Community and Events

Dr Rachael Ainsworth, Research Software Community Manager
About the Software Sustainability Institute

- A national facility promoting the advancement of software in research since 2010, by cultivating better, more sustainable, research software to enable world-class research
- A collaboration between the universities of Edinburgh, Manchester, Oxford and Southampton
- In 2018, SSI was awarded funding from all seven UK Research Councils (and has been supported through grants EP/H043160/1, EP/N006410/1 and EP/S021779/1)

Better software, better research.
Dr Rachael Ainsworth, SSI  
@rachaelevelyn @fosdem #FOSDEM2023

Teams

Software
Helping the community to develop software that meets the needs of reliable, reproducible, and reusable research

Training
Delivering essential software skills to researchers, partnering with institutions, doctoral schools and the community

Policy
Collecting evidence on and promoting the place of software in research and sharing with stakeholders

Community
Developing Communities of Practice by supporting the right people to understand and address topical issues

Outreach
Exploiting our platform to enable engagement, delivery and uptake
Teams’ activities

Software
- 75+ software consultancy projects
- 200+ evaluations
- 4 surgeries

Policy
- Hidden REF
- Involved in UKRI long-term strategy
- On 29 national & international committees

Training
- 460+ Carpentry workshops
- 9k+ learners, 300+ instructors
- 85+ guides

Outreach
- 170+ external contributors
- 20k unique visitors per month
- 10.3k+ followers

Community
- 217 Fellows
- 3800+ RSEs engaged
- 30+ workshops organised
  (14 Collaborations Workshops)
Community Structure

**Community Management**
Community management is provided via 2.1 to 2.9 FTEs distributed across 4 positions (Community Lead, Research Software Community Manager, Community Officer, and Community Manager for UK Research Software Engineering). Additional support is provided by other SSI staff. Participants in the Fellowship Programme organize events and grow their own communities of practice.

**Members**
- 10% Service Providers
- 5% Research Policy Makers
- 15% Trainers
- 30% Researchers
- 40% Research Software Engineers

**Community Configuration**

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Programming

- **convey/consume**
  - email list
  - newsletter
  - webinar
  - Twitter
  - blog
  - website
  - LinkedIn

- **contribute**
  - contact community manager directly
  - submit newsletter content
  - ask questions in a webinar / post in the chat
  - replies on social media
  - write a guest blog post
  - contribute code or other resource
  - fill in a survey

- **collaborate**
  - contact one another directly
  - meet in small groups (led by community manager)
  - @mention or discuss on community platform
  - co-author blog posts or papers (asynchronously)

- **co-create**
  - simultaneous co-authoring (e.g., using Google docs)
  - meet in small groups (member-led)
  - create new communications channels
  - organize events together

Fellowship Programme

- Engaging with natural ambassadors of better software practice from the research community
- £3k funding to empower those involved with improving software practice; helping form communities of practice
- Fellows help SSI discover important information about software in different research domains
- Fellows help guide SSI training, policies, community work and consultancy engagements

https://software.ac.uk/fellowship-programme
Examples of Fellows’ Activities

- Carpentries Offline by Jannetta Steyn, Abhishek Dasgupta, Alison Clarke, Colin Sauze, Emily Lewis, Rebecca Wilson, et al.
- Reproducible Research and R workshops for Archaeologists by Alison Clarke & Emma Karoune
- Good mental health, good research software by Dave Horsfall
- Intermediate Research Software Development in Python at UKAEA by Matthew Bluteau
- RSE@Northumbria Launch Event by Lucy Whalley
- Software Carpentry at STFC by Eli Chadwick
- Great R packages for Ornithologists by Philipp Boersch-Supan
- Reusing Research Software and Tools in Digital Humanities Scholarship by Emily Bell & Anna-Maria Sichani
- Open Life Science by Yo Yehudi & Malvika Sharan
- Library Carpentry by James Baker
Collaborations Workshop

- Brings together researchers, developers, funders, publishers, educators & more to explore important ideas in software/research, & start interdisciplinary collaborations
- Unconference: keynote presentations, mini-workshop/demo sessions, discussion groups, lightning talks, collaborative ideas, speed blogging and a hack day
- CW23 will take place 2-4 May 2023
  - [https://software.ac.uk/cw23](https://software.ac.uk/cw23)
  - Hybrid in Manchester, UK
  - Theme: Sustainable Career Development - looking after your software, your career, and yourself
  - Deadline for submissions: 24 February 2023
  - Deadline to register: 24 March 2023
Collaborations Workshop Flow

(Informing) Keynotes & Lightning Talks

(Exploring) Discussion Groups

(Exploring) Collaborative Ideas

(Creating) Hack Day

Networking and collaboration

(Exploring) Panels

(Exploring) Collaborative Ideas

(Exploring) Panels

(Exploring) Discussion Groups

(Exploring) Mini-workshops & Demos

(Exploring) Discussion Groups

(Exploring) Collaborative Ideas

(Creating) Hack Day
Collaborations Workshop Outcomes

- Blog posts authored by discussion groups are published to the SSI website
- Collaborative Ideas groups feed into Hack Day projects
- 70% of participants start 1-2 collaborations based on conversations at the workshop (CW21)
- 80% of participants intend to carry on working on the hack day project, for example (CW21):
  - Carpentries Offline (formerly CarpenPi)  
    [https://carpentriesoffline.github.io/](https://carpentriesoffline.github.io/)
  - Coding Confessions  
    [https://coding-confessions.github.io/](https://coding-confessions.github.io/)
Event Organisation Guide

- Guide on how the SSI organises events (project management of events) with CW as the main example
- Templates (e.g. venue requirements, budget, event timeline, duties roster, event roles, risk management)
- In Practice section, including detailed write-up of how we organised CW21 from Feasibility Stage to Closing
- Open for contributions

[link to event organisation guide]

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Research Software Camps

- Free online events twice a year over the course of two weeks
- Each Camp focuses on introducing and exploring a topic around research software, thus starting discussions among various research communities
  - Supporting Mental Health (November 2022)
  - Next steps in coding (May 2022)
  - Beyond the Spreadsheets (Nov 2021)
  - Research Accessibility (Feb 2021)
- Sessions include panels, training, workshops, guides, blog posts, and social media discussions
- Many opportunities to get involved as part of the mentorship programme and software surgeries
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