

The Midwife, the Chef, her Manager, and his Gardener: Communication Roles in Corporate Wikis

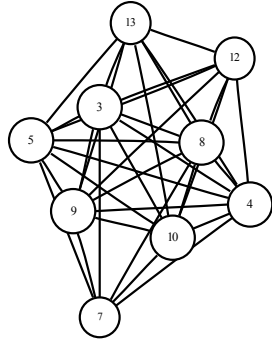
Anna Maria Theis-Berglmair & Steffen Blaschke

Figure 1 displays the coauthorship network of the wiki in bi-annual spells. Node 3 is the administrator of the wiki who brings the wiki to life, thus we label him the wiki's midwife. The wiki itself grows without any further help of a determined group of gardeners who pre-populate content and structure. Indeed, collaboration among authors immediately catches on, including executives (e., node 4). The second and third term see only little growth in coauthorship, mainly due to the fact that the organization itself is still growing. With increasing membership in the last term comes an explosion in authorship, too.

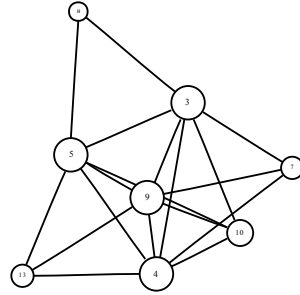
Figure 2 displays the first four quarterly spells of the wiki. Node 2 is the administrator, node 3 the project manager in charge of the wiki. We call these two individuals the midwives since they, literally, bring the wiki into life. Within the first quarter, a small group of individuals assists them in pre-populating the wiki with content and structure. Altogether, they take on the role of gardeners.

Note that the project manager remains the node with the highest degree of coauthors throughout the first year of the wiki. She enlists a number of authors who, one by one, contribute content. However, she virtually coauthors all of the pages, whereat her work is largely of structural nature. Thus, she not only remains the node with the highest degree of coauthors, but she retains her role as a midwife and gardener, structuring and restructuring the wiki over and over again.

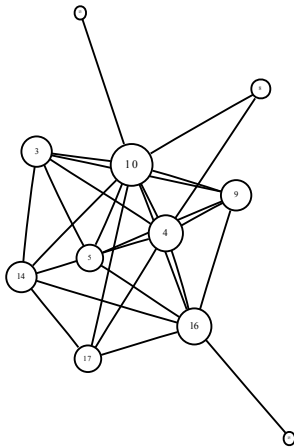
In the third quarter, the project manager assigns some of the gardening to an intern (node 50). Besides the structural work of now two main gardeners, there is little to no collaboration in terms of coauthoring content in the wiki. Unfortunately, it seems the wiki itself is a child who cannot walk without the helping hand of its (mid)wife.



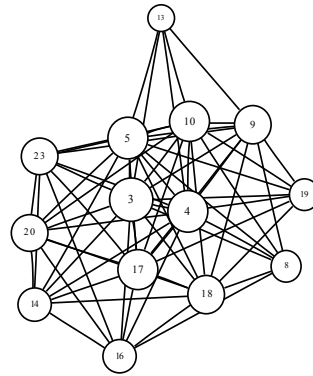
(a) 13 June – 13 December 2005



(b) 13 December 2005 – 13 June 2006

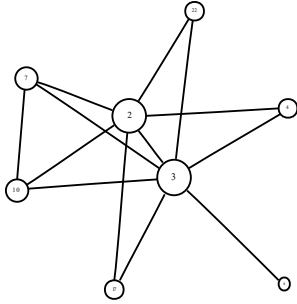


(c) 13 June – 13 December 2006

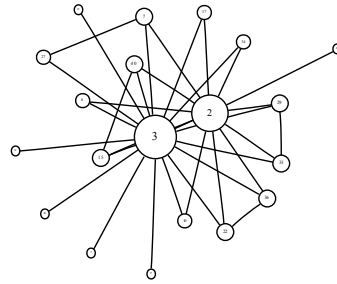


(d) 13 December 2006 – 13 June 2007

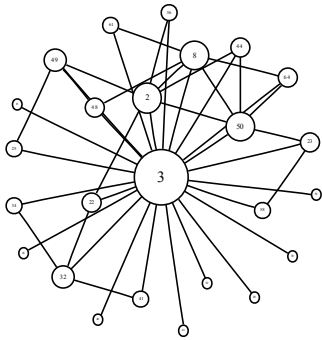
Figure 1: Case 1 Coauthor Network



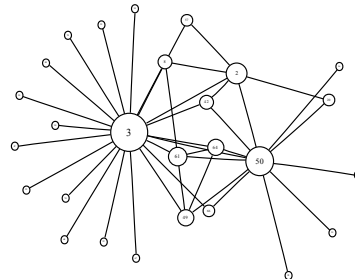
(a) 12 August – 12 November 2006



(b) 12 November 2006 – 12 February 2007



(c) 12 February – 12 May 2007



(d) 12 May 2007 – 12 August 2007

Figure 2: Case 2 Coauthor Network