



Transparent Engineering:

engaging enterprise application users via social media

Stan Drozdetski

Sarah Rambacher

The MITRE Corporation

What we'll talk about

■ What we'll talk about

- Engaging users during – and after - the development process
- Preparing the team
- Using social media to your advantage
 - Concentrating on “private” communities
- Do's and don'ts – from our experience

■ What we won't talk about (much)

- Feedback in the “wild” (public communities)
- Facebook, Google+, Twitter, or any other tool specifics

The MITRE Corporation

- MITRE is a private, not-for-profit organization chartered to work in the public interest
- Founded in 1958 to provide engineering and technical services to the U.S. Air Force
- Manages Federally Funded Research and Development Centers
- Supports a broad and diverse set of sponsors within the U.S. government, as well as internationally

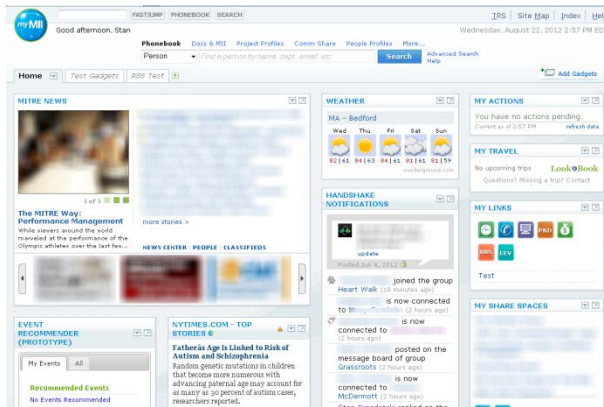
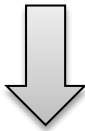


7,000 employees worldwide

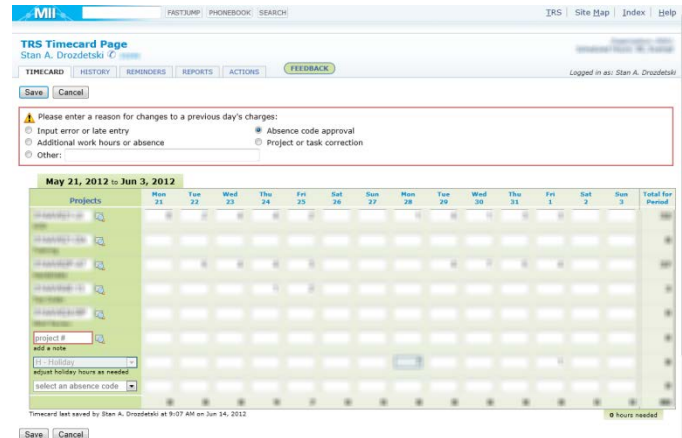
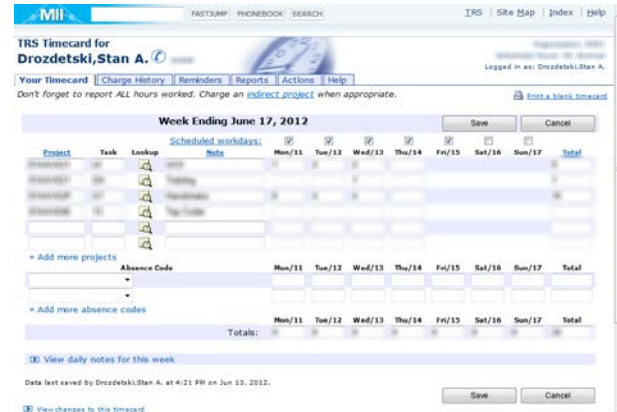


Two case studies

MyMII Intranet Portal



TRS Timecard



In the past...

For assistance, contact the [Help Desk](#)

Post feedback and suggestions to the [email list](#)

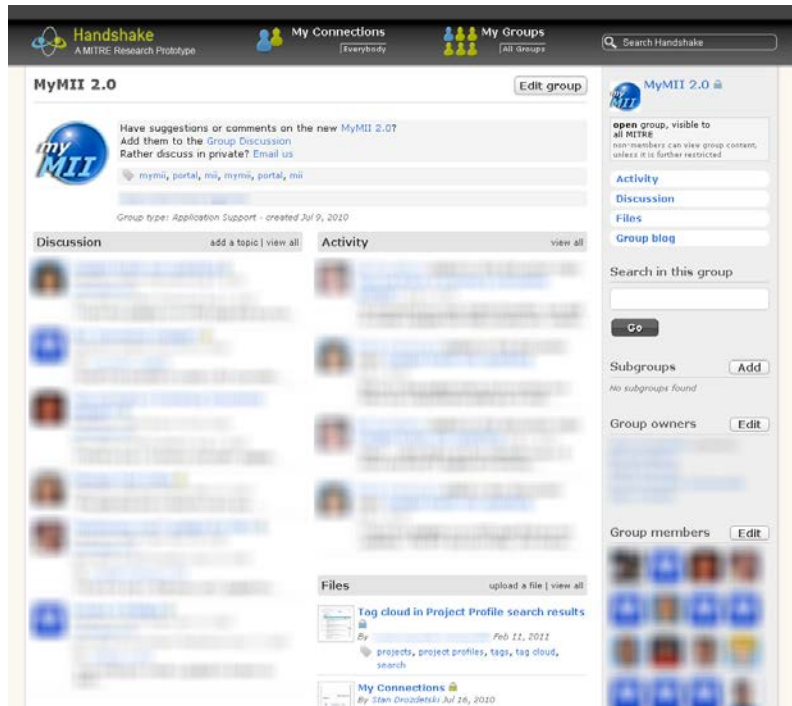
■ Conduct user research

- focus groups
- usability investigations

■ Field pilots

- Channel “problems” to tech support
- Set up an email list (or a blog) for other feedback

Now:



(screenshot from Handshake, MITRE's social collaboration platform)

■ Open forum

- Many-to-many communication
 - Participants can build upon the contributions of others
- Experts can self-identify

■ “Sticky”

- In-context conversation
- Easy to jump into ongoing discussions
- Notifications can spread virally

■ Tied to user's digital profile

Where do you start?

■ What do you want to accomplish?

- Energize/empower your customers
 - Participation can last through the entire product lifecycle
- Receive feedback earlier
 - Vetted by the community!
- Improve your product

■ Why?

- Happier users
- Better product - faster
- X “because our CIO read an article”
- X “because we just signed up for Yammer”

Do you have the right people?

■ Application Development Team

- Needs management support from the start
 - Everyone needs to buy into the “transparent engineering” concept
- Needs to be responsive
 - Target product is under active development (or support)
 - Team is capable of making decisions quickly

Do you really have the right people?

■ Community Leaders

- Able to respond quickly
 - Train at least two leaders
- Good hosts
 - Empathetic
 - Have a sense of humor
 - Can engage in a productive conversation
 - Know how to “seed” topics
- Thick skin (not easily discouraged)
- Tactful
- Qualified to represent the team

Can you build a community?

- **Does a community exist already?**
 - If not, are the users interested enough?
- **Think of the right engagement strategy**
 - Invitations? Talk to people in person?
 - Set up ground rules early
 - Think of the end goal before you start
- **Pick a tool that:**
 - Community leaders can control
 - Doesn't get in the way
- **Integrate your solution**
 - Email for group notifications (surprisingly sticky!)
 - Tie the community support tool right to the application
 - Or, use the application to talk about the application

Let's review...

- ❑ Clear purpose
- ❑ Approval from the executives
- ❑ Responsive team, capable of active decision-making
- ❑ Dedicated community leaders
- ❑ Accessible community
- ❑ Defined end goal

Example: engaging in a dialogue



Most of the portal-like sites and blogs that I read on a regular basis **format their links to open in new windows or new tabs**. The current MyMII doesn't do this. Any particular reason why?

MyMII follows the corporate philosophy of “**default to the same window, don't make the decision for the user**” (see more on that here...)

Is this thinking actually true anymore? Has anybody here tested this assumption in the last decade with our real users?



- **Explain your motivations**
 - Are you ready/willing to do so?
- **Be open**
- **Don't be surprised when people disagree with you**
- **It helps to explain who you are**

Example: chance to follow-up



Bottom line – **the app is more difficult to use and less “inviting”** than the current interface.

Is there **anything in particular** that makes it more difficult and less inviting to you?



- **Better than “fire and forget” survey responses**
- **Others may pitch in with their opinions**
- **Can track users’ opinions over time**

Example: many-to-many discussion



I gleefully added the Onomi gadgets... That works well.

However, when I added the Onomi gadget for tags, [long description of the problem]... **Sorry, very confused.**



You can get this functionality by using the “Onomi Bookmarks” gadget and [step-by-step description of the solution].

- **This is what you want**
 - Most of the time
- **Reward people for being helpful**
 - But, be careful of forming cliques
- **Sometimes, it’s OK to sit back & let the community decide**

Example: asking for opinions / help

Earlier this morning, we announced that we will be deprecating the service due to a re-classification of license by Google... **Does anyone have suggestions?**

Mapquest.com has a nice looking map interface (including live camera feeds)

Convolved solution – using the gadget 115 Page Viewer – view a traffic page from a local TV news channel like [describes an example]



■ Involve the community in solving problems

- Users will see the trade-offs
- You may will learn something new

■ The community will remind you of issues you didn't think you had

Example: users going the extra mile

I've been thinking about the sliding window construct, and I have a suggestion...

[multi-paragraph description of the proposal]



TRS Timecard Page

TIMECARD HISTORY REMINDERS REPORTS ACTIONS FEEDBACK

Save Cancel

May 21, 2012 to Jun 3, 2012

Projects	Mon 21 - 22	Tue 22	Wed 23	Thu Today	Fri 25	Sat 26 - 3	Sun 3	Total for Period
Project 1	3		1				0	4
Project 2		13	1				0	14
Project 3			6				0	6
Project 4							0	0
Project 5							8	8
Project 6							0	0
total	16	8	0	0	0	0	8	32

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Save Cancel

- **Very rewarding for the team**
 - “people actually care!”
- **The flip side of engagement**
 - Now you have to deliver

Finally, some numbers

MyMII Intranet Portal

community on Handshake

226 members, 65% contributing

84 discussions, 636 comments

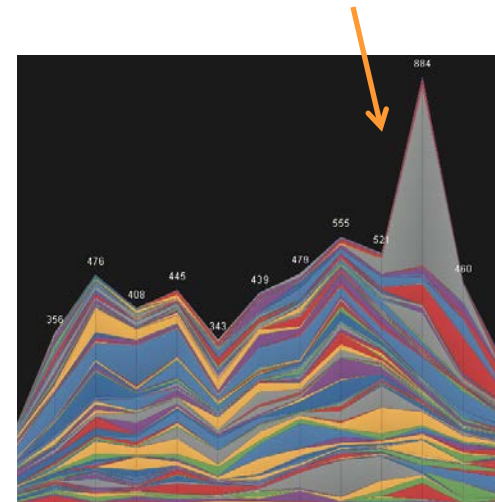
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community on Handshake

231 members, 45% contributing

128 discussions, 185 comments

biggest activity “spike”



In conclusion...

- **Are you ready to work “transparently”?**
 - If so, social media can give you the engagement you desire
- **Can you keep the community interested?**

Any questions?



Stan Drozdetski drozdetski@mitre.org

Sarah Rambacher srambach@mitre.org