

Enriching the learning experience for teachers with SSAT's digital network

Supporting teachers' professional development

Our CEO is always interested in the latest technology to support and enhance what we do at SSAT. We were looking for a platform for online collaboration, with community spaces for teachers and leaders to improve their professional development. We looked at different platforms and after a timely meeting with the Knowledge Hub team, the KHub platform seemed to tick all the boxes for us.

Our key driver was the provision of an online and collaborative space in which members of our networks could contribute to discussions about important educational topics and subjects of immediate professional interest to them. Much of this activity supports SSAT's varied programmes of professional development and enables those taking part in externally-funded initiatives to share their practice and reflect on the outcomes.

The online platform also helps to uphold the quality of our professional development programmes at a time when teachers are finding it more difficult to come out of school to attend face to face meetings. Posting and sharing resources, ideas, news and views offers an enrichment to our professional development programmes and a means for programme participants to interact between their face to face commitments.

Keeping network groups simple and relevant

We display the features that are relevant to the group, keeping the structure of the group as simple as possible so as not to overwhelm members.

I'm a heavy user of announcements in our groups; having the ability to add text, links and images in a prominent place on the group's home page means members don't have to waste time searching for what they need.

The activity stream is clear and helpful, and helps members find the latest activity. The 'what's happening' feature allows for tweet-like information and further reading – the links feature in this section is invaluable.

The SSAT Network created a 'digital network' on Knowledge Hub in 2015. With over 35 groups and 650+ members, it provides an online and collaborative space for schools who are members of SSAT where vision and strategies for building a world-class education system are shared.



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Active facilitation and learning

As someone who has been a group facilitator for a long time, the way I approach the development and facilitation of various groups is important and contextual. Facilitation isn't a done deal and I'm still learning. Some of our groups are more active than others, and the quality of some of the contributions is outstanding. It's satisfying to see group interaction, and making a group look attractive and helpful while linking to useful information to share helps.

Having a central repository for programme resources is hugely beneficial and avoids issues of their going astray in long lists of emails and/or problems with large file sizes.

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Managing members' expectations

The challenge is to use online spaces as an integral part of our activities and professional development programmes. Encouraging a change in thinking and practice will gradually allow the online space to be seen as more of an integral feature in our activities and programmes. But there is still some reluctance to get involved; facilitators need to convey the message that spending time in online communities is an enrichment exercise and time well spent.

Overall, Knowledge Hub provides a huge enhancement to what we offer and do. Online collaboration has been a very positive and natural move for us, as it should be for any leading educational organisation. SSAT firmly believes in the power of social learning and online collaboration to enrich and deepen the learning experience for teachers at any level ... and use of the Knowledge Hub platform is definitely helping us with that endeavour.

Find out more about the SSAT Network on Knowledge Hub:
<https://ssat.khub.net>