



CAST
Driving social change
with digital technology

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An exploration of potential models for creating a national Data4Good community of practice

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1. Introduction

Following the success of our first national Data4Good Conference in November 2018, much of the delegate feedback centred around their delight at having a forum to share knowledge in this specific field, and the feeling that there were limited opportunities to get together with a community of ‘data for good’ people. This research reviews the landscape of existing national Communities of Practice (CoPs) in the not-for-profit sector and field of data; and explores potential models for creating a national ‘Data4Good’ Community of Practice.

2. What is a Community of Practice?

A community of practice (CoP) is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, a craft or profession, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. The key elements are:

The domain: members are brought together by a learning need they share (whether this shared learning need is explicit or not and whether learning is the motivation for their coming together or a by-product of it).

The community: their collective learning becomes a bond among them over time (experienced in various ways and thus not a source of homogeneity).

The practice: their interactions produce resources that affect their practice (whether they engage in actual practice together or separately).

Source: <https://wenger-trayner.com>

The concept was first proposed by cognitive anthropologist Jean Lave and educational theorist Etienne Wenger in their 1991 book *Situated Learning* (Lave & Wenger 1991).

3. Existing research about setting up CoPs

Wenger-Trayner’s website¹ provides useful guidance for anyone considering establishing a CoP:

Three considerations for getting a community of practice started

- *Step 1:* have a series of conversations with potential members. What issues and challenges are they facing? Do they interact with others facing similar issues and challenges? Do they think it would help to make such interactions more sustained and systematic?
- *Step 2:* which often happens in the context of the first one, is to find some potential members who are willing to join you in your vision of a community of practice and to invest their own identities as practitioners in making this happen.
- *Step 3:* assuming the first two have yielded positive results, engage a dedicated core group from step 2 in designing a process to enable the community to get going. Often this will entail organising a launch event. However, in some cases, it could just entail initiating work on an issue and letting the process attract others. The level of visibility of the launch process will depend on the how much it can build on existing identities associated with the community.

¹ <https://wenger-trayner.com/resources/key-success-factors/>

Three key success factors for communities of practice

Communities of practice are complex social structures, whose voluntary and self-governing nature makes them quite sensitive to subtle dynamics. As a result, a host of factors potentially contribute to their success (and to their failure) and can become critical in some circumstances. Wenger-Treyner's top three are:

- *Identification*: Communities of practice thrive on social energy, which both derives from and creates identification. Passion for the domain is key. This makes the negotiation of the domain a critical success factor.
- *Leadership*: A key success factor is the dedication and skill of people who take the initiative to nurture the community. Many communities fail, not because members have lost interest, but simply because nobody has the energy and time to take care of logistics and hold the space for the inquiry.
- *Time*: Time is a challenge for most communities, whose members have to handle competing priorities. Theoretically, time should not be an issue if the interest is there, but practically it remains a constant challenge. Because time is at such a premium, a key principle of community cultivation is to ensure "high value for time" for all those who invest themselves.

Difference between a network and a community of practice

It should be emphasised that there is a distinction between a network and a CoP. The CoP is specifically about knowledge/learning about a practice and links to the community identity. Networks are more broadly about connections to others with something in common. <https://wenger-trayner.com/resources/communities-versus-networks/>

4. Support around data for the not-for-profit sector

Data and analytics is a relatively new professional field, emerging out of the big data revolution, the rise of open data, and the plethora of new tools and techniques that have developed since 2010. Many of the data support organisations, or services focused on data, available in the not-for-profit sector today have come into existence since 2013. Since that time there has been a gradual increase in the number of data-related professions in the sector e.g. data scientists, data analysts, data managers, and data leads.

Data Orchard and DataKind created a list of data support providers (as part of the [Data Evolution project](#)) which has been available, and added to, since January 2017. The list includes details of 23 support providers offering services to the not-for-profit sector. It includes most members of the Data4Good Partnership, some of which have developed/are developing their own Communities of Practice from their memberships (notably Datakind UK, Royal Statistical Society, The OR Society and Charity Digital (Tech Trust)).

We have not included NCVO and NPC in this review although both do relevant work with their memberships, particularly in relation to Impact measurement and management, and organise training and events among a broader range of sector support.

5. Research on existing national CoPs

We reviewed over 20 existing CoPs of different types to explore factors that might be considered when setting one up from scratch. The national, and in a few cases 'UK based international', CoPs we've included in this research are:

- Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO)
- Charities Safety Group
- Charity Connect
- Charity Digital
- Charity Evaluation Working Group (ChEW)
- Charity Finance Group
- Charity IT Leaders
- CharityComms
- Data IQ
- DataKind UK
- E-Campaigning Forum (ECF)
- Inside Government²
- Institute of Fundraising
- Pro Copywriters
- Responsible Data Forum
- The Charities HR Network
- The Foundation for Social Improvement (FSI)
- The Operational Research Society
- The Royal Statistical Society
- UK Evaluation Society
- Women in Data

Brief descriptions of each of these can be found in Appendix 1. We also explored six of the CoPs in more detailed case studies, listed later in the report.

In addition, we identified a number of other groups which operate either at a more international level or at a more local level or are relevant in relation to data but don't meet the criteria of a CoP. These are listed in Appendix 2.

² Note: Inside Government have been included as they offer an annual voluntary data conference aimed at the not-for-profit sector. However, they don't really meet the definition of a CoP.

Comparison of CoPs with different organisational structures

	Charity Evaluation Working Group (ChEW)	ProCopywriters	Charity Comms
Established:	2011	2010	2007
Members:	300	800	4,000
Turnover:	£33k (2018)	£54k (2018)	£666k (2017)
Paid staff:	0 (2017)	3 part time (2018)	12 (2017)
Who and what they cater for:	A forum for research and evaluation managers working in the third sector, providing peer support and learning to develop research and evaluation skills.	A membership organisation for commercial writers, providing networking, knowledge and directory listings.	A membership network for communications professionals working in UK charities.
Funding streams:	Membership fees; grant funding from Big Lottery Fund.	Membership fees; annual conference; webinars; job advertising on website.	Membership fees; conferences and events; donations.
Structure:	Informal network	Ltd company	Charity and Ltd company
Membership fees:	£0 to £80	£60 to £2,580	£84 to £3449
Spread:	UK focus	UK focus	UK focus

Case study 1: Charity Evaluation Working Group (ChEW)

Who and what they cater for

A community of practice with around 300 members (representing 80 organisations), providing peer support to evaluation and research managers in the third sector. They have thematic sub-groups for health, and children and young people.

The group was established in 2011 by Donna Buxton who was looking for other people like her who were working alone within small charities and wished to share knowledge, skills and learning. The group communicates via a LinkedIn group, and organises approximately four events per year where speakers/group members present on different topics and share good practice.

Funding

Membership fees

Membership is free for organisations with a turnover of less than £1m, or £80/annum. They are currently considering adding a more expensive associate membership for commercial members.

Grants

They have recently received a grant from the Big Lottery Fund to help develop the group further which will enable them to employ a part time membership coordinator and set up a website.

Structure

ChEW is currently an informal community of practice, with member organisations taking turns to host meetings. Activity is coordinated by a board of volunteers, governed by a chair.

Future developments

Because of the requirements of the Big Lottery Funding, they are currently in the process of registering as a charitable company (a company limited by guarantee with charitable purpose). This fits with their ethos and will help them to access grant funding.

The Board are keen to see the group grow and link up with other groups, to be a combined force for change in the sector and to enable the sector to speak and respond with one voice on key issues and consultations.

Spread

UK and Ireland.

Case study 2: ProCopyWriters

Who and what they cater for

The network describes itself as the alliance for commercial writers and has a membership of over 800. The network was founded and managed by a group of copywriters. Its website states that the network exists to 'elevate the profession of copywriting, provide learning and development opportunities, and help our members showcase their skills, raise their profiles and find work'.

Membership includes an entry in the online directory of copywriters, plus access to online resources, a jobs board and a discussion forum.

Membership is open to any commercial writer who serves clients in the UK. The network welcomes freelancers, employees (for example, those working in agencies), company owners, students and people starting out on their copywriting careers.

Funding

Membership fees

ProCopywriters offers memberships for individuals. Basic membership is £6/month. Pro membership is £90/year. They also offer organisational membership. Monthly fees depend on turnover: up to £500k, £45/month; up to £1m, £105/month; up to £5m, £215/month. Charity organisational membership is £75/month.

Conferences and events

They deliver an [annual conference](#) for copywriters. Tickets are £400 plus VAT, with discounts for members. Past conferences have received sponsorship from the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, the Institute of Direct and Digital Marketing (IDM) and the Content Marketing Association (CMA).

They also deliver a programme of online webinars, these are currently offered free to members.

Structure

ProCopywriters is a limited company (The Professional Copywriters' Network) registered in the UK.

Spread

Members are mainly UK-based. Their annual conference takes place in London.

Case study 3: Charity Comms

Who and what they cater for

CharityComms is the membership network for around 4000 communications professionals working in UK charities.

Funding

Membership fees

They offer membership for both organisations and individuals in the charity sector, as well as corporate membership for suppliers to the charity sector.

Individuals pay £84/year. Organisations pay, depending on income, from £169 (under £1m) to £3,449 (£10m+). Corporate fees also depend on income, at £350 (below £1m) or £700 (£1m+)

Subscription fees generated £420k in 2017/18.

Conferences and events

They deliver a busy schedule of events, mainly professional development conferences, workshops and special interest group sessions. Most (or all) of these are held in London. They also have a UK-wide program of regional networking events and a small number of social events. Their most recent report states that they delivered 57 events attended by over 4,000 comms professionals in 2017/18. A number of events are free and/or exclusive to members.

Conferences are charged for both members and non-members at the following rates:

Charity organisational and individual members: £180+vat

Corporate Partners: £225+vat

Small charity (income up to £1m) and freelancers: £200+vat

Medium charity (income £1-5m): £250+vat

Large charity (income £5m - 10m): £285+vat

Super large charity (income £10m+): £315+vat

Corporate/Public sector: £400+vat

Conferences and events generated £230k in 2017/18

Donations

Donations contributed £12k in 2017/18

Structure

Charity Comms is a registered charity and limited company. It was set up in 2007 by communications directors from some of the UK's biggest charities, several of whom are still on their board of trustees. They currently have 8 trustees who are also directors of the charity.

Spread

UK focus. Conferences and professional development events all seem to be organised in London. They do have a number of regional networking events, covering the main regions in England, Scotland and Wales.

Comparison of CoPs at different stages of maturity

	Royal Statistical Society (RSS)	Charities Finance Group (CFG)	Foundation for social improvement (FSI)
Established:	1834	1987	2007
Members:	10,000+	1,500	6,900+
Turnover:	£2.6m+ (2017)	£1.8m (2018)	£425k (2017)
Paid staff:	27 (2017)	22 (2018)	8 (2017)
Who and what they cater for:	Professional body for statisticians and data analysts.	Membership body for people in finance roles in the charity sector.	Small charities development, training and resources.
Funding streams:	Events; magazine; grants/sponsorship; membership; exams; accreditation; training; publications.	Membership; conferences and events; sponsorship and advertising; annual fundraising dinner.	Membership; training; consultancy; qualifications; voluntary funding; statutory funding.
Membership fees:	£140 to £186	£195 to £1,400	£0 to £275
Structure:	Charity	Charity	Charity
Spread:	International	UK focus	UK focus

Note: there was some discussion about whether the Foundation for Social Improvement met the criteria of a Community of Practice. On balance we decided to include it on the basis that people who run small organisations are likely to perform a wide range of roles and perhaps people who 'wear many hats' might be a community in themselves. Also, in small organisations, it's likely that that responsibility for data may be one of those many hats.

Case study 4: Royal Statistical Society (RSS)

Who and what they cater for:

RSS is a professional body for around 10,000 statisticians and data analysts. Members benefit from a well-established range of products and services, including:

- Bi-monthly magazine, journals and members' bulletin;
- Consultations, local groups, events and meetings and an annual conference;
- Mentoring schemes, awards and training discounts;
- Networking;
- Directory listing;
- Affiliate discounts (publishers).

Funding (all figures are from 2017 accounts)

- **Membership fees:** Members pay between £140-£186 yearly (concessions are available, including free membership for students and teachers.) Membership subscriptions generated £626k.
- **Publications:** They have an established range of publications - journals, reports, a magazine and online magazine. These are available to members but non-members can also subscribe. Publications in total generated £953k.
- **Training, accreditation and exams:** Public, in-company and online courses, with discounted fees for members. Most courses are held in London. Generated, in total, £559k.
- **Events:** 'Public interest' and 'Strengthening the discipline conferences and events'. Generated, in total, £209k.
- **Advertising:** This generated £42k
- **Venue hire:** Rooms at their premises are available for hire. This brought in £39k.
- **Grants and sponsorship:** In total generated £26k

Structure

They are a registered charity. An elected council is the main governing body, comprising a President, and 24 ordinary members. Honorary officers lead work in key areas alongside a member of staff.

Spread

International. Membership is split 75% UK-based / 25% international. UK members are spread UK-wide, but London is where the largest proportion are based (more than 1,200).

Case study 5: Charities Finance Group (CFG)

Who and what they cater for:

CFG is a membership organisation for around 1500 people in finance roles in the charity sector. Their focus is on networking, training and development. Member benefits include:

- Discounts on events and training
- Networking and knowledge sharing
- Print and digital publications and resources
- Free regional members' meetings
- Recruitment savings of up to £1.5k from a partnership with 'Third Sector Jobs' including free trustee, treasurer and volunteer role advertising
- Access to charity finance helplines run by specialist corporate supporters

Funding³:

Income reported is split by outcome rather than income stream:

Well Developed Skills, Learning, Knowledge & Practice - £1,064,201

Effective Governance & Leadership £468,066

Operating in a Supportive Environment £114,063

However, income is derived from four main streams:

- **Membership fees:** The cost of membership ranges from £195 to £1,400 depending on the income of the organisation, as well as location. Organisations outside of London and the South East are offered a reduced rate. In 2018 they reported having 1,482 charity members and 129 corporate members.
- **Conferences and training events:** In 2018 they reported 118 CPD events, 16 conferences and 640 annual conference attendees (466 charity members).
- **Sponsorship and advertising (corporate partners):** They report approximately half of total income (including donated goods and services) comes from corporate partners.
- **Fundraising:** They hold an annual fundraising dinner with tables being hosted and paid for by corporate partners. This generated £126k in 2018

Structure

They are a registered charity and company. The board of trustees are the directors of the company, and they have one wholly owned trading subsidiary, which carries out all trading activities for CFG.

Spread

UK focus. In 2018 they reported their charity members split as:

London & SE - 976 / North - 187 / Wales & SW - 178 / Midlands - 141

Case study 6: Foundation for social improvement (FSI)

Who and what they cater for:

The FSI provide heavily subsidised support for around 6,900 small charities, mainly focused on fundraising:

- F2F training, workshops and conferences
- E-learning, online learning webinars
- Qualifications
- Consultancy/Advice
- Fundraising Resources

Funding⁴:

FSI advocate a 'mixed income economy' and aim for an income in the ratio: Earned 65% / Voluntary 20% / Statutory 15%⁵

- **Consultancy:** Offered in four key areas of expertise: Governance, Strategy & Planning, Impact Measurement & Reporting, and Fundraising/Income Diversification. In 2017 consultancy generated £264k.
- **Sponsorship/grants/donations:** They partner with a number of organisations who provide products and services for small charities. They also have a number of corporate sponsors, receive voluntary funding, and have voluntary supporters working with them from private companies. They credit a partnership bid to the Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport, enabling them to double the capacity of their fundraising training. Donations and legacies generated £99k in 2017.
- **Products:** Their training includes face-to-face and e-learning courses and online webinars. Face to face courses are exclusive to members and heavily subsidised. Most focus on fundraising. They also offer fundraising qualifications (accredited by SQA.) Members receive 20% discount. Conferences also exclusive to members and highly subsidised at £25 for a full day conference.
- **Membership fees:**
Small charities up to £1m turnover - FREE
Charities £1-5m turnover can access a paid Associate Membership scheme. Income including membership and products generated £63k.

Structure

They are a registered charity. The charity is a private company limited by guarantee.

Spread

UK focus. In 2017 they report they offered training in 16 locations across the UK.

The annual FSI Skill conference is held in London, as is a yearly London Fundraising conference and they have also held 'Northern Fundraising' conferences.

⁴ http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Accounts/Ends84/0001123384_AC_20170630_E_C.PDF

⁵ <http://www.thefsi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Business-Plan-2018-2019-On-Line.pdf>

6. Considerations for setting up a CoP

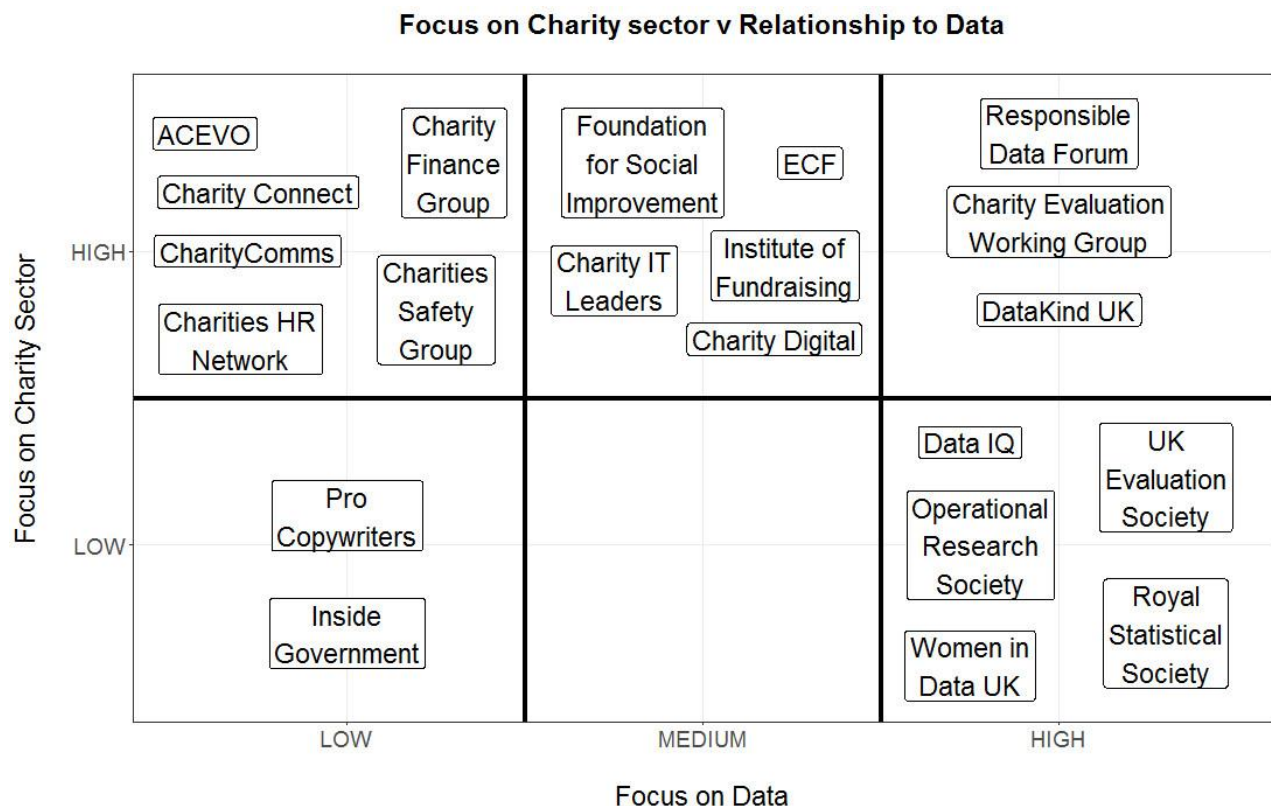
The seven key factors we explored when looking at existing CoPs were:

- Focus/target membership
- Organisational structure/legal form
- Age/maturity
- Funding
- Services/benefits
- Management and organisation
- Geographic reach

6.1 Focus/target membership

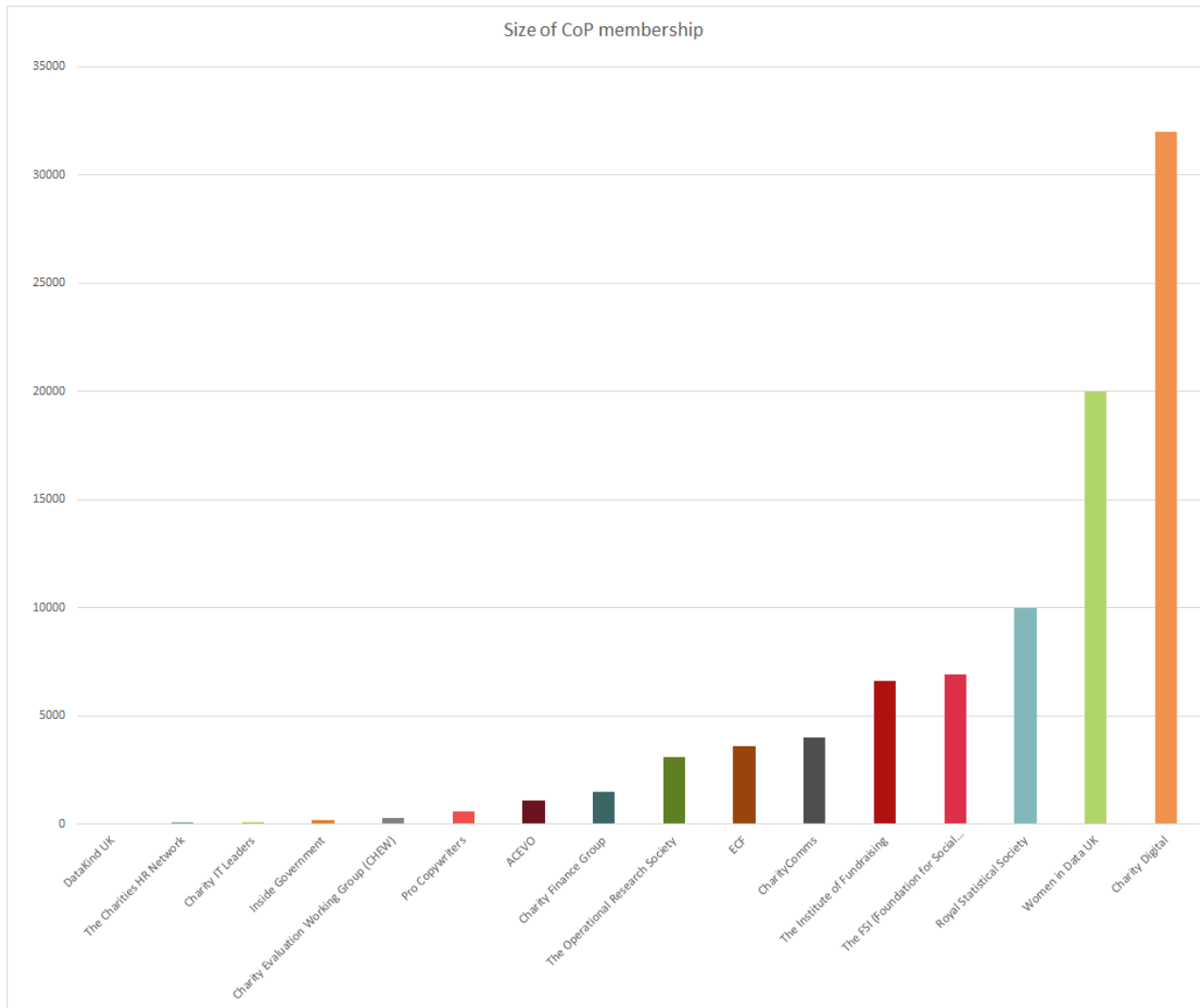
A CoP can be set up to address virtually any topic. We looked at CoPs that had some synergy with a potential 'Data4Good' community, be it with a non-profit focus, or a data focus.

It's notable that CoPs exist in the not-for-profit sector around familiar professional roles: leadership, HR, fundraising, IT, marketing and communications. Meanwhile there are some strong and long-established CoPs that have a high focus on data but relatively little, if any, involvement/participation from the not-for-profit sector.



There are just a few CoPs that focus highly both on the not-for-profit sector and on data. They are all quite niche in their own ways, and are still relatively emergent as CoPs. DataKind UK facilitates an emerging CoP of 50+ data scientists working in the charity sector, The Responsible Data Forum is international and focuses on ethical, legal, social and privacy-related issues. The Charity Evaluation Working Group (ChEW), which has been slowly growing since 2011, is aimed at people managing research and evaluation in the charity sector.

It's difficult to analyse and compare the membership of the various CoPs, particularly, the difference between actively versus passively engaged participant in a community. The chart below represents what we were able to find from publicly available sources and via interviews with organisers of particular CoPs.



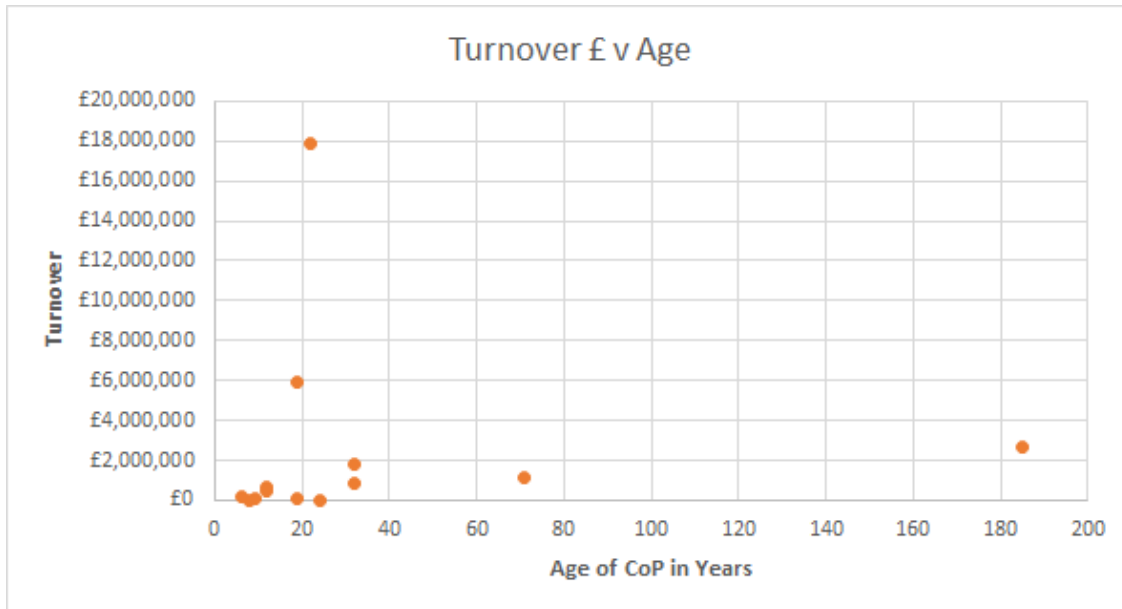
Note: we were unable to find membership figures for several of the CoPs including: The Evaluation Society, Charity Connect, Data IQ, Responsible Data Forum, Charities Safety Group.

6.2 Organisational structure/legal form

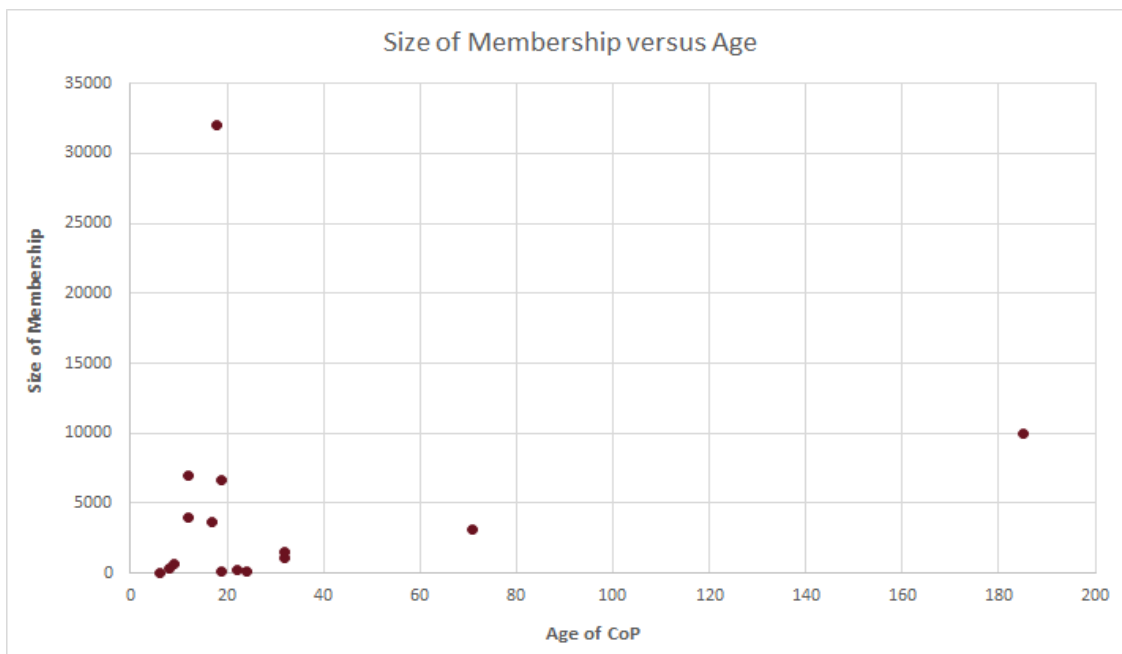
A CoP can exist with no formal organisation setup (i.e. it exists in the form of social media groups, meetups, etc. but has no formal registered company or charity), be registered as a private company, or be registered as a charity. All the CoPs we reviewed that had established significant income streams, particularly in the way of charitable or statutory grants or formal membership fees, had a charity or company registration. All the established organisations operating in the charity or non-profit sector, were set up as charities themselves.

6.3 Age/maturity

By their nature, CoPs take time to establish and grow their membership base. The maturity of the CoP doesn't appear to correlate with the size of the membership or the organisation's turnover. However, it is difficult to extract the costs of CoP support activity from other services and activities the organisation may deliver. There were also a number of gaps in the data for turnover and membership which, given the small sample size, may affect results. The age of the organisation doesn't seem to impact the membership fees commanded. A comparison of three CoPs of different ages is provided in section 5.

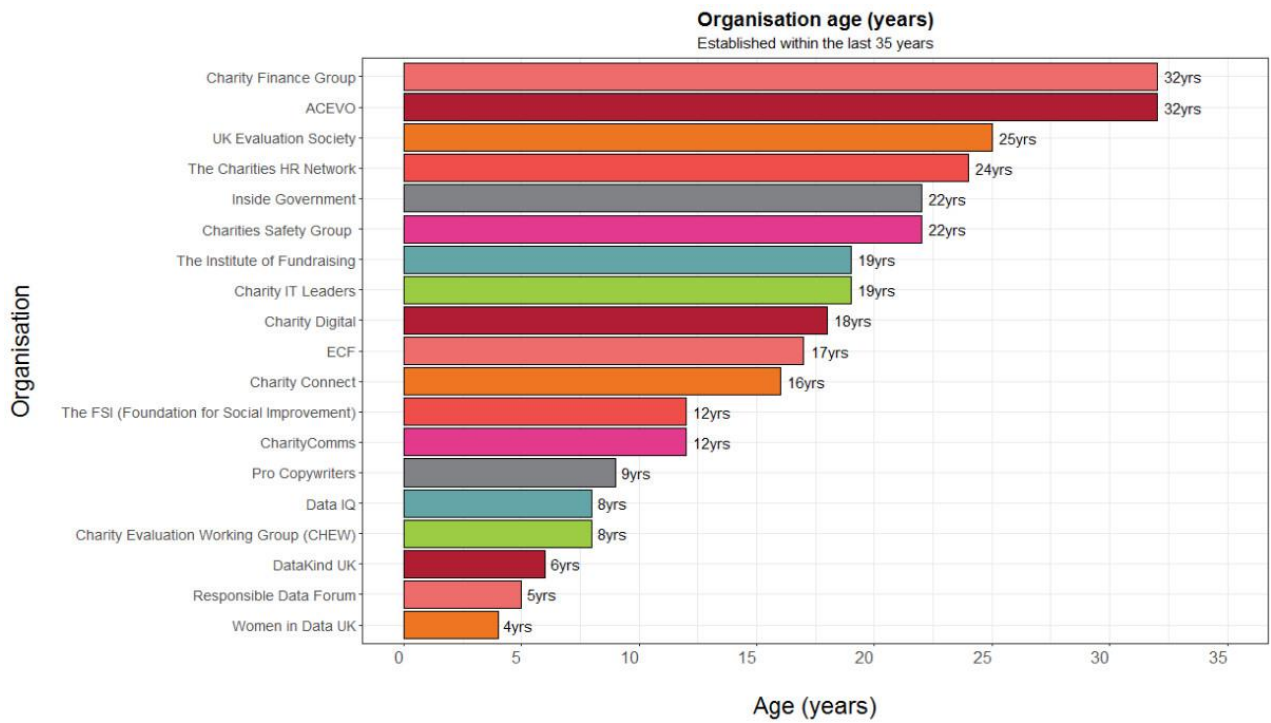
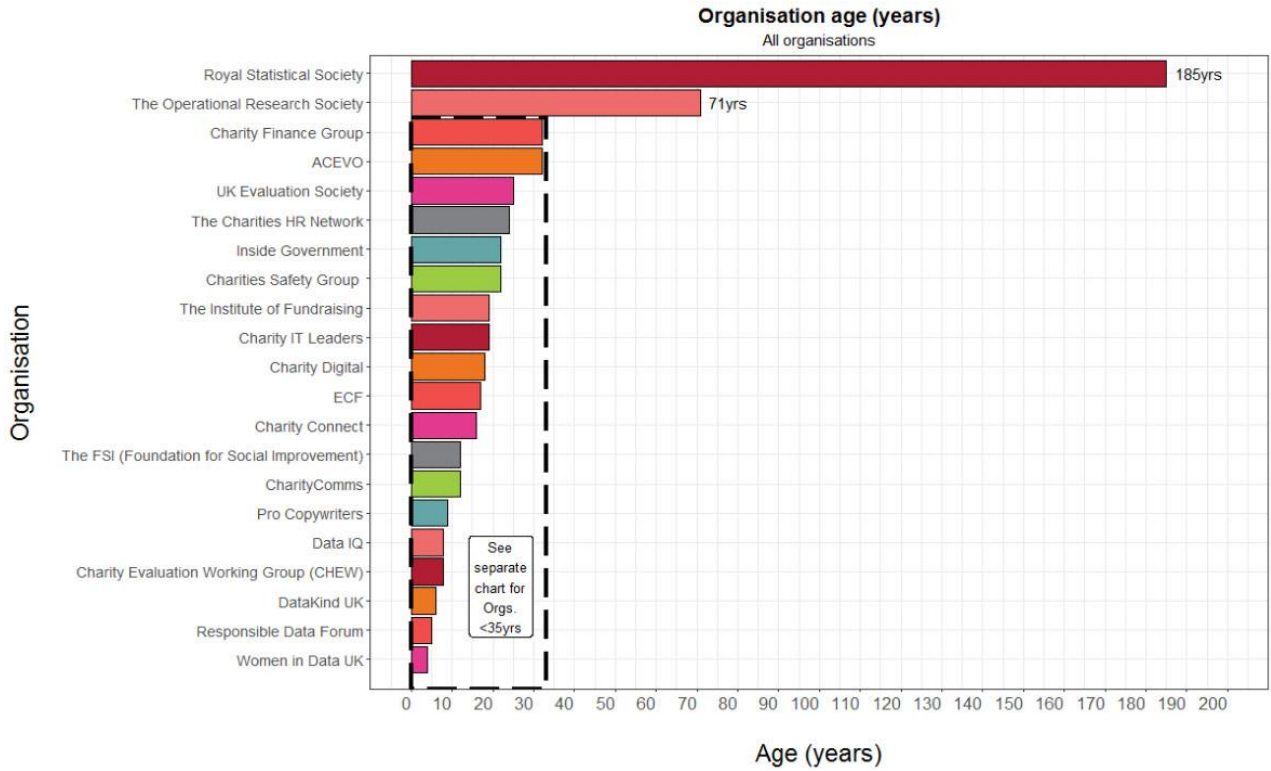


Correlation between turnover and age $r = 0.0284$. Removing outliers makes little difference to the correlation $r = 0.306$



Correlation between size of membership and age $r = 0.066$

The Royal Statistical Society and The Operational Research Society are the two most long-established CoPs we reviewed. Neither of these focus particularly on the not-for-profit sector. The bulk of the other CoPs have been established in the last 35 years



6.4 Funding

The CoPs we looked at rely on a number of funding streams. Almost all charge membership fees of some kind, though a number offer free membership to small charities or students. Membership fees are, on average, in the range of £90-£680 with a median of £60-£275.

Training is also a common source of income, as are conferences and events. Voluntary and statutory funding/grants appear to feature as an income stream for a relatively small number of the CoPs we looked at, though notably more so for those at the early stages of development. Many earn income from corporate members and sponsorship.

The turnover among those we reviewed ranged from £0 to £17.9M with a mean average of £2.4M and a median of £666k. The top 3 were Inside Government (£17.9M, Institute of Fundraising £5.9M and the Royal Statistical Society £2.6M)

6.5 Services/benefits offered

Unsurprisingly the most popular benefits and services centre around meeting and learning. Most offer regular email bulletins or updates, discounts on events and training. Annual conferences are a popular medium for networking and professional development. Typically, the higher the organisation's turnover, the broader the range of benefits and services on offer. A handful, primarily those most long established, offer printed newsletters, magazines or journals. Virtually all the CoPs have a website and online approaches to networking and learning are increasingly common, notably via social media and webinars.



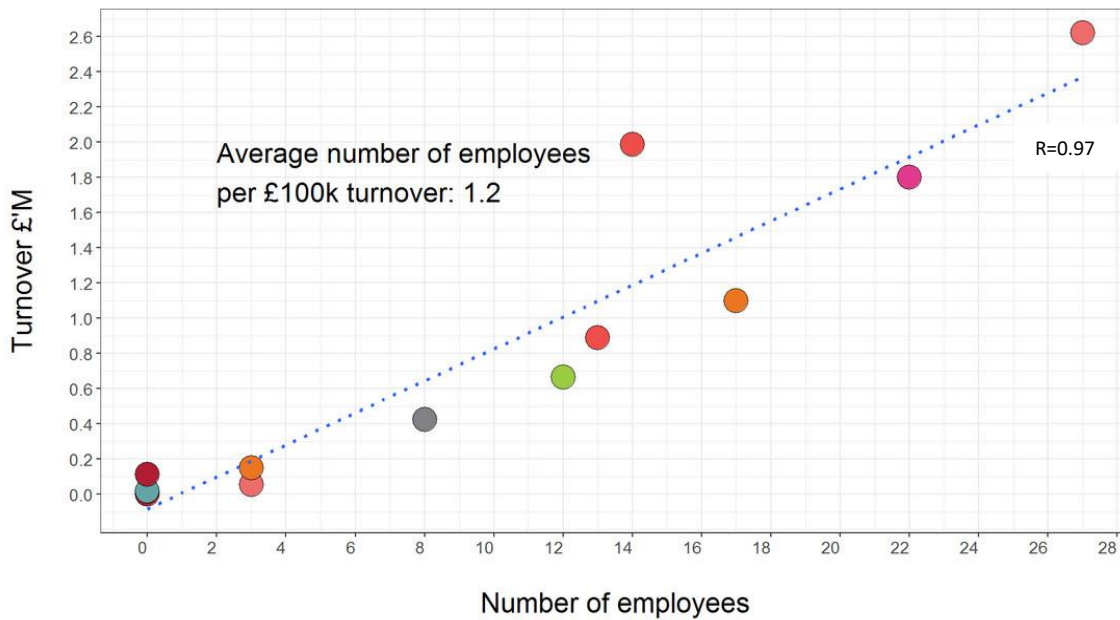
Organisation name	Benefits											
	Annual awards	Annual Conference	Directory listing	E-News letter / briefings	Free / Discounted training	Helplines	Journals	Meetings	Mentoring / Coaching	Print Newsletter	Social media groups	Webinars
ACEVO		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Charities Safety Group		✓		?	✓			✓		?	✓	
Charity Connect												✓
Charity Digital		✓		✓	✓						✓	✓
Charity Evaluation Working Group (CHEW)				✓				✓			✓	
Charity Finance Group		✓		?	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Charity IT Leaders		✓						✓	?			?
CharityComms			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓
Data IQ	✓	✓	?	?	✓			?			?	
DataKind UK				✓	✓			✓			✓	✓
ECF		✓		✓				?			✓	
Inside Government		✓										
Pro Copywriters		✓	✓						?			✓
Responsible Data Forum				✓				✓				✓
Royal Statistical Society	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓
The Charities HR Network								✓	?		✓	
The FSI (Foundation for Social Improvement)		✓		✓	✓				✓			✓
The Institute of Fundraising	?		?	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Operational Research Society	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓
UK Evaluation Society		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	?	
Women in Data UK	✓	✓		✓				✓			✓	

? = Not known

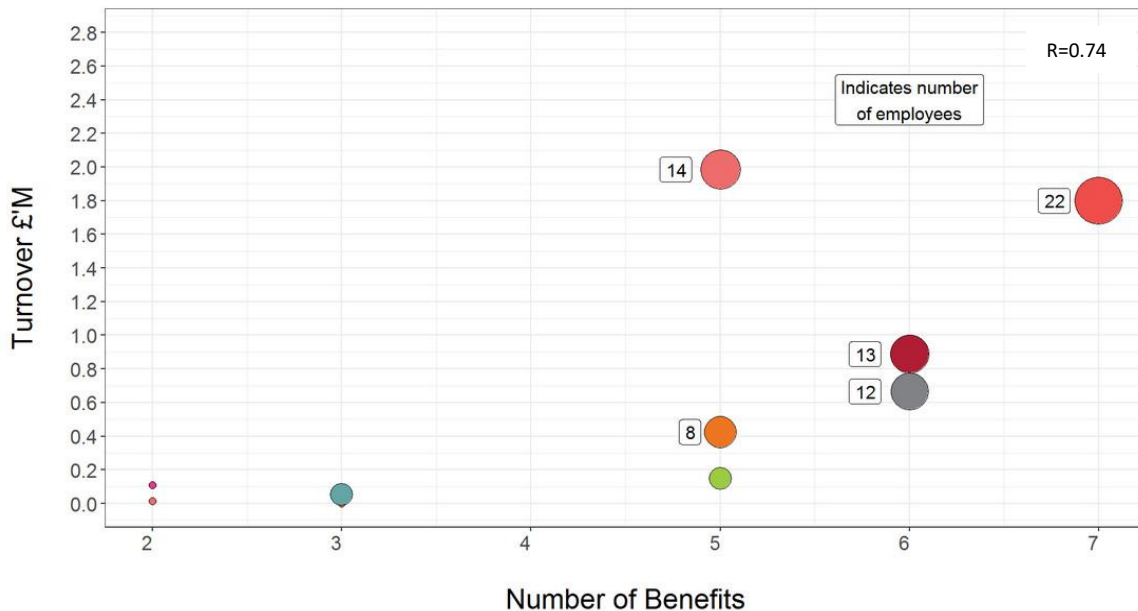
6.6 Management and Organisation

Where the CoP is set up as a formal organisation with paid employees, the number of employees didn't correlate to the number of members. There was, however, a very high correlation between number of employees and turnover and a fairly high correlation between number of employees and number of benefits offered. It is harder to find reliable data on the number of volunteers working for the organisation but, overall, volunteers appear to be crucial to the majority of those we reviewed. A number operate with no paid employees, but a reliance on a volunteer board/steering group, as well as self-organization amongst members of different regions and/or special interests.

Turnover v Number of Employees

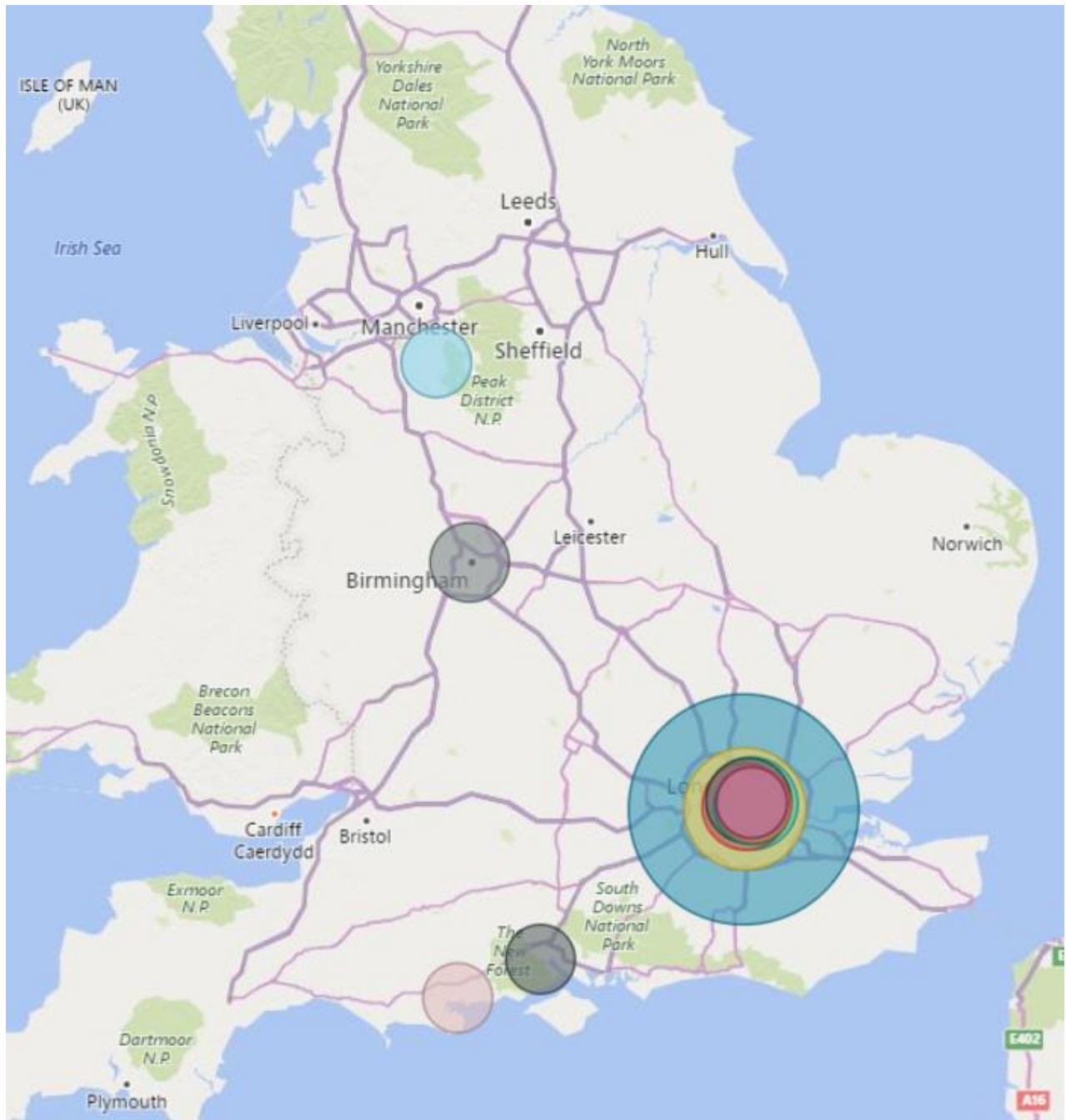


Turnover/Number of Employees v Number of Benefits provided



6.7 Geographic reach

The vast majority of national CoPs are based in London and operate most of their face-to-face meetings, events, training, and conferences in London. We were unable to assess geographic spread of their memberships though anecdotally these tend to be dominated by London based members. It is encouraging however that many have adopted digital approaches to service delivery with almost as many offering e-newsletters/briefings as face to face meetings, an encouraging 55% offering webinars, and 42% offering social media groups. Some are more effective at ensuring regional and localised reach e.g. FSI and Charity Comms or mitigating against distance travelled (e.g. CFG charge lower rates for members outside London/South East).



Organisation	Location	Turnover £'m	Employees
London			
Inside Government	London	17.90	0
The Institute of Fundraising	London	5.89	49
Royal Statistical Society	London	2.62	27
Charity Digital	London	1.99	14
Charity Finance Group	London	1.80	22
ACEVO	London	0.89	13
CharityComms	London	0.67	12
The FSI (Foundation for Social Improvement)	London	0.42	8
DataKind UK	London	0.15	3
Charities Safety Group	London	0.00	0
Data IQ	London	0.00	0
ECF	London	0.00	0
Other			
Women in Data UK	Basingstoke	0.00	3
The Operational Research Society	Birmingham	1.10	17
Charity IT Leaders	Cheshire	0.11	0
UK Evaluation Society	Hertfordshire	0.00	0
Charity Connect	Middlesex	0.00	1
Pro Copywriters	Poole	0.05	3
The Charities HR Network	Southampton	0.02	0

7. Conclusions

This exploration of Communities of Practice relating to data and the not-for-profit sector shows a fairly barren landscape. Some small, emergent CoPs do exist for the charity sector though are somewhat niche and predominantly London-focused. We found nothing relating to data and the social enterprise sector. Meanwhile there are large and well-established highly data-focused CoPs primarily serving the private and public sectors with little significant engagement with the not-for-profit sector.

In summary, there's lots for data professionals outside the not-for-profit sector and there's lots for charity professionals outside the field of data. Perhaps this is to be expected given data analytics and data science are fairly new professions in the not-for-profit sector (compared to more established professions like finance, fundraising, marketing and communications).

A rough estimate of an average (median) CoP would have a membership of 2300 members, 3 employees supported by a governance/trustee board of volunteers, and a turnover of £666k though realistically you could get something up and running for perhaps a third of this cost. It would be likely to have a website and social media networks, organise meetings and events, have an online newsletter, run an annual conference, and offer training (including webinars). To get something like this going, it would most likely need to be registered as a not-for-profit (most likely a charity) to gain support and trust from the sector and require some grant support in the initial 3-5 years until it could be self-sustaining through other income sources.

This research raises some interesting questions about the creation of a potential Data4Good Community of Practice:

- Is there demand for a Data4Good CoP?
- Where and how do those working in data in the not for profit sector currently build their professional knowledge, skills and learning? What's the overlap between this and the CoPs in this research (in relation to data and the not-for-profit sector)?
- Is the Data4Good CoP identity strong enough yet and the size of the community large enough? Currently our Data4Good mailing list is in the region of 800-900 members? Are data roles valued and established enough for leaders to invest in these peoples' professional development?
- Is there sufficient energy, resource and commitment among the Data4Good Partnership to lead and/or initiate the development of a national Community of Practice?
- Given the importance of data across a range of professional roles should the Data4Good partnership work through a range of existing CoPs in different professions to embed/build data skills more broadly?
- What alternative options are available if the establishment of a new 'Data4Good' organisation was not the best solution at this time?
- How can the Data4Good Partnership work collaboratively to support/respond to the needs of the community in a sustainable way?
- What about people with data responsibilities in small organisations. How would such a community embrace and develop their professional skills given the low likelihood of dedicated professionals but enormous scale of micro, small and medium sized organisations with low resource bases? <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/>

8. Recommendations

- The questions in the previous section inform discussions among the Data4Good Partnership on their strategy for building the data capabilities in the not-for-profit sector.
- Revisit the first step in starting a Community of Practice (at the beginning of this report) i.e. have a series of conversations with potential members.
- Identify what issues and challenges they are facing.
- Find out if they interact with others facing similar issues and challenges (including via any of the existing CoPs identified in this research)
- Ask whether they think it would help to make such interactions more sustained and systematic.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Mini descriptions of some key CoPs

ACEVO www.acevo.org.uk

The ACEVO provides networking and support for charity leaders (CEOs) in the UK. It was set up around 1989 and now has over 1,100 members. Member benefits are focused on networking and support for senior charity leaders, including CEO forums, special interest groups, mentoring and free confidential helplines. Full membership costs depend on the charity's income, from £219-815/year. Associate memberships are also available for non-CEO senior management team leaders.

Charities Safety Group <https://www.csg.org.uk/>

CSG was established in early 1997 by a group of individuals who came together to provide a self-help and support network for people with health and safety responsibilities, but who are not necessarily health and safety specialists. They offer regular opportunities to network with people from similar organisations facing similar concerns, including quarterly members' meetings and occasional workshops. They also lobby government and publish relevant information sheets. CSG is controlled by a Management Committee made up from annually elected individuals from the membership who have the support of their organisations to commit time, energy and resources to developing and maintaining this initiative. Membership costs £35/year. They also receive income from an annual conference - charged at £45 (members) or £55 (non-members). They appear not to have any formal registrations as a charity or company.

Charity Connect <https://www.charityconnect.co.uk/>

Networking and knowledge sharing on different charity topics via Online forum/message board for charity sector workers. Charity Connect is the Trading name of Jobladder Limited who also run the recruitment site Charity Job. Legally registered as a Ltd Company it was set up in 2003. Membership is free.

Charity Digital <https://www.charitydigitalnews.co.uk/>

Connects the charity sector with technology partners, offers product discounts and services, advice, and training on how the right technology can further charity causes. Run by Tech Trust, Charity Digital is the online forum/website/network they've established for sharing news and opportunities including training and webinars and recently their first national conference. They have a membership of 32,000 (or 55,000 across all Tech Trust services). The organisation was established in 2001 and is currently realigning its brand and strategy to strengthen the digital capability of the charity sector. Turnover approx. £1.8M with 14 staff.

Charity Evaluation Working Group (ChEW)

A community of practice with around 300 members, providing peer support to evaluation and research managers in the third sector. The group was established in 2011 by Donna Buxton for people who are working alone within small charities and wish to share knowledge, skills and learning. The group communicates via a LinkedIn group, and runs around four events per year where speakers/group members present on different topics and share good practice. Membership is free for organisations with a turnover of under £3m, or £80/annum. They have recently received a grant from the Big Lottery Fund to help develop the group further which will see them employ a part time member of staff, set up a website and register with the Charity Commission as a 'small unincorporated charity'.

Charity Finance Group www.cfg.org.uk

The Charity Finance Group is a membership organisation for people in finance roles in the charity sector. They were established in 1987 and their focus is on networking, training and development. They now have around 1,500 members who have access to a full programme of training courses as well as special interest group and regional members' meetings. They offer individual and corporate memberships. Charity memberships are between £70-1400/year depending both on size of the organisation and location (London & South East organisations charged more). Corporate memberships range from £350-1800/year depending on the size of the company.

Charity IT Leaders www.charityitleaders.org.uk

Charity IT leaders facilitate professional networking, knowledge sharing and support the development of the current and future generations of charity IT Leaders. Membership is only open to organisations with an annual turnover of at least £10m OR an annual IT expenditure of at least £1m*. They have c.100 members who pay £500/year to access an annual conference, special interest groups and benchmarking tools. Their two main sources of income are membership fees, and conference sponsorship income. According to charity commission returns, their income has been falling steadily over the past five years, from £150k in 2014, to £111k in 2018.

CharityComms www.charitycomms.org.uk

CharityComms is the membership network for around 4000 communications and PR professionals working in UK charities. They offer membership for both organisations and individuals in the charity sector, as well as corporate membership for suppliers to the charity sector. Services and benefits include: training, events and networking for comms professionals working with charities. See detailed case study page 10 for further information.

Data IQ www.dataiq.co.uk

Connects, educates and supports data professionals. Ltd company set up in 2011. Primarily serves data professionals in the private sector. Offers many different kinds of data-related events and training, annual awards. Funded by corporate sponsors and sales from training and events and (presumably) consultancy services.

DataKind UK www.datakind.org.uk

A UK charity and chapter of an international network. Runs a peer community of over 50 data scientists working in charities called the 'Social Data Society' providing peer support and training for professionals at different stages of data science development. They meet every 6 weeks for 1.5 hours with around 20 attendees. Meetings include presentations on a range of data science topics, projects people are doing in their workplace, sharing problems and solutions, exploration of topics they'd like to learn about, and other training and events happening around the country. Examples of sessions include: Becoming a leader in your organisation, forecasting, how to use Docker (a tech tool). It's London-based but they also offer remote dial-in to meetings for other participants around the country. The society started around January 2018. More broadly DataKind UK offers pro-bono support to charities via their community of 1800 data scientist volunteers from private/public sectors. In 2017/18 their turnover was £150,000 with income generated from the corporate sector, donations, grants and income generating activities.

E Campaigning Forum fairsay.com/networks/ecampaigning-forum

The eCampaigning Forum (ECF) community is network of practitioners using digital media for campaigning (advocacy). It was set up, as part of fairsay.com in 2002 by Duane Raymond, former Oxfam e-campaigner. FairSay ultimately exists to help everyone have a fair say in shaping their world and provides services to campaigns including advice, connection, training, workshops, events and improving practice. People primarily get involved via the mailing list of 3500 practitioners. Note: much of the information on the website is now quite out of date though the social media channels remain fairly active.

Inside Government voluntarydataconference.co.uk
www.insidegovernment.co.uk

Public Policy Events Organisers. A division of GovNet Communications. Primarily aimed at government and public sector audiences including education through their conference programme and includes a range of events focused on homelessness, wellbeing, domestic violence, and loneliness, which are cross-sector. They also organise events around finance, marketing and comms, and internet safety. Since 2017 they have been running an annual voluntary data conference in October. The company operates on a profit-making basis from ticket sales and sponsorship (£1.2M profit in 2017). They don't really meet the criteria of a CoP though they are about bringing professionals together for learning.

Institute of Fundraising www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk

Professional membership body for UK fundraising with approx. 6,600 members. Support fundraisers through leadership and representation; best practice and compliance; education and networking; champion and promote fundraising as a career choice. Support fundraisers by providing resources, skills development, and qualifications. They have a busy calendar of training, events and conferences (including webinars) around the country including many relating to data protection and legal compliance. A charity and limited company, set up in 2000, with a turnover of £5.8M, 49 employees and 500 volunteers.

Pro Copywriters <https://www.procopywriters.co.uk/>

They bring copywriters together in a friendly community, to give each other advice and support. Offer learning and development for copywriters through Copywriting Conference and monthly webinars. Build the reputation of copywriting as a profession, and promote the work they do. Help copywriters find high-quality clients. Promote professional standards in the copywriting industry. Champion fair and realistic pricing for copywriting services. Has a membership of 600. Offers directory listings, job opportunities, training, webinars, blogs and social media networks. Set up in 2010 as a limited company. Turnover approx. £55,000.

Responsible Data Forum <https://responsibledata.io/>

The Responsible Data community is a place for those who use data in social change and advocacy to develop practical approaches to addressing the ethical, legal, social and privacy-related challenges they face. It was originally convened in 2014 by the Engine Room with eight international partners including Amnesty International and Oxfam. The Engine Room maintain the website and mailing list whilst other partners lead on organising calls, events, and resource development. Membership currently appears to be free.

The Charities HR Network <https://www.chrn.org.uk>

The Charities HR Network, a registered charity in its own right, was set up over 20 years ago, to promote improved standards of HR services within national organisations in the voluntary, charitable and not for profit sector. They meet six times a year in Central London, have an members-only LinkedIn group and publish an annual employment law update. They have around 70 members who pay from £124-366/year membership fees. The organisation is managed by a Steering Group comprising six members, and, according to the Charity Commission, report that their income has been rising slowly but steadily over the past 5 years, from c.£11k in 2014 to £16k in 2018.

The FSI (Foundation for Social Improvement) www.thefsi.org

The FSI provide resources and training for small charities. They were set up in 2007 by their founder, Emma Harrison CBE. They now have over 6,900 members, who mainly benefit from access to heavily subsidised training and development. They run both face-to-face and online courses, mainly focused on fundraising. Free membership is offered to small charities under £1m turnover, £225 for those with a turnover of £1M to £1.5M and £275 for those with a turnover up to £5M. They offer their services at such a low cost by developing multiple income streams, with funding from grants and partnerships as well as income from membership, training, qualifications, and conferences.

The Operational Research Society www.theorsociety.com/

The OR Society is a professional body for operational researchers and analysts. It was established in 1948 as the OR 'club'. It now has around 1,300 members in 53 countries. Member benefits are well-established, with journals, monthly updates, an annual conference and regular meetings throughout the year. Normal full membership costs £81/year (concessions and discounts are available including free membership for students).

The Royal Statistical Society www.rss.org.uk

The RSS promotes the importance of statistics and data - and is a professional body for all statisticians and data analysts. It was started in 1834 as an offshoot of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BA). It currently has over 10,000 members who benefit from a well-established range of benefits including journals, networking and training events, conferences and awards. Members pay between £140-£186 yearly (concessions and discounts are available, including free membership for students and teachers).

The UK Evaluation Society www.evaluation.org.uk

The UK Evaluation Society exists to promote and improve the theory, practice, understanding and utilisation of evaluation and its contribution to public knowledge. Membership currently includes evaluation professionals, practitioners and evaluation commissioners from national and local government, the research community, independent consultancies and the voluntary sector, representing a range of inquiry fields including social services, economic development, education, science and technology, health care management and policy. It was set up in 1994. We were unable to find any information about the organisation's legal status or institutional home though it's run by a committee of professionals drawn from different institutions, with a strong membership representation from academic institutions and some regional networks also.

Women in Data <https://womenindata.co.uk/>

Aimed at Women Data Analysts and Data Scientists in business sector. Founded in 2015 by two women who work at recruitment company DataTech. Mostly aimed at women working in data in major corporate sector/national govt departments. Over 1000 attendees at their 2018 conference, mostly news and networking via social media and an emphasis on promoting women in data in the news. Difficult to fully understand its legal structure though it states it's a not-for-profit. Appears to be a sub-branch within the recruitment company Datatech Analytics <https://www.datatech.org.uk/>

Appendix 2: Other relevant organisations

Data for Good Exchange www.bloomberg.com/company/d4gx/

Bloomberg advocacy for using data science and human capital to solve problems at the core of society. US Based international.

Data for Good dataforgood.ca

Canadian national not for profit organization, that help other not for profit, and non-governmental, organizations harness the power of their data to make more informed and better decisions in their quest to make their communities flourish.

Data Bytes

A space for those interested in Data4Good in London to network, collaborate and share updates on projects, success stories and challenges of working with Civil Society and data. Run by Civil Society Data at the GLA.

Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data www.data4sdgs.org

Global network of 300 partners bringing together governments, the private sector, and civil society organisations dedicated to using the data revolution to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. They take action, galvanize political commitment, build trust, and spur innovation.

InTrac Monitoring Evaluation and Learning www.intrac.org/what-we-do/monitoring-evaluation-learning/

Promotes and supports approaches to M&E – including planning, monitoring, evaluation, impact assessment and learning. They support organisations to develop practical, efficient M&E systems, approaches and tools; build skills and confidence of practitioners to use, adapt and improve M&E themselves; share knowledge and experience via publications, conferences and webinars and debates.

London Data Store data.london.gov.uk

Created by the Greater London Authority (GLA) as a first step towards freeing London's data and making it free and accessible

London Plus londonplus.org

Rebranded from Greater London Volunteering (GLV), London's civil society charity, in 2018. Emphasis on taking a bold approach to turn data into insight, empowering civil society organisations through better connections and ensuring that their collective voice influences positive change. Many resources and information sharing relating to data.

Open Data Camp UK www.odcamp.uk

Run by an informal organising committee of volunteers, Open Data Camp UK run unconferencing events at locations around the UK. The events run over a weekend and are attended by around 100 people. They are supported by local organising teams who help to arrange the event. The events are free to attend and open to anyone. They are funded by sponsorship from public and private sector funders.

Open Data Institute (ODI) theodi.org

International organisation with over 2000 members across a global network. Aim to encourage innovative solutions with data. HQ in London with regional ODI Nodes are run as franchises. Hosted by existing (for-profit or non-profit) organisations. There are nine regional UK ODI Nodes: ODI Aberdeen; ODI Belfast; ODI Birmingham; ODI Bristol; ODI Cardiff; ODI Cornwall; ODI Devon; ODI Hampshire; ODI Leeds.

Examples:

ODI Cardiff cardiff.theodi.org

Run by Satori Lab with a mission to connect, equip and inspire people across Wales to innovate with data: understanding who wants data, who has it, and supporting connections. Fairly loose cross-sector network (100-200 members), they run co-working days, a mailing list and a Slack team.

ODI Leeds odileeds.org

A pioneer node of the ODI delivering projects and events. Independent not-for-profit organisation funded by sponsors from local authorities, government, commercial, and academia, who all believe in the power of open data to drive social, economic, and environmental change.

ODI Birmingham birmingham.theodi.org

Led by Innovation Birmingham and supported by commercial, public and third sector bodies, the Node aims to bring together all of Birmingham's open data and expertise under one roof to better facilitate the use of open data for public benefit. It provides training and coaching around data.

Open Data Hackathons www.meetup.com/London-Open-Data-Hackathons/

Group of data enthusiasts who love exploring data and improving their analysis skills. Set up because they felt too many mid-week data community events were focused on presentations rather than actual hands-on analysis. Currently over 600 members – getting people to socialise, chat and actually achieve something within a short time. Run events on specific themes e.g. health data.

Pilotlight - Programme of coaching and strategic support for charity leaders. www.pilotlight.org.uk

School of Data schoolofdata.org

Global network of 13 organisations and 100+ individual members committed to advancing data literacy in civil society organizations (CSOs). Set up in 2014 they work in over 20 countries delivering training, workshops, fellowship programme, community events, mentoring and sharing news and good practice.

Sheffield Data for Good www.meetup.com/Sheffield-Data-for-Good/

Bringing together the data and social expertise in Sheffield to help solve the city's social problems. A community with over 500 members meeting up to focus on issues e.g. homelessness, social isolation.

Tech4Good Southwest www.meetup.com/Tech4Good-SouthWest/

Bristol and Bath based network of 780+ members running a free quarterly event for people who are interested in using digital technologies (web, mobile, data) for social good in the Southwest. Supports people who work or volunteer at a charity, community group or non-profit organization, are a programmer, a data geek, curious about tech, an individual with a great idea, or a social changemaker.

The Data Lab, Scotland www.thedatalab.com/

Organisation aimed at revolutionising Scottish industry in how it develops and applies cutting-edge analytics and data science. Exists to capture new market opportunities, boost productivity and connect experts. Predominantly brings together data professionals from private and public sector.

West Midlands Open Data Forum www.wmodf.org.uk

A regional independent network set up around 2010, made up of a core group of around 16 volunteer members who form a steering group and meet bi-monthly. Promotes the release, re-use and integration of open data to benefit communities, businesses and public services in the West Midlands area. They run an annual event around open data, attended by about 30 people.

AND THERE ARE PROBABLY MANY MANY MORE!