Openness of W3C Working Groups

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W3C Process (in a nut shell)

- Community requirement for new work
- W3C workshop to investigate new work area
- Draft charter and AC feedback
- Call for Participation to W3C Members
- WG formed and works to "consensus" on deliverables
- WG needs plan on how to engage with community (early and often)
- Distributed and/or F2F meetings
- Public feedback occurs via WDs, Last Call WDs and Candidate Recommendation (Call for Implementations)
- W3C Recommendation(s)
- Errata and maintenance

XML Query WG experience

- XML query workshop (Dec 1998) -> draft charter
- Large initial W3C membership in WG (including **new** W3C members)
- **Member-only WG** and initially no invited experts
- XML Query WG started with a "blank piece of paper" -> Use cases
- WG spent a lot of time ensuring community awareness and liaison with other WGs (especially XSL and XML Schema WGs)
- Multiple WG/TF meetings/week, F2F meetings every 2-3 months, > 350 emails/month
- "Publish early and publish often" practice
- WG had seven separate deliverables -> Task Forces
- WG received a large number of LC comments (>1200 on one LC)
- WG required multiple Last Calls on multiple specs
- WG Candidate Recommendation based on a very large test suite
- WG took a long time to deliver W3C Recommendations (> 7 years)

WS-Policy WG experience

- Based on membership submission specs with existing interop
- WG membership included all submission authors
- WG had a publicly visible email list from day one with no invited experts
- WS-Policy WG started with contributed specs and a primer
- Less need for community awareness since specs and primer existed before WG was created
- One weekly distributed meeting and F2F meetings every 2-3 months, >125 emails/month
- "Publish early and publish often" practice
- WG had only four deliverables (two on W3C Rec track)
- WG received a small number of Last Call comments and did only one LC
- Co-chairs actively solicited feedback from within W3C and other standards WGs writing "policy assertions"
- WG expanded interop community during Candidate Rec
- WG delivered Recommendations in 15 months (Jul 2006->Sep 2007)
- WG published Primer and Guidelines for Assertion Authors (Nov 2007)

Summary

- XML Query and WS-Policy WGs did not "need" invited experts to accomplish their goals
- Early and constant community outreach is very important especially for Member-only WGs
- Starting from a concrete submission with existing support can be very helpful
- Getting issues onto the table as early as possible is very important
- "Publish early and publish often" is very important to community awareness
- Active liaison with other WGs can be strategic
- Publishing a companion Primer can be very useful to the wider community
- W3C Process works!