Communities in academic research in Australia span disciplines, regional areas, research lineages and long histories of academic collaboration. The development of these communities happens in a number of different ways, working in the same lab, department of faculty, precinct, area, attending conferences in the same field. Less commonly these communities bind around other common interests, IT tools, instruments, common facilities, or even data repositories. Of the utmost importance in this milieu, is the strength of a community as it is based upon the relationships formed between members of the community. Simply put, without trust there is no collaboration.

The communities we are specifically referring to here are communities that employ IT in their everyday research practice (the majority of them). Different infrastructure (storage, Cloud, HPC), different tools that relate to different disciplines, facilities, etc. The problem here is how to engage, how to train, how to show researchers and their students to effectively use and trust the stuff they are innovating via their research.

In this paper and presentation we will take the audience through a number of tried and tested methodologies that we have actively employed in building community. We will show that to actively engage researchers in an academic setting, the building of community must reach fanatical levels [1]. The methodologies for building communities can take many forms, but involves connecting people, events, social networking, blogging and utilising psychologies of engagement.

Fundamental to 'mashing-up' various communities, is the importance of getting people to engage with one another in common areas of understanding. While we don't see technology as the answer, we do see it is a common way to engage humans in a conversation that will lead to more deep and meaningful disciplinary discussions that will lead to trust and therefore meaningful relationships. Ideally spawning the next generation of innovation.

We will talk through various examples of real-world events in Australia: Cloud Dojos, Socractic Forums, Code Karaoke, Unconferences, BarCamps, Speed Networking, Big Bang Beer events, etc. [2]; of which, effective use of social media (live blogging, tweeting, streaming) are pervasive in each of these events. We will offer you recipes to ensure you engage and connect with your research community. We will also talk through

what to expect from people. We will explain how to drive your community (alongside the key roles you need to engage people in these 'alternative' learning styles). We'll also talk through some of the characteristics of academics & researchers who will need additional support (e.g. creatives, esoterics, etc.) [3], and how to engage people who are reluctant about these new kinds of events and interactions.

The goal of the talk will be to inspire participants so they will want to try new event methodologies so as to bring together their diverse groups across their community. We'll also give pragmatic step-by-step recipes along with expected costs (community building is not cheap). All audiences are most welcome.

[1]= By 'Fanatical levels' we are referring to the idea of being passionate while also conforming to the shared value of the community, a fine balance as described in this guide by Wikipedia to its editors: http://bit.ly/Sj0oUz
[2]= Many of these events are listed under the Wikipedia umbrella term of 'Unconferences' or 'Open Space Technology', though as one of the authors is an editor of these wikipedia pages it should be noted how frequent the changes are to this field as 'event hacking' continues to change: http://bit.ly/U1WKDN
[3]= Fundamental to this talk is the use of 'group psychology', especially construct and cognitive behavioural theories as they apply in real world situations. While we will not refer to these explicitly, they are the underpinning ideas of this work.