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Managing in a New Way

How one team is using Scoop to get work done and maintain a sense of community across time zones



Online collaboration can help managers to share knowledge, build trust, and have the same candid "water cooler conversations" that take place in a typical office setting with their decentralized team members.

May 15, 2012—Many Bank teams work across multiple locations and time zones, which can prove challenging for managers who want to share knowledge, build a sense of trust, and have the same candid "water cooler conversations" that take place in a typical office setting with their team members.

Joel Hellman, director of the Global Center on Conflict Security and Development, OPCS, decided to create a virtual community—or a virtual water cooler space—that doesn't exist over email to increase the quality and frequency of conversations among his team. He turned to [Scoop](#), a social business collaboration platform emerging from the Bank's [Knowledge Strategy](#), as his primary managerial tool.

"I like Scoop because it is a forum where we can keep each other up to date about what we are doing and get feedback in one place," he said. "All of this would normally get lost in our flood of emails."

Joel previously used Scoop when he was sector manager of the South Asia Governance and Public Sector unit. As he encouraged staff to

narrate their work, he discovered that their posts created an intellectual exchange that improved the dynamic in his team.

Turning conversations into action

After transitioning to the Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries Group in OPCS, Joel had to tackle a new work program with staff that were geographically dispersed across Washington, New York, and Nairobi. For new team members like Reidun Otteroy, senior operations officer, Scoop provided a platform to introduce herself virtually to the team, find out who was working on what, and relate her work to the team's broader priorities: "It's a wonderful tool for sharing information and having discussions—I log on first thing in the morning to find out what's happening outside of my inbox."

The team also uses Scoop to get their core work done. One example is setting up a process for tracking and discussing country support requests for the Global Center for Conflict, Security, and Development.

"It's useful when Joel posts these country requests on Scoop, because it helps the entire team know what's going on and gives us a space to strategize our approach and organize ourselves, essentially turning our conversations into action," said Spyridon Demetriou, senior operations officer.

The team is also making a big investment in the [Hive Knowledge Platform on Fragility, Conflict, and Violence](#). "For the Hive to work, it will require a committed corps of users who get into the habit of posting, sharing, and commenting," Joel said. "At the beginning, we will need to be the backbone of that corps. Using Scoop within our team starts to build up the habits that we will need to lead the Hive."

A new way of communicating

Joel's staff attest he's much easier to reach on Scoop than email, and he expects them to get into the habit of checking into Scoop once a day. There, they can do three things: post about their work, comment on others' work, and review the site to keep informed.

"If I was interested in one-way communication, then I might as well use email," Joel said. "But if everyone does their part to share, comment and engage, then it will be an important forum for us to maintain our sense of community across several locations."

Click [here](#) to read Joel Hellman's guilt, shame, and incentives approach to change management, or watch his [video](#) on the topic.

Click [here](#) to read Joel Hellman's practical tips for creating a virtual team space on Scoop.

Contributed by Maggie Tunning and Amanda Hale, Knowledge and Learning Unit, OPCS

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Main Points

Sharing knowledge, building a sense of trust, and having candid conversations can be a challenge for Bank teams working across locations.

One director decided to create a virtual community to address this challenge.

The team's [Scoop](#) site has helped them to facilitate the onboarding of new staff, get core work done, and maintain their sense of community across locations.

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