

DO Ad Hoc Query Resolution



Introduction – Ad Hoc Query Resolution

Over the past few months, we have all adapted rapidly to our new working environments. This document and workshop looks to the way we work together as a team on a day-to-day basis addressing the question of *“How can I keep my team connected and informed while working remotely?”*

We may no longer have water cooler conversations, or bump into our colleagues in the corridor, but there are virtual solutions for organising teams and answering ad hoc queries.

This document aims to help you recreate the physical space once provided by the office setting by setting up a Google Currents for your team.

How do we do Ad-Hoc Query Resolution better?

DO Ad-hoc Query Resolution comes from work done through Work Smarter Together, the USM-supported Remote Working Group, and UCD Agile.

This document aims to help you and your team resolve Ad Hoc Queries in the Distributed Office in two ways: firstly, how to identify the needs your team has that are not currently being met; and secondly, how to set up your own Google Currents community in order to meet those needs.

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Working in the “Distributed Office”: DO



The people

who we work with and the people we connect with

The ‘things’ we do

the tasks and actions that are our work

The ‘things’ in it

the practical things we require to make that work possible

The experiences

what happens through all the connecting, meeting and working with folks

The help to make it work

what we draw on from outside the office to make the work of the office possible.



The DO series of actions and workshops

DO Ad Hoc Query Resolution is part of our series of ideas, actions and workshops aimed at helping to make working in the “distributed office” easier.

DO Ad Hoc Query Resolution touches on the “things” we do in the office, the people we work with and the experiences we create through this.

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Do Ad-Hoc Query Resolution – identifying needs

What needs do I have as a team lead that are not being met?

What needs do the members of my team have that are not being met?

Based on the issues raised in the workshop, the problems surrounding Ad Hoc Query Resolution fall into the following categories:

- Keeping everyone up to speed
- Getting a sense of morale and needs
- Inducting new staff
- Knowing that a job has been done
- Reducing the number of zoom meetings
- Keeping the team connected

Your team may have other needs that are not being met currently. One way to identify the needs that your team has is to hold a team meeting. A MURAL could be used to brainstorm ideas and vote on the most pressing needs. If you're interested in running a session to this effect we can connect you with a MURAL template – just email usm@ucd.ie

❖ There's more to life than email!

When we asked workshop attendees what they wanted to learn about Ad Hoc Query Resolution, we noticed this recurring theme:

“reduce email traffic”

“find different solutions to flooding inboxes”

“interested in ways, other than email, that people keep in touch”

Using email as the sole method of keeping the team informed can be exhausting.

While it is an efficient method of getting information across relatively quickly, the issues surrounding it include the large number of emails being sent and received and the formality of email compared to other forms of communication, such as phone or face to face conversations.

Furthermore, emails do not replace the usual office conversation as they are often only two-way, unless the right colleagues have been copied. There is no chance of overhearing part of a conversation that might be of interest to you unless someone explicitly includes you.

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- **Work conversations do not happen in a vacuum**

Instead of resolving a query by asking a single person, why not ask the question to the entire “room” as would happen in the office? If you have found a good solution to a common problem, why not share the solution with everyone in your team at the same time?

Google Currents allows you to do both, whether within your own team or a much wider community.

Before setting up the community itself, it is important to identify what’s unique about your community and its needs. This will give your community a concrete focus.

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What kind of Community will meet my team's needs?

Once you have identified the needs to be met, you can decide what kind of community will suit these needs. There are two broad kinds of community on Google Currents, both of which are detailed below.

Public versus private communities

When choosing whether to make your community public or private, consider the following:

- Who is the audience? Will the content be relevant to a small or large group of people?
- What is the subject? Is it sensitive or public in nature?
- What is the scope of your topic? Is it broad or niche?

Public communities

- Are visible to anyone with a ucd.ie account. People can join or ask to join a community.
- Can't be made private later.
- Are visible to anyone in your organization. People in your domain can see the community members and posts without having to join.
- May be useful for a collaboration between many different areas in the University.
- An example of a public community is the [USM Community Hub](#).

Private communities

- Only people with a ucd.ie account who have been invited or added by a Moderator can join.
- Can't be made public later.
- Only members can see the community's posts.
- Only members and invitees can see who belongs to a private community.
- May be useful for a team to keep in contact with each other.

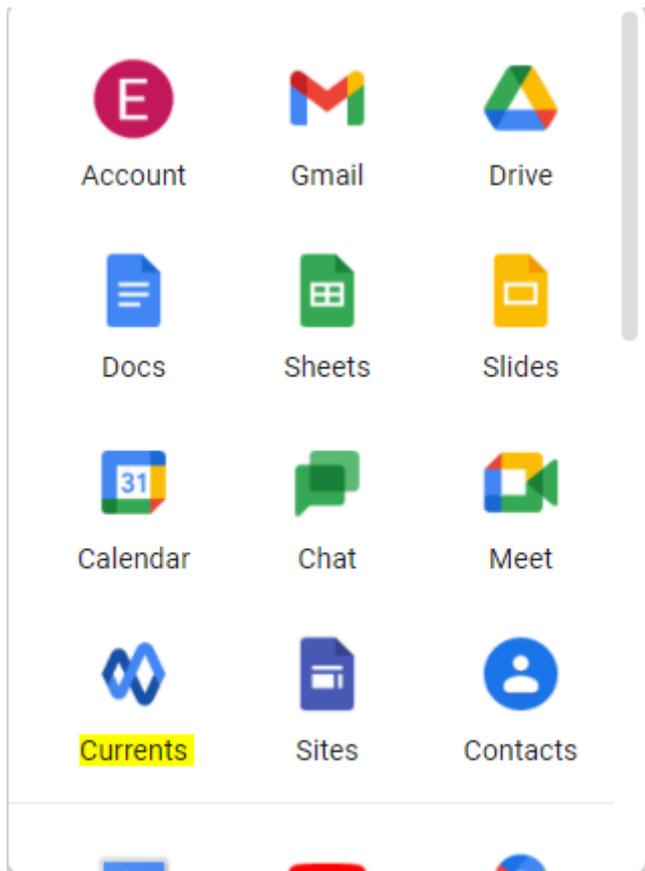
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Getting Started with Currents

Signing up for Currents

If you are unsure how to get started, the good news is that once your ucd.ie email account has been set up, you already have a Currents account ready to go. From your inbox, simply click the dots menu in the top right-hand corner beside the UCD Connect Logo and then click Currents. This will bring you to the Currents Home Page.



Staff onboarding

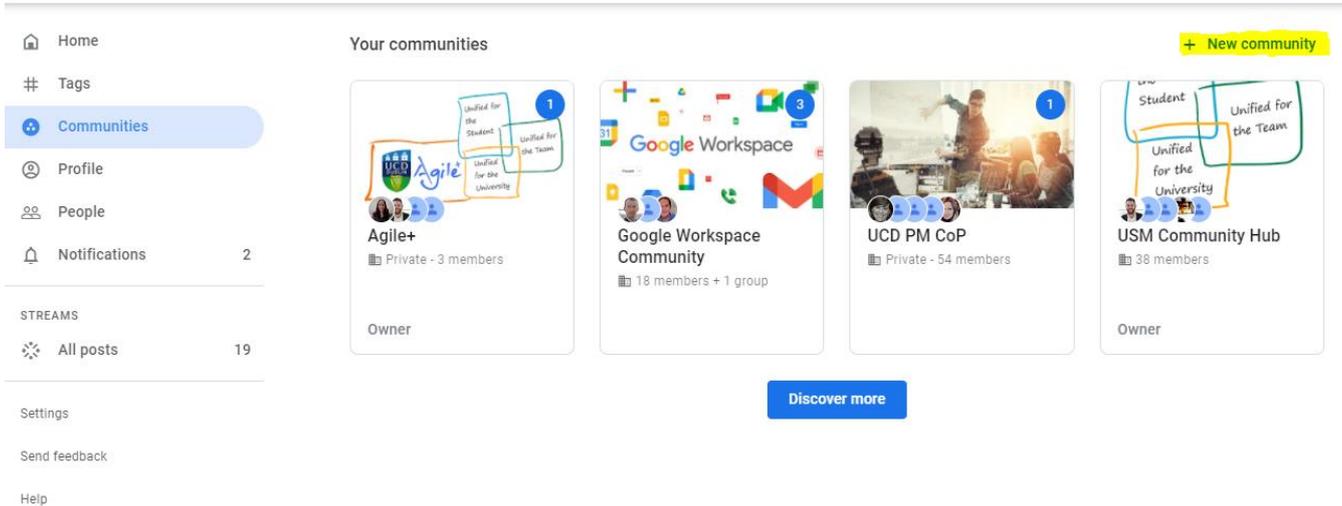
As Currents is integrated with all Google Workspace applications, this means an instant setup for new staff members. At a time when staff onboarding and integration into a new team can be difficult due to distance, roadblocks like not being able to access the right software to connect with one's team can slow down this process even further. With Currents, this roadblock is eliminated and not only are new staff members instantly plugged in to their team's communication network, but also have access to all the conversations that have happened in the past, making it easier to catch up.

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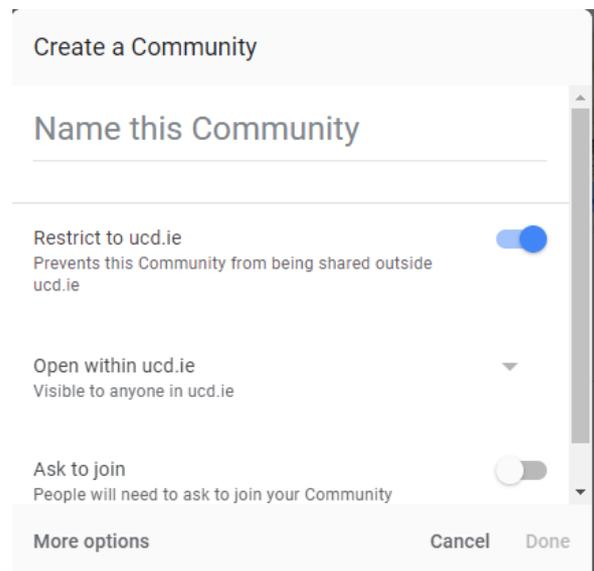
Adding a new Community

Click *Communities* on the menu on the left-hand side, then + *New Community* on the top right.



2. This menu (right) will pop up which allows you to name your community and select privacy settings.

- **Restrict to ucd.ie** means only those with ucd.ie accounts can see the Community. This is the recommended setting.
- **Open within ucd.ie** will make the community public.
- **Private in ucd.ie** will make the community private.
- Setting the Community to **Ask to join** will mean that anyone looking to join the community will have to be approved by a Moderator.



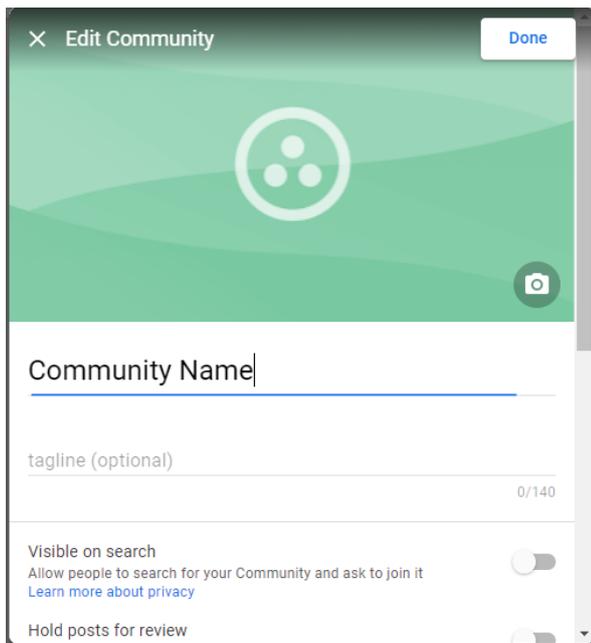
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Customizing your community

When you have identified your team's needs, you can then go on to customise the community in such a way that it reflects the team's goals and needs clearly.

You can edit a community by clicking the three dots on the menu on the left-hand side. Then click *Edit Community*. This will bring up the following menu:



Here you can do the following:

Community Description

- Add a customized cover photo that's relevant to your community.
- Describe the community's goal in a brief descriptive tagline.
- Add a description with details about the community's purpose.
- Mention what type of activity is expected and encouraged.

Category Filters

You can add filters to make it easy for community members to post content for specific groups of people. For example, you could create a project filter where team members can see all content related to a project.

Other examples of filters include:

- Announcements (these could fulfil the need to keep team members up to date)
- Questions (this could fulfil the need for team members to draw on the expertise of their colleagues where previously they would have spoken face to face in the office)
- University wide information (this could fulfil the need to reduce emails)
- Extracurricular activities (i.e. non work related posts – this could fulfil the need to keep the team connected and make new staff feel welcome)

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How does Google Currents fulfil my team's needs?

Jeremy Britton
3h ago in Extenuating Circumstances Community **Owner**

Extenuating Circumstances System Update

Hi all

An update has been made to the Extenuating Circumstances System in SISWeb/Infohub.

The status **"Awaiting Evidence"** has now been updated to **"Awaiting Evidence/Verification"**.

This works alongside a message that was previously added which states the following:

A description of "Awaiting Evidence" does not necessarily mean you have not attached evidence but that it has yet to be reviewed by Staff

Hopefully, this modification will allay student's concerns and anxieties as otherwise the upload system has been reported to be working very well.

As this change is coming at a time when the system is being heavily used, if any unexpected errors or display problems are noticed by students it is requested that they be escalated as soon as possible through the normal Infohub procedure.

This change comes as the result of ongoing work and collaboration between the Directors of College and School Offices Group and IT Services.

[#extenuatingcircumstances](#)

1

Restricted to ucd.ie - [View activity](#)

Add a comment

Filter applied - anyone looking for more information on Extenuating Circumstances can find it here

Tagged - can be easily searched for later reference. Click on the tag to see all posts relating to extenuating circumstances in one place.

Coworkers can leave comments, meaning you can avoid long email threads

Conversations can be seen by all group members so no need to copy long lists of teammates!

PINNED POSTS: You can pin a post to the top of the community to ensure that important messages are the first thing members see.

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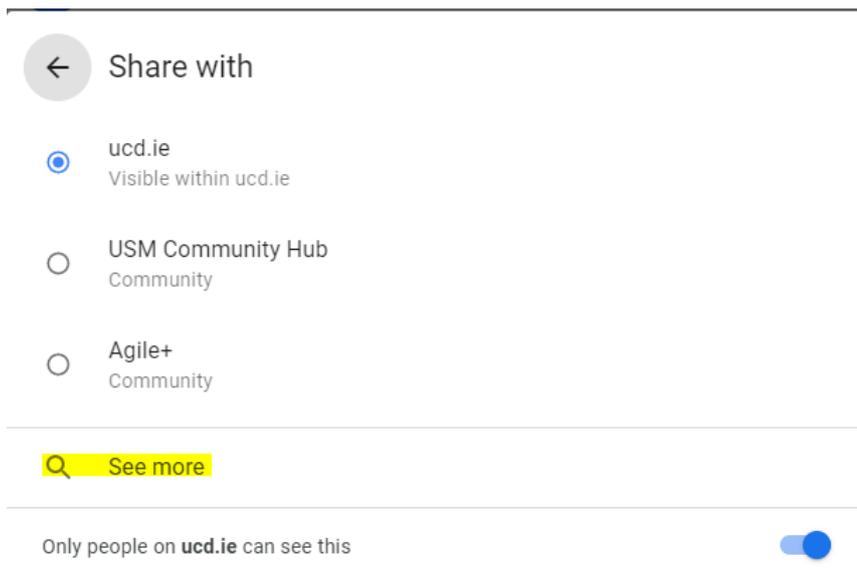
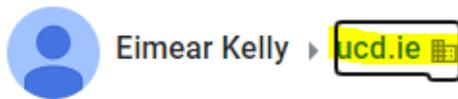


Frequently Asked Questions

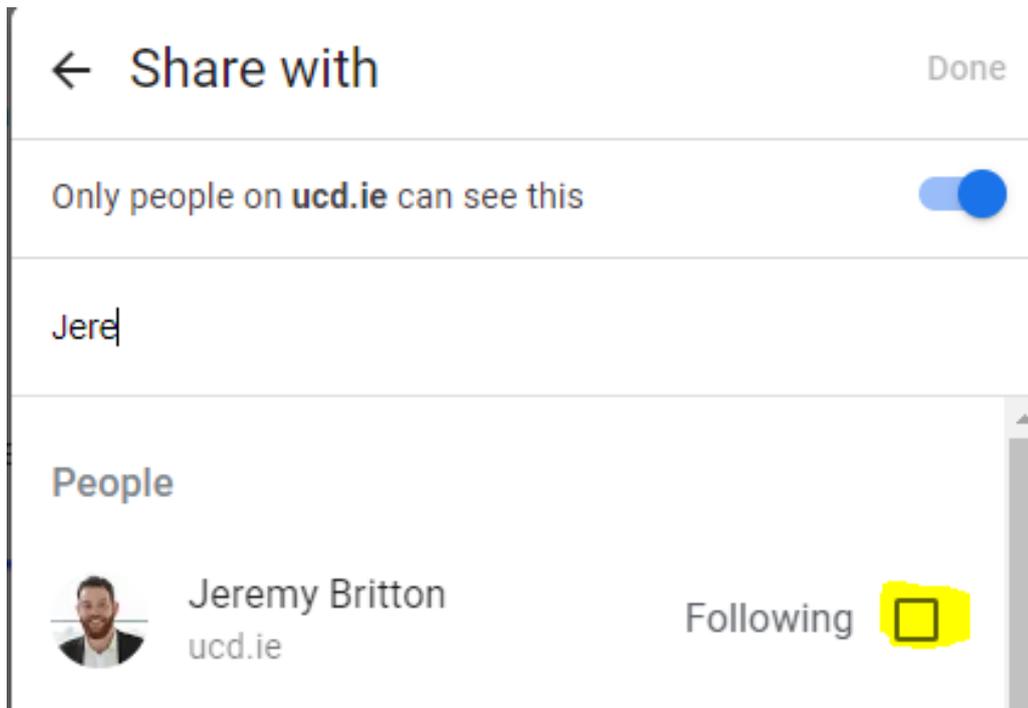
Can a post within a community be restricted to a subset of that community?

There is currently no breakout or subgroup feature in Google Currents communities, so in this case you may want to create a new private community. Alternatively, the Rooms feature in Google Chat allows you to set up a closed group to discuss and share work, and is also available for you to use through your UCD email in Gmail; find out more about Rooms in Google Chat by visiting the [UCD IT Services website](#).

However, Google Currents allows you to share a post privately to selected persons within UCD instead of to a community. When you are drafting the post, the name of your community appears in blue at the top beside your own name - click on this blue text name of the community, then change the setting to 'within UCD.ie' instead of the community. Then, when you are drafting your post, click on 'UCD.ie' in blue, search for the persons with whom you want to send this post privately and tick beside their name. After you have sent it, the post will appear in your Home feed and that of the recipients but will not be visible to anyone else in UCD or on any Google Currents community. See screenshots below for what this should look like.



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(By ticking the box next to Jeremy's name, the only person able to see this post will be Jeremy)

Can stakeholders outside UCD be given access to a UCD Google Currents community?

Yes, but in limited circumstances: only to a private Google Currents community that was initially set up to be visible outside UCD and only if that stakeholder already has access to Google Currents through their own institution or organisation. In view of this, the Rooms feature in Google Chat may be better suited to your needs; find out more about Rooms in Google Chat by visiting [the UCD IT Services website](#).

Is there any more information on getting started with Google Currents?

For more details on Google Currents and other Google Workspace collaborative tools, including how-to videos and links to Google Support user guides, visit [the UCD IT Services website](#) or the [Google Workspace Community on Google Currents](#).

How do I change my notification settings on Currents?

To toggle your notification settings, Click *Currents* in the top left-hand corner, then click *Settings* down the menu on the left-hand side. Scroll down to Notifications and click the arrows beside *Posts* and *Communities*. This will allow you to toggle which notifications about Currents you receive by email. You can receive as few or as many notifications to your inbox as you wish.

You can also check your notifications in the application itself by clicking *Currents* in the top left-hand corner and *Notifications* down the left-hand side.

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Why is Currents asking me to enter my date of birth?

The date of birth field is only to ensure that users are over 18 years of age, as Currents is a social media platform (even when used only internally). This date of birth information is only stored on the user's Google profile, and in fact the user can enter any random date so long as it's over 18 years of age - it doesn't need to be a real date of birth.

As to why some people are asked for this information and others not, it may be that some users used their UCD Google account to access another application (such as Picasa, which was a photo editing app owned by Google but which is now out of service) and therefore are being asked to update their profile so that it meets the needs of accessing Currents.