

# Science Gateways Community Institute: Developing Strategies for Sustainability of Projects via Bootcamps

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Sustainability of academic software in general and of virtual research environments (VREs) and of science gateways particularly is a major concern for many academic projects. Solicitations for funding mostly support novel developments and novel research to accelerate science but little to sustain existing computational solutions. The importance of software for science and its sustainability have been recognized in the last decade though and is reflected in the founding of the UK Software Sustainability Institute (SSI) in 2010 and in the US Science Gateways Community Institute (SGCI) in 2016 to support academic software and science gateways beyond traditional funding cycles. SGCI serves user communities and science gateway creators to support the growth and success of science gateways in multiple ways and one example is the Science Gateway Bootcamp organized by the SGCI Incubator service area.

The bootcamp is a week-long, intensive workshop for leaders and creators of gateways who want to further develop and scale their work. It addresses sustainability strategies from diverse angles:

1. Core business strategy skills as they apply to leading an online digital presence, such as understanding stakeholder and user needs; business, operations, finance, and resource planning; and project management;
2. Technology best practices, including the principles of cybersecurity; software architecture, development practices, and tools that ensure implementation of strong software engineering methods; usability and
3. Long-term sustainability strategies, such as alternative funding models; case studies of successful gateway efforts; licensing choices and their impact on sustainability.

Participants engage in hands-on activities to help them articulate the value of their work to key stakeholders, to create a strong sustainability plan and work closely with one another. The concept is to define actionable items for three to six months, form cohorts who keep in contact with each other and support each other in the continuous process of achieving sustainability.

SGCI offers two bootcamps per year in the US with a maximum number of ten teams to be accepted for each event. Up-to-date, three of such bootcamps have taken place with one planned for August 2018. Based on the success of the three events and on lessons learned from these events, SGCI's Incubator service area organized a mini-bootcamp of two days in June 2018 in Edinburgh, UK in collaboration with SSI. Also here the feedback was mostly very positive recognizing that two days can only provide a well-thought through selection of topics in appropriate depth.

A future goal is to develop further shorter bootcamps on specific topics and closely collaborate on international level to be able to spread the concept further and train the trainers to scale the support of sustainability via bootcamps. International observers can attend the bootcamps in the US and discussions are underway with European projects to offer such bootcamps.

## Type of abstract

Presentation

## Summary

The Incubator service area of the Science Gateways Community Institute (SGCI) offers intensive, 5-days long bootcamps to develop sustainability strategies for science gateway projects. The strategies are applicable for software projects in general. The presentation will give an overview on the concepts, the lessons learned from the first three bootcamps in the US and from one shorter two-day long bootcamp in the UK and an overview on collaboration possibilities on international level.

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