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strategy**
partners

Felicity Brand
*@flicstar_*

Boost your project's trust signals with great docs!

*Everything Open Melbourne
Mar 2023*

G'day! About me

flicstar.com | Technical communicator

Open Strategy Partners | Communications Consultant
Collaborative Writing and Editing
Mentoring, Training

TYPO3 | Open Source Enterprise CMS
TYPO3 Guidebook co-author
Association Member, Contributor

The Good Docs Project | Creating best practice
templates and writing instructions for documenting
open source software.

A B2B content marketing agency for tech product and service companies.

Your tech is complex.
Your message shouldn't be.
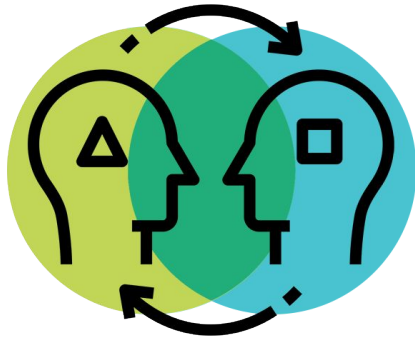
Empathy   *Clarity*   *Trust*   *OSP*

openstrategypartners.com | @open_strategy

"Trust is the foundation
 for everything we do,
and if we can learn to trust one another more,
we can have unprecedented human progress."

Frances Frei
Harvard Business School

https://www.ted.com/talks/frances_frei_how_to_build_and_rebuild_trust

If your project has a vibrant set of signals, a prospective user or contributor is far more likely to engage with your product or community.

Outline

- *What are trust signals?*

- *Why do they matter?*

- *Types of signals.*

- *How to influence your trust signals.*

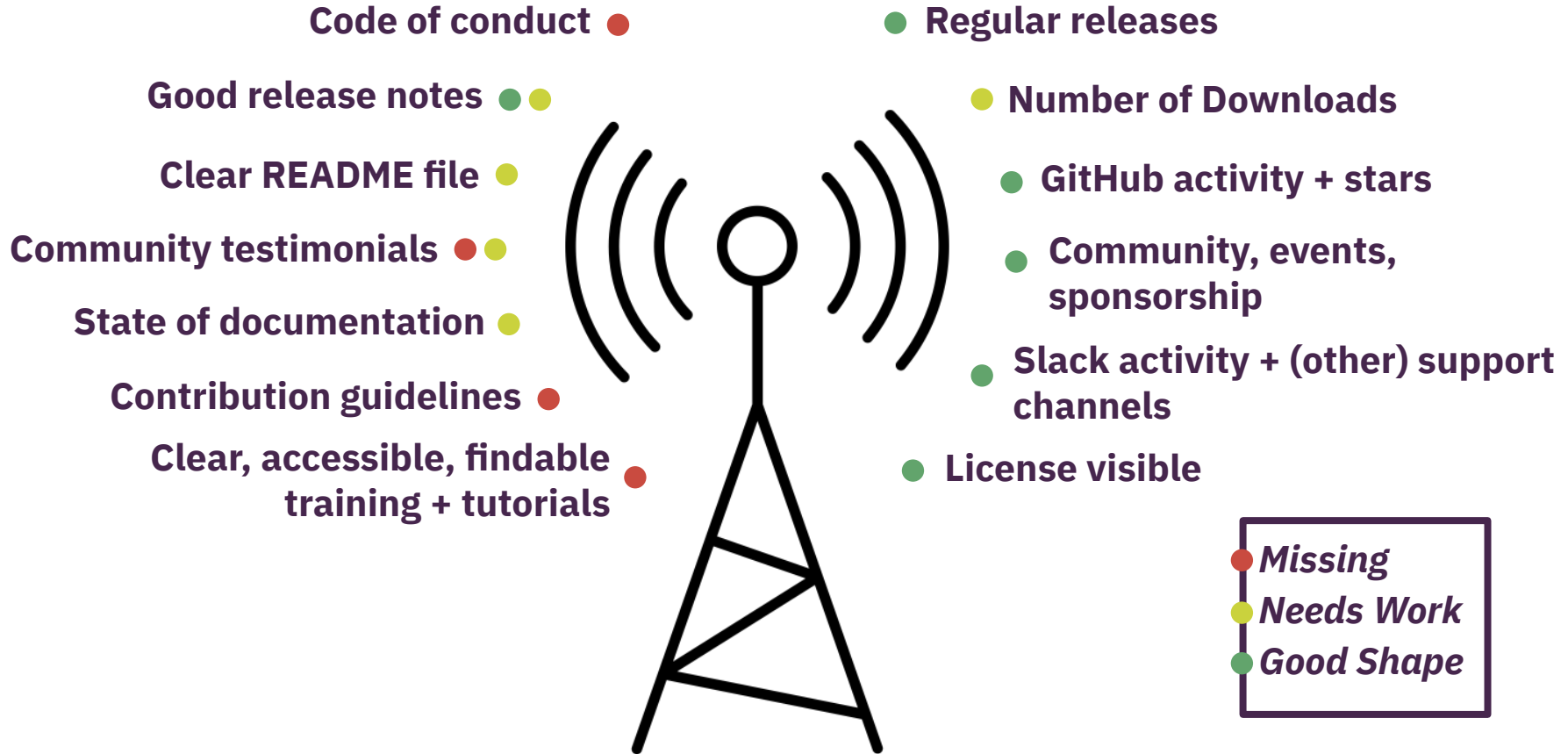- *Practical steps and resources to boost your project!*

Example FOSS Project Trust Signals

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Code of conduct ●

● Regular releases

Good release notes ● ●

● Number of Downloads

Clear README file ●

● GitHub activity + stars

Community testimonials ● ●

● Community, events, sponsorship

State of documentation ●

● Slack activity + (other) support channels

Contribution guidelines ●

Clear, accessible, findable training + tutorials ●

● License visible

● *Missing*
● *Needs Work*
● *Good Shape*

Why do Trust Signals Matter?

Steven Covey's TRUST Model
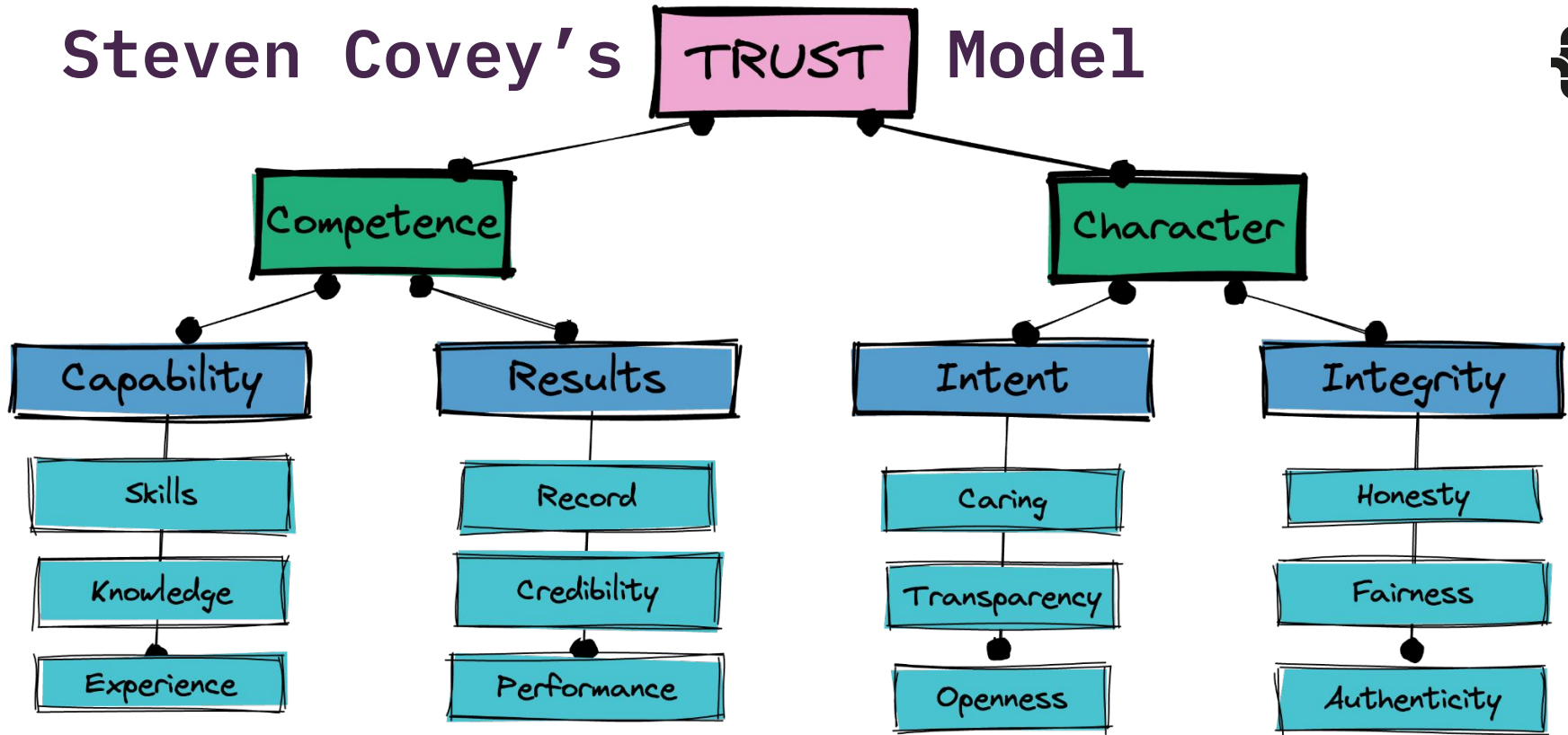
Trust/Investment Staircase

Social media, word of mouth

Attention

README

Interest in Concept

Code quality

Trust in Technology or Product

Responsiveness, roadmap

Trust in Community

Issue template

Contribute

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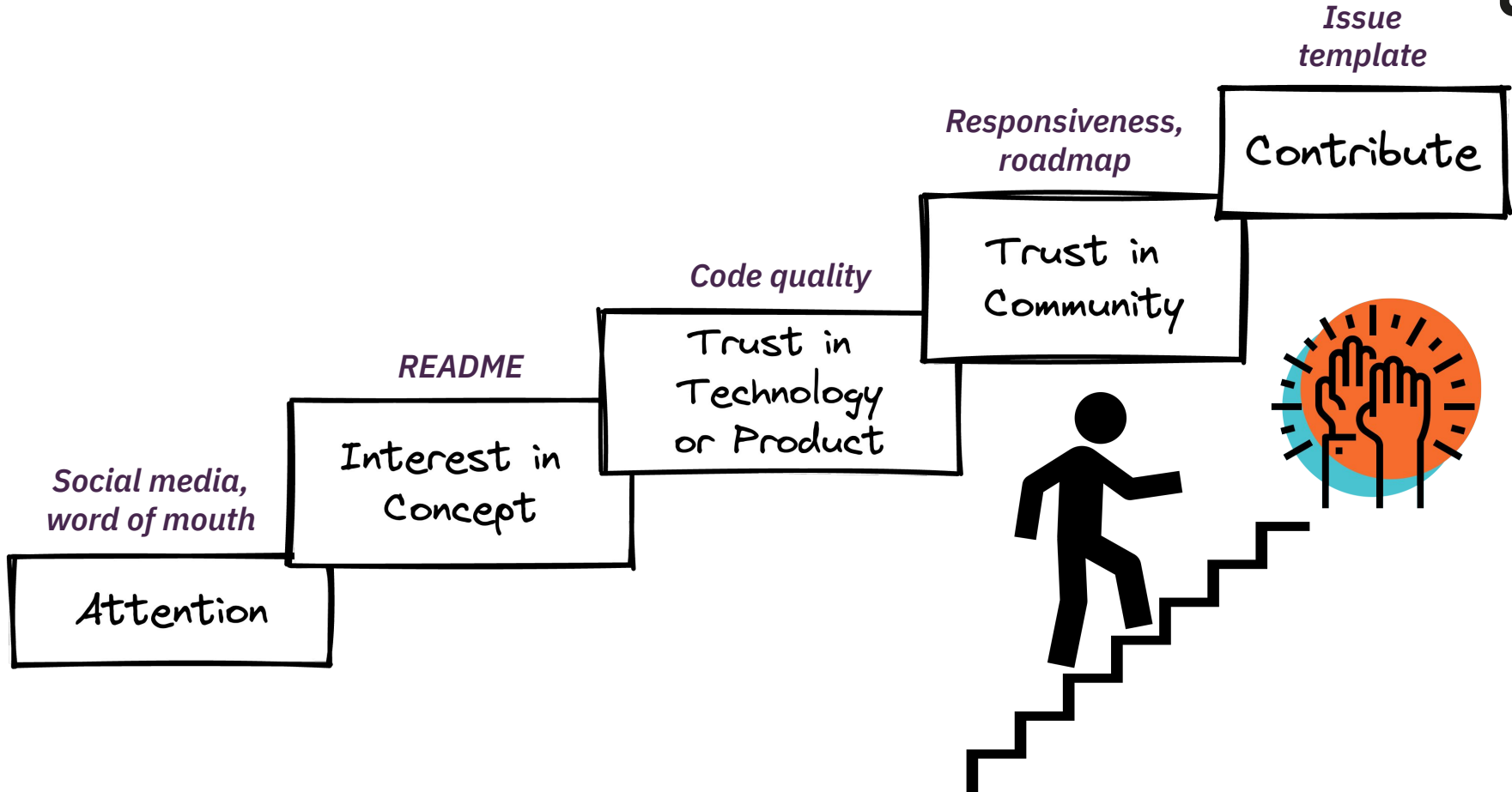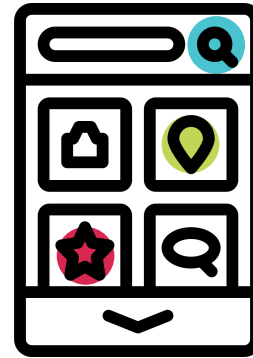
Types of
Trust Signals

Direct Signals

- # downloads
- Popularity (stars)
- Use of labels
- # of open issues, open PRs
- Average issue age/resolution time
- Oldest open issues
- Code quality
- Test coverage,
- Other info (badges!)
- License
- # of commits, contributors, forks, issues, pull requests, star gazers, and watchers

Clear, visible cues

Quick and easy to consume

Make immediate impression

"This code looks okay."

Indirect Signals

- README
- Documentation: Release notes, Contributor's guide, Code of conduct.
- Conversations in issues, merge requests
- Activity in community channels: Slack, Discord, Stack Overflow, project hashtags on social media.

Inferred from browsing

Take longer to consume

Content, language, behavior

"Is this project worth investing in?"

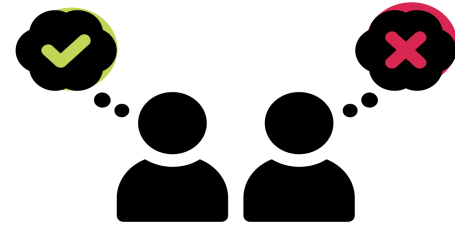Signals that are costlier to produce are considered more reliable because they are harder to fake.

Influence your
Trust Signals

Invest in Indirect Trust Signals

A quick note on context

The **same signals** can mean **different things** to **different people.**

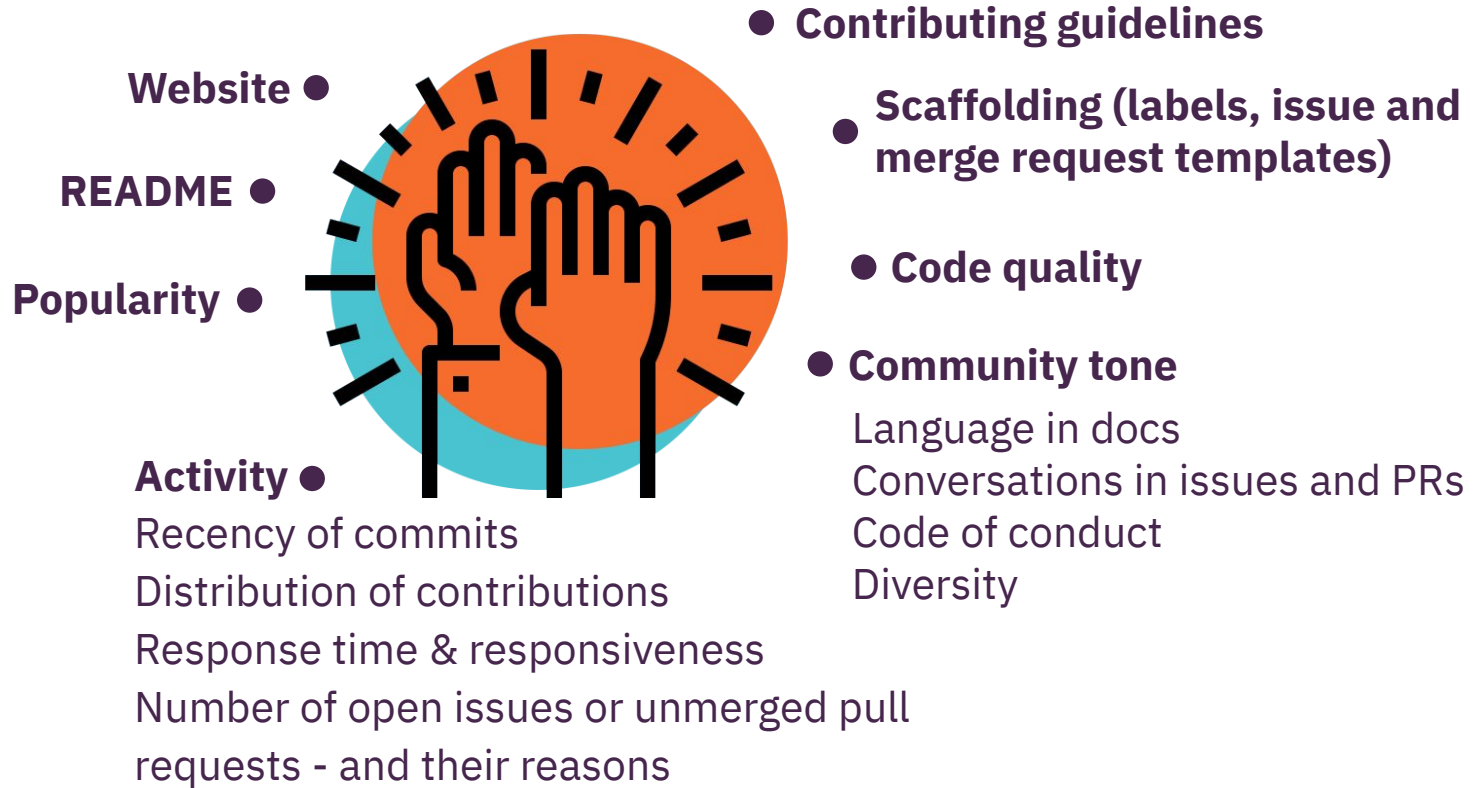*The same signals can be both attractive and unattractive.*

CHAOSS

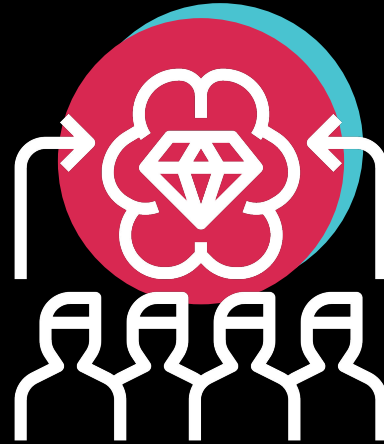*chaoss.community*

Resources, Practical Steps

Audit your Signals

Key signals that inform contribution

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Website •

README •

Popularity •

• Contributing guidelines

• Scaffolding (labels, issue and merge request templates)

• Code quality

• Community tone
Language in docs
Conversations in issues and PRs
Code of conduct
Diversity

Activity •
Recency of commits
Distribution of contributions
Response time & responsiveness
Number of open issues or unmerged pull
requests - and their reasons

Document
your values

Use a **Code of Conduct** to showcase your values and how you plan to enact them.

State your community's expectations of members ("the rules") AND WHY they exist.

"We are this kind of community."

Contributor Covenant

www.contributor-covenant.org

Work on Your Content

Docs!

- GitHub
- GitLab
- The Good Docs Project
- Write the Docs
- Writing the Readable README from @ddbeck
- makeareadme.com
- And many more...

Templates are your friends.

THE GOOD DOCS PROJECT

thegooddocsproject.dev

Language 1/2

"We don't expect you to be completely formal, or to even write error-free English. Just remember this: don't swear, and be respectful to others."

- Symfony, Respectful Review Comments

Set expectations
- Contributors Guide
- (Code of Conduct)

https://symfony.com/doc/current/ contributing/community/review-comme nts.html#giving-positive-feedback

TYPO3 Community Language & Writing Guide

- About This Guide
- Our Values and Character
- Authentic Communication
- Writing Principles and Guidelines

- Writing Workflow
- Community Content Contribution
- Editing Principles and Guidelines

Help your community meet them
- Style guide
- Writers guide

TYPO3

https://docs.typo3.org/m/typo3/writing-guide/main/en-us/

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Know your signals.

- *What are trust signals?*
- *Why do they matter?*
- *Direct and Indirect signals.*
- *How to influence your trust signals.*
- *Practical steps and resources to boost your project!*

Be aware of what you're broadcasting.

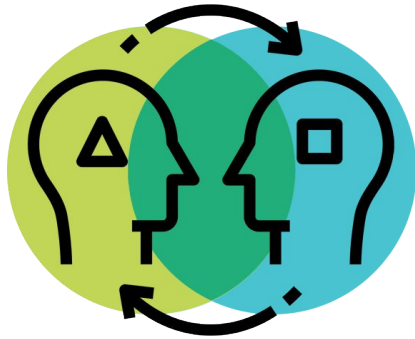open strategy partners

tinyurl.com/trust-signals

Thank you! Questions?

- *felicity@openstrategypartners.com*

- *flicstar.com*

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