

Virtual Worlds:

A Discussion on Community
Organization Structure

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Introduction

- We've heard a lot of common interest in virtual worlds
- But it is only by working together that we can achieve a common goal
- This presentation aims to start discussion on how to work together

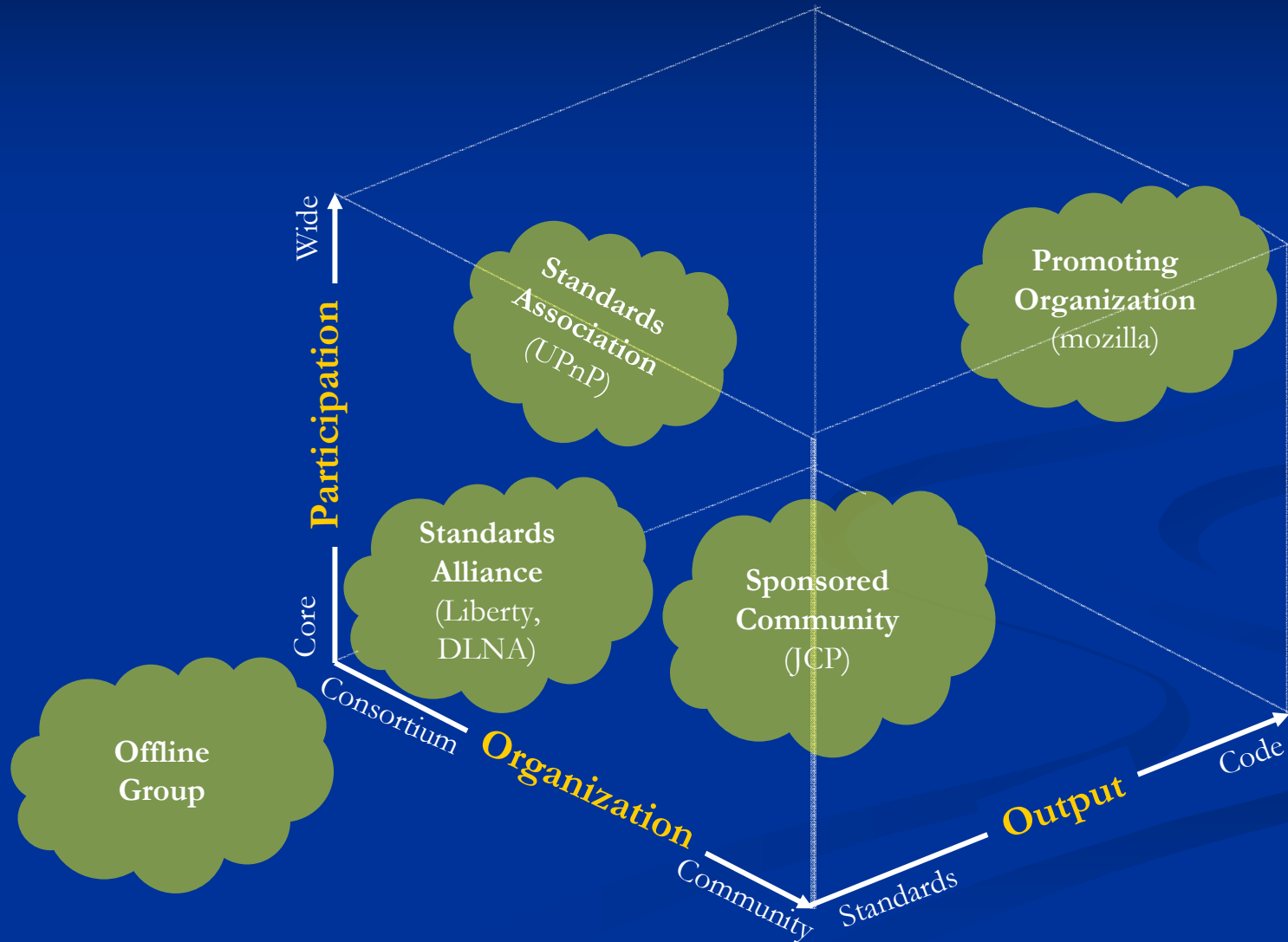
Questions We Need to Answer

- What 'goal' do we want to reach?
 - What is our 'mission'?
- What type of 'community' do we want to create?
 - What type of participation do we want to promote?
 - What type of output from the organization do we want?
 - What type of external representation do we want?
- How to we pay for supporting our activities?

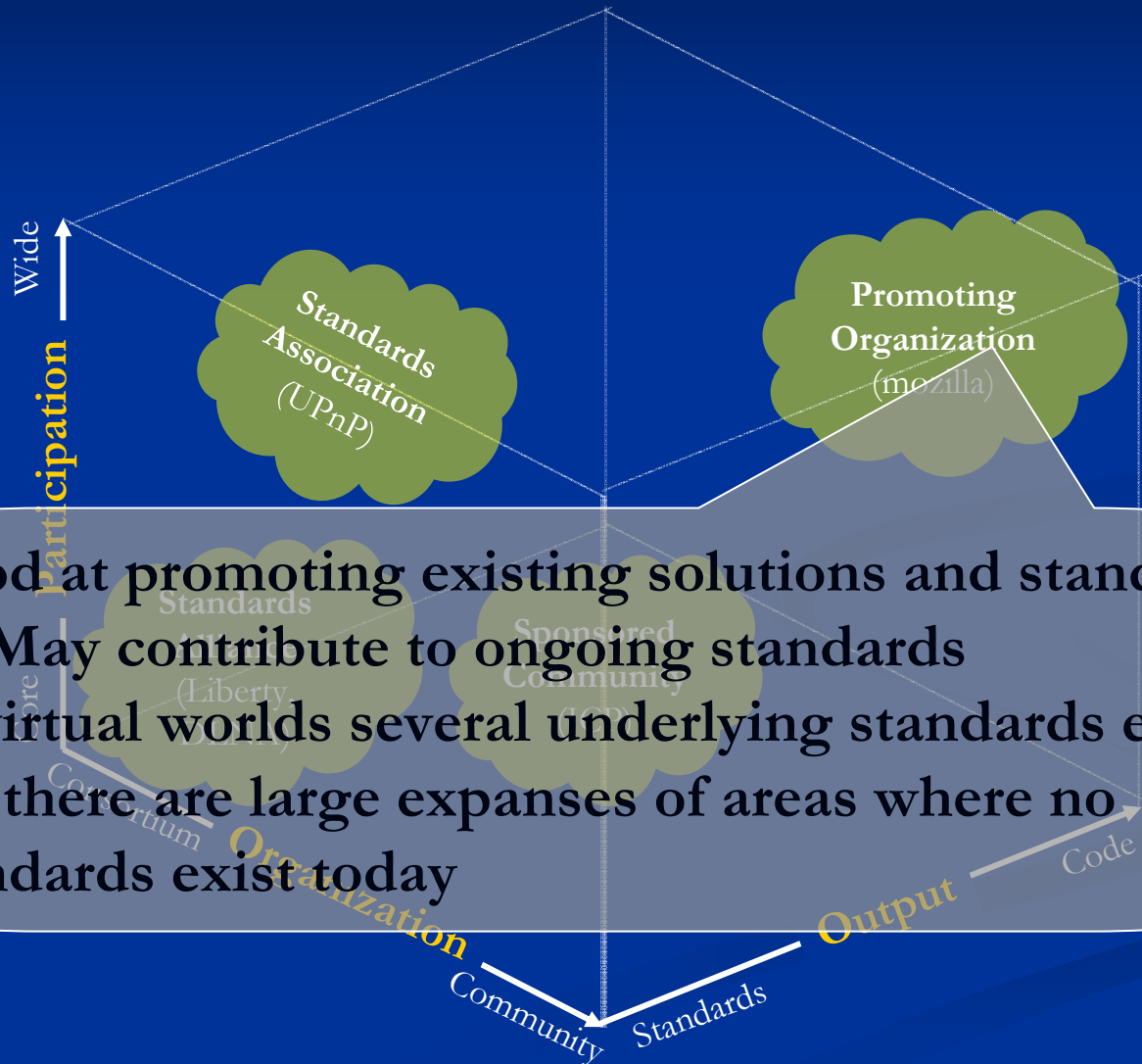
Mission Proposal

- Work together to:
 - Develop open standards to support interoperable virtual worlds based on existing open standards
 - Promote open standards and protocols to support interoperable virtual worlds
 - Drive industry adoption of standards into a range of device types
 - Ensure a balance between member rights and member contributions

Spectrum of Organization Types

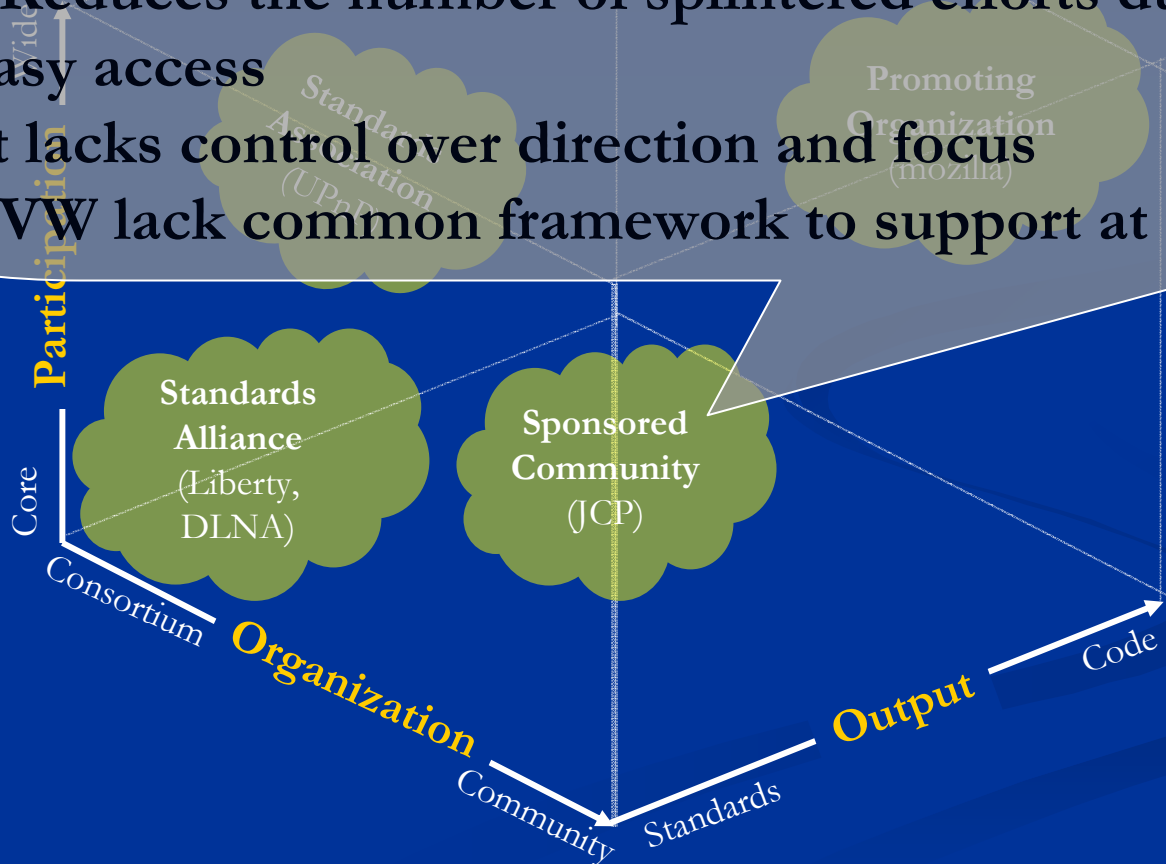


Pros/Cons: Promoting Organization



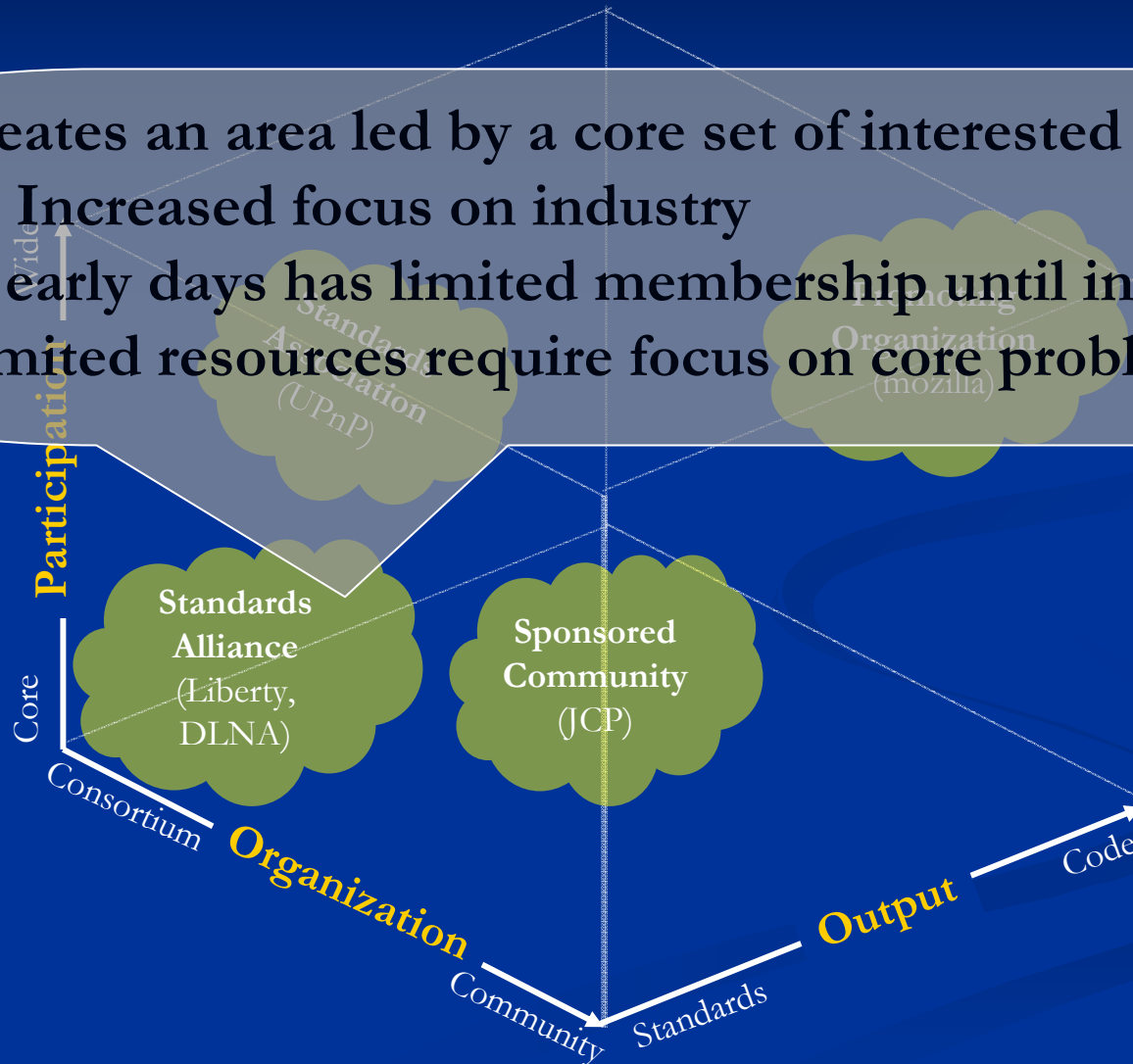
Pros/Cons: Sponsored Community

- Creates large numbers of standards around common framework
 - Reduces the number of splintered efforts due to easy access
- But lacks control over direction and focus
 - VW lack common framework to support at this time

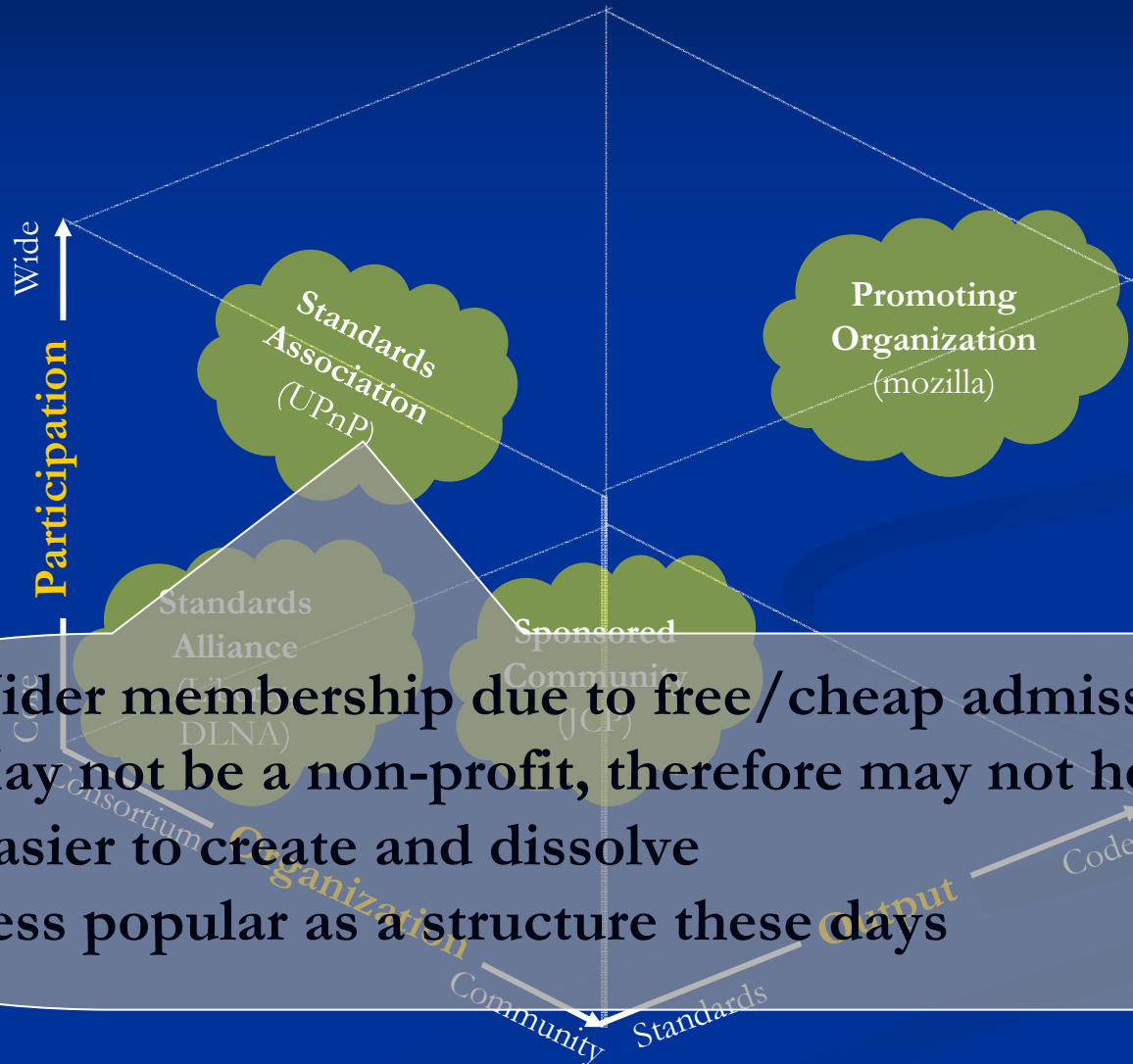


Pros/Cons: Standards Alliance

- Creates an area led by a core set of interested parties
 - Increased focus on industry
- In early days has limited membership until industry led
- Limited resources require focus on core problems

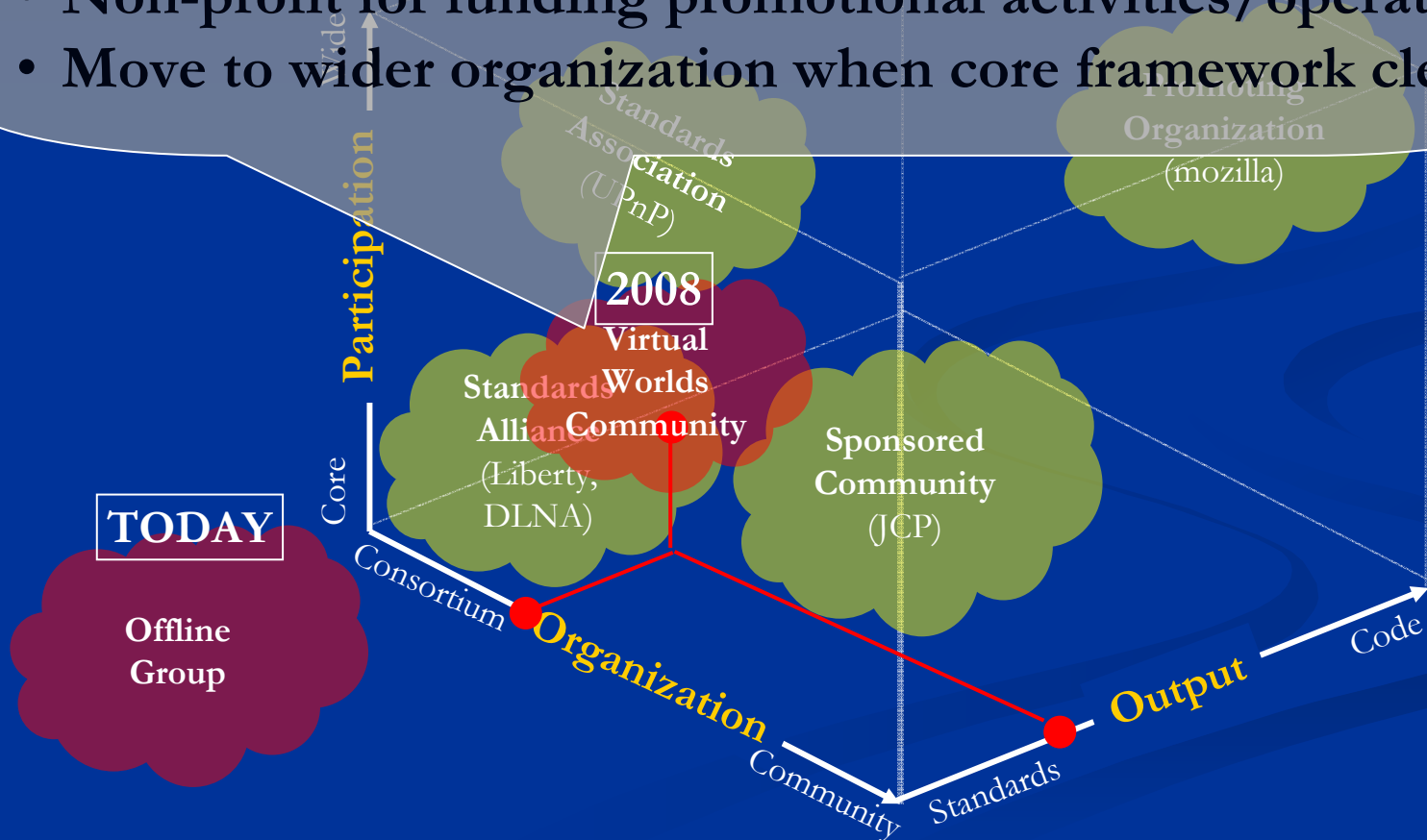


Pros/Cons: Standards Association



Recommendation

- Core membership committed to mission/direction
- Open membership to participants
- Non-profit for funding promotional activities/operation
- Move to wider organization when core framework clear



How would the org work?

- Board
 - Governance
 - Direction setting
 - Outreach
- Working groups
 - Member run specific work areas
- Shared code base?
- Sponsored events

What about Existing Communities?

- Virtual Worlds Community should complement existing organizations
 - Each offers different pieces of the puzzle
- Several organizations exist
 - Web3D Consortium's X3D standards
 - IETF/W3C's Internet standards
 - EU's MetaVerse1 project and MetaVerseLabs (MVL)
 - Croquet Consortium's work

Paying for Activities: Membership

- Funding is needed for operating the organization
 - Press releases by community
 - Running community web site
 - Running the community itself
- Usual approach
 - Core membership → Non-profit board seat
 - Main fees (\$25k-\$100k)
 - Promoter membership → Voting rights
 - Mid-level fees (\$5k-\$25k)
 - Member → Technical participation/contribution
 - Low-level fees (\$1k-\$5k)
- Low-end initially because costs are likely to be low
 - No certification, logoin, sample implementation, etc.

Summary

- To apply some focus we need an organizational community to bring together efforts
- Virtual worlds require
 - Several problems/standards to be solved
 - Funding to promote activities
 - Core set of committed companies
- Given this a simple non-profit, focused, standards community would seem to be the best next step

Discussion?