NSF's Research Infrastructure Communities of Interest (COI) Introduction and Posting Guidelines

Background

The National Science Foundation's (NSF's) Research Infrastructure Workshop has created a Community of Interest (COI) to facilitate knowledge exchange among the NSF-supported Research Infrastructure and other Scientific Facility Communities. The COI is a response to several factors:

1. Frequent requests from the Community for Research Infrastructure to create a space to facilitate conversation and knowledge exchange.
2. The Community's wish to encourage all NSF-funded Research Infrastructure awardees to share lessons learned and best practices with one another as noted from the 2017 Research Infrastructure Workshop Report.
3. The opportunity for NSF to demonstrate agreement and compliance with earlier GAO report recommendations to promote the sharing of lessons learned within the community.

NSF Objective

The COI has been customized for the Research Infrastructure Community to share knowledge and lessons learned and educate members on best practices. NSF envisions this as a space for the community by the community.

The platform is managed by NSF contractors. NSF will not collect information from the platform without publicly stating and asking for permission. NSF's goal is to provide a platform for Research Infrastructure and award recipients to find each other and communicate. NSF Offices, such as OLPA and ODI, may also use it as a place to engage with the community. This tool will benefit users by giving them access to colleagues in their field. A user can communicate new accomplishments at their facilities via the discussion category, share helpful or newly published documents in the knowledge base category, look at upcoming webinars in the Events category or ask questions of other recipients with the same position type or community of interest in the Questions category. Users may find the ideas category especially useful to gauge what workshop topics may be popular among their community.

Posting Guidelines

Category Types

There are four types of categories in each community of interest. Each category type provides unique features to facilitate engagement.

- Discussions
- Ideas
- Questions
- Knowledge Base (Articles)

Important note to get automatically notified of new posts

Each category will include a "Join" option, which allows members to join the category and be listed in the category Members tab of that category. Members who join the category can participate in the discussions, are listed in the Members tab, and automatically get notified of new posts. To learn how to update the frequency of your notifications please reference the COI User Guide.

Discussions

Posts should be conversational, have a prompt, or give folks something to respond to. Users can start new topics and participate in ongoing conversations. Users can upload images, videos, and file attachments.


If a popular idea comes from the Ideas category, users can start a Discussion thread to help develop it. An example of a post you can make in the Discussions category includes providing, asking for, or collaborating on documents to create an information exchange. The Discussions category would also be a good place to receive peer feedback on documents users have found or authored.

Ideas

In the Ideas category, users can share feedback and vote for ideas they support. You can see which ideas are most popular and select ideas to move to the Discussions category. Users can assign status labels such as in review, planned, started and completed, to inform others of the status of their feedback.

The Ideas category can be used to collect content ideas for upcoming Webinars or Workshops. Users may also want general feedback from the community about their theories or an upcoming publication.
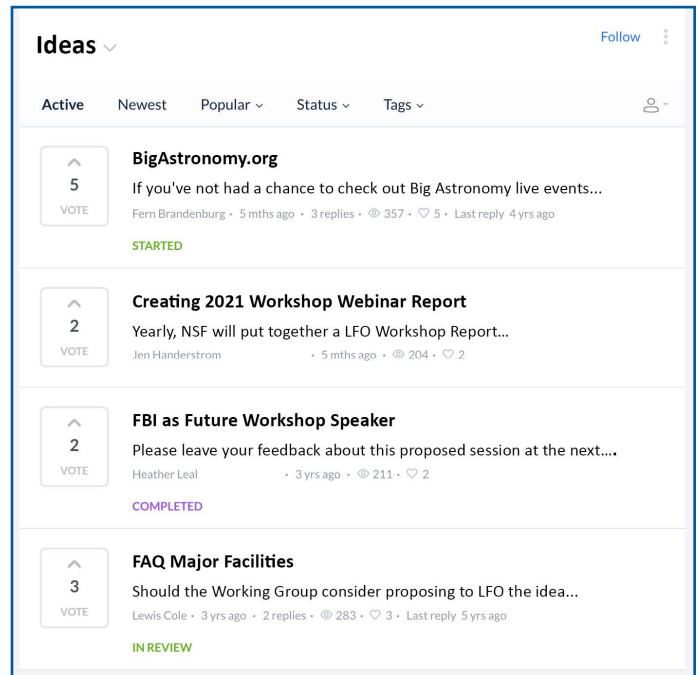
Category Types

In the Q&A category, users may ask questions and provide accurate answers to other user questions. If you are new to your position, this is an opportunity to ask for help, guidance, or feedback. Questions can be marked as "Answered" by the question author or by moderators. Moderators can also mark replies as "Official Response" or "Answer" and pin the best answer.
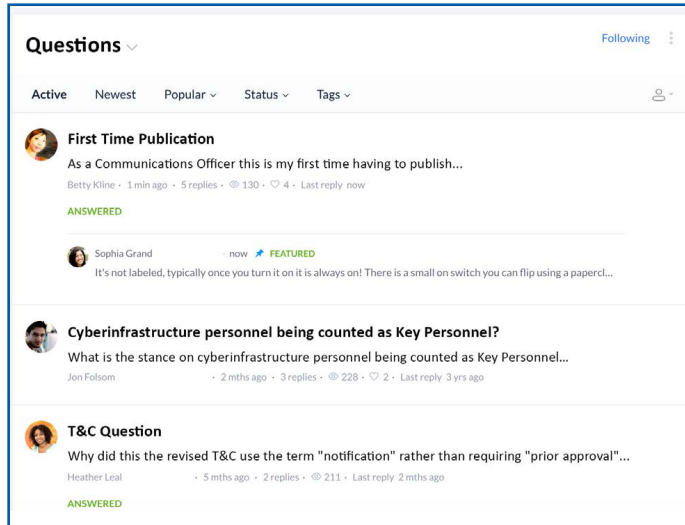
Knowledge Base

Users can publish content in the Knowledge Base such as blog posts, news, and help articles. This is an area where users can share interesting information that is specific to their community of interest. Examples of content to be posted in the Knowledge Base include training resources, project management tips, or guidance documents.
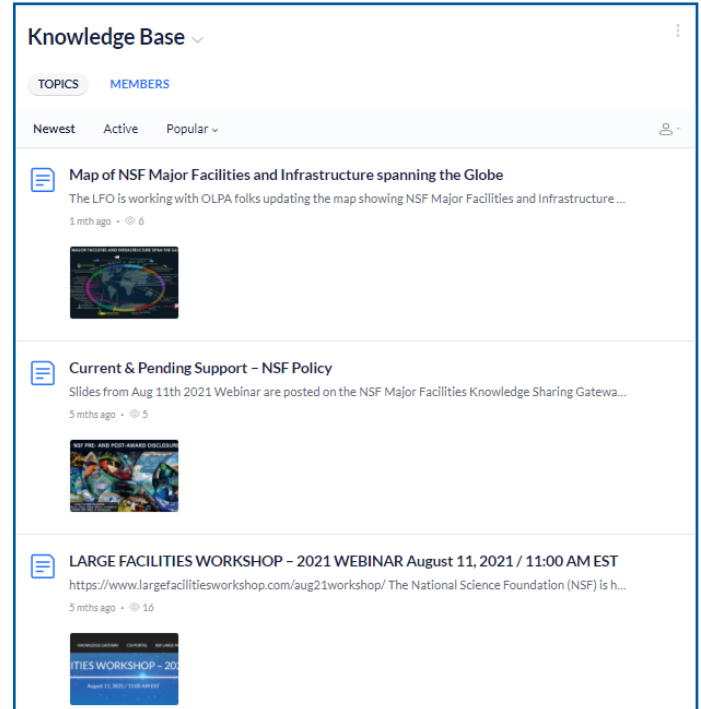
For additional information, check out our FAQ page. You may also send an email to RIOutreach@nsf.gov.