinator of the Australian Research Data Commons (ARDC), and as part of my role, I support the Research Software Alliance (ReSA). I co-lead three communities: I am a co-chair and Community Manager of the FAIR4RS working group, a steering committee member for Research Software Engineers Association of Australia and New Zealand (RSE AUNZ), and the co-lead for Visible Research Software Interest Group.

The ARDC is a national organization dedicated to providing Australian researchers with competitive advantage through data. ReSA's mission is to bring research software communities together to collaborate on the advancement of the research software ecosystem. The FAIR4RS working group is an open international community organized to define FAIR principles for research software to continue advancing science by increasing the findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability of research software outputs. RSE AUNZ is an advocacy group that supports research software engineers in Australasia. Lastly, the Visible Research Software Interest Group is an online forum where the Australasian research community can discuss issues related to making research software visible, published, and FAIR.

All of these roles give me opportunities to advocate for improving transparency in science. Because I deeply care about open science, diversity, and research software, I want to help make these areas more visible and recognized as important for the reliability and reproducibility of research.

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

I majored in Software Development during my bachelor's degree, and I applied my technical skills to bioinformatics during my master's and PhD. I'm fortunate to have had many leadership opportunities during my career with organizations such as the Association of Postgraduate Students at the University of Queensland, the RLadies Brisbane Chapter, and The Carpentries. I like to interact with people and this is an asset for community management. After my PhD, I worked on improving my science communication skills, and now I am working towards learning and practicing change management.

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

I spend my time generating new ideas, writing those into plans, and consulting with people about how to make them a reality. After that, I spend a lot of time keeping my communities' flames burning with strong and transparent communication. I'll be the one who welcomes members and figures out what they want to get from the community. This takes a lot of time, but it is essential to build connections, especially with online communities. It lets me involve members in decision making, for example by co-writing goals. I also acknowledge that many community members just want to be updated on progress, so I will let them know what is happening, and I always reiterate the opportunity to become more active.

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

My favorite project was working with the FAIR4RS community because people were really involved. All the papers that we wrote together were shared and reviewed openly and the authors and reviewers were acknowledged for their contributions. Defining the FAIR4RS principles involved hundreds of people, and it is the most collaborative effort I've been part of so far. I also appreciated being around people who have a lot of expertise, and every interaction was an opportunity for growth! We have accomplished our goals and we are now wrapping up after more than 2 years. I will definitely miss the interactions after that. We are leaving footprints for others to walk in, and I am extremely happy to have contributed.
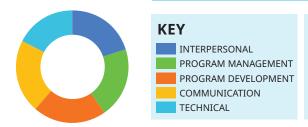
KEY

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

ⓘ **PAULA'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 Paula 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?

Although I lead more than one community, I only hold the title of "Community Manager" for the FAIR4RS WG in my role with ReSA. I co-lead the other two communities (mentioned above) and I play different roles. For the Visible Research Software community, I became the strategist. For RSE ANZ, I am becoming the outreach person. That said, I don't think that community management is a task for only one person. We always need allies, champions, advocates, and collaborators.

For example, at ARDC I am part of a community of facilitators: a group that shares what we've learned about community management with each other. Others in the community also act as community managers, although they don't carry the title. The Research Software Alliance recently hired another community manager for the Funders Forum, and I try to support them with my experience, as they are new in the role. It is always nice to share our learning together. I also feel part of the CSCCE community and they are the ones I go to when I have questions about community building.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT BEING A COMMUNITY MANAGER?

I like the way community management is an ongoing process, with constant growth and improvement, rather than a finite goal. Being part of the scientific culture change motivates me to continue. It is like a motor constantly moving, where every part moves differently but for the same purpose. Independent of the community, I like the common vision that we can build together. There is alway the search for balance between opportunities and challenges. For instance, I like learning why people are invested in communities, even though they have a million other things to do. I find that one shared value is being part of transformations.

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?

One of the challenges - but also the fun part of being a community manager - is the need to multitask. You need to be able to adapt and context-switch very rapidly. One minute I'm reviewing a proposal (program development), and then 10 minutes later I'm communicating with the comms teams about advertising our next article or event (communication). After that, I might welcome new volunteers (interpersonal engagement). I learned all these skills - and how to switch quickly between them - on the job, but I have encountered really good resources online, and I welcome any opportunity for professional development.

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

Community management is helping a group of people have coordinated discussions and guiding them toward achieving their goals together. Most goals that require change cannot be achieved by a single individual, and that's why communities strengthen our reach. Involving people affected by the change in the decision-making process is the best way to demonstrate the need for them to be engaged.

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