

Technology in A.A. Online Community

Connecting A.A. members to discuss A.A. and technology

Solving our common problems —
How technology in A.A. can help

TIAA-forum.org

Today's presentation

What is TIAA-forum.org?

Demonstration

Status and plans for the future

Questions

Primary Purpose of TIAA

- To share experience, strength, and hope in using technology to carry AA's message of recovery – not to focus on technology per se.
- The number of alcoholics has grown dramatically over the past quarter century (in the US, by 50%)
- AA membership has remained flat at 1.9 million worldwide

There is a growing awareness that today, technology can help carry the message

- We need non-technical folks to keep the nerds useful!
- Whenever literally anyone, literally anywhere, reaches out for help, the hand of AA can be there – virtually, if not physically.
- Participation as tiaa-forum.org members by everyone from AA members to Area Delegates, Trustees, GSO staff

General discussions of how we do what we do in AA service

- How do we stop reinventing the wheel?
- Many of the needs of Groups, Districts, Intergroups, and Areas are similar; approaches for meeting those needs can now be shared and stored for future reference

Forum currently has over 2,600 members

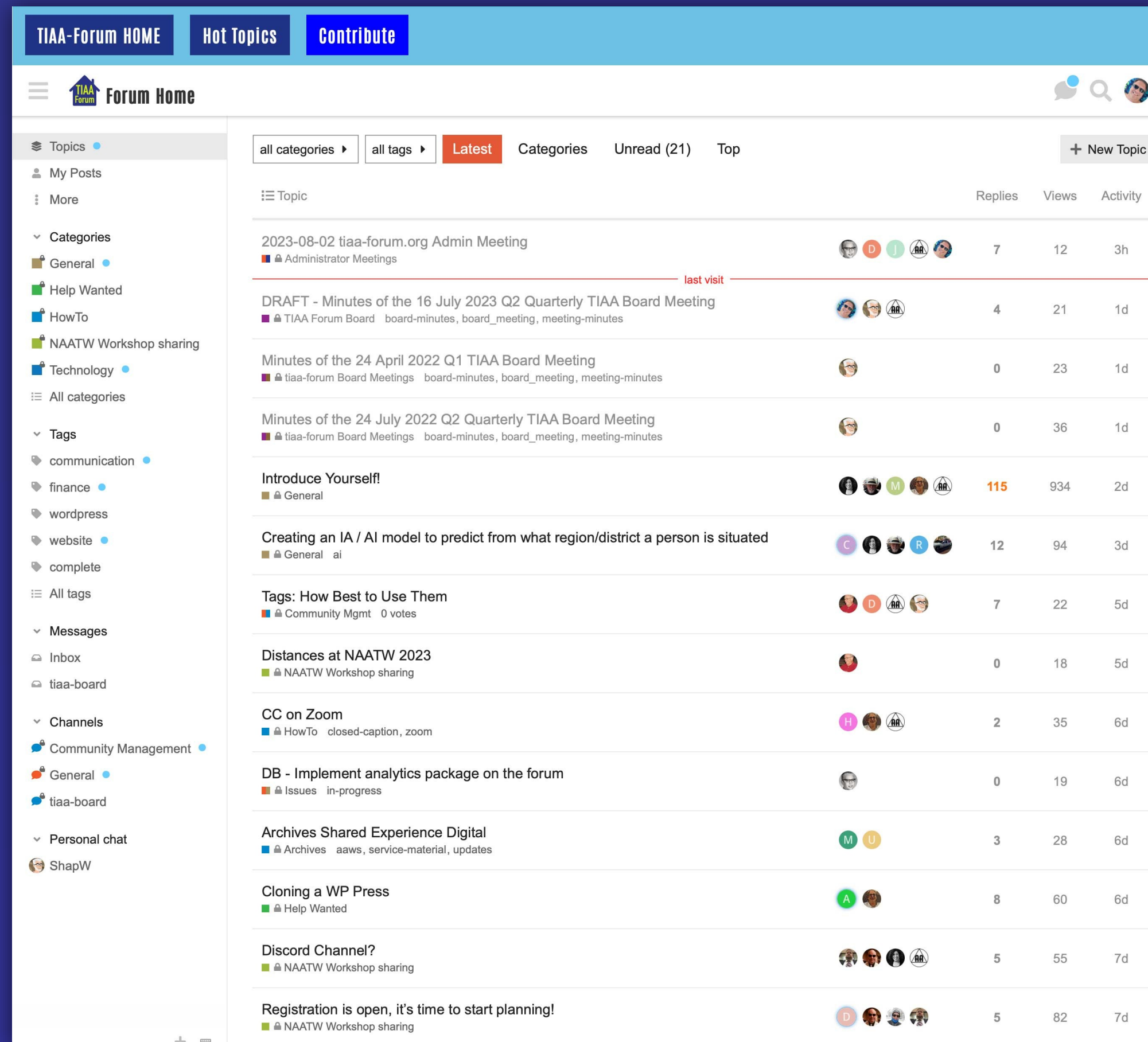
- Growth has been steady, with a couple of increase “bumps” in '19 and '20

Demonstration



Our homepage was updated in late 2022

- It displays all the Hot Topics under discussion in the Forum
- Allows those who've never used the Forum to explore what it offers
- It does not require logging in, as was the case previously
- This allows existing members to see at a glance what is trending
- It enables existing members to introduce other A.A. members to the Forum unobtrusively
- WordPress "front end"



Our new Forum Home landing page was added in 2023

- It displays all the Categories in the Forum on a left-hand navigator sidebar
- Enables a quick, top to bottom scan of all available categories
- Allows a member to select All Categories (bottom of the navigator) if the 'classic' view is preferred (as we know, many alcoholics hate change)
- Once a specific Category is entered, graphics and other behavior are as previously displayed

TIAA-Forum HOME Hot Topics Contribute

Forum Home

A.A. Archives

AA Archives? Yes! This category is for AA members that work with, are interested in, or curious about AA Archives. We welcome your questions and comments as you enter into the discussions and hope you'll find useful information here.

Archives all tags Latest Unread (1) Top + New Topic

Topic	Replies	Views	Activity
About the Archives category Archives AA Archives? Yes! This category is for AA members that work with, are interested in, or curious about AA Archives. We welcome your questions and comments as you enter into the discussions and hope you'll find useful info... read more	4	55	Feb 14
Welcome to the archives section of the TIAA-Forum Archives This category (#archives) is for AA members that work with, are interested in, or curious about AA Archives and the preservation of our history. We welcome all to our discussions about AA Archives and hope you'll find u... read more	10	204	Dec '22
Archives Shared Experience Digital Archives aaws, service-material, updates	3	28	6d
Presentation Applications Archives nonprofit, portability, powerpoint, shared-resources, social-media	0	17	7d
Traditions Archives	5	45	7d
Archives structure Archives	3	43	Jun 16
Archivist Wanted for Online Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous (OIAA) Archives archivist	0	35	Feb 12
Different home page for @archives group 8 Archives-staff	27	100	Feb 5
Anonymity Archives	10	69	Feb 2

A new Archives category added in 2022

- All Archives chairs from each of the 93 Areas invited to join the Forum during the National AA Archives yearly workshop
- Enables a central facility in which anyone interested in AA Archives can share their experience, or ask questions of others
- Members of the Forum who join the Archives Group will always land in the Archives Category upon logging in, although they are free to explore and search the remainder of the Forum
- Demonstrates the potential for Categories dedicated to the common standing committees at the Area, District and Intergroup/Central Office levels(eg, Accessibility, Public Information, Treatment/H&I etc)

Kinds of discussions on TIAA-forum.org

How do I . . . ?

- Set up a website for . . .
- Run a hybrid District meeting

Here's my experience

- Running a hybrid election assembly
- Setting up a chat function on our Intergroup website

Help! My _____ is down, broken, giving me an error

- Websites, virtual meeting software, donation page, etc.

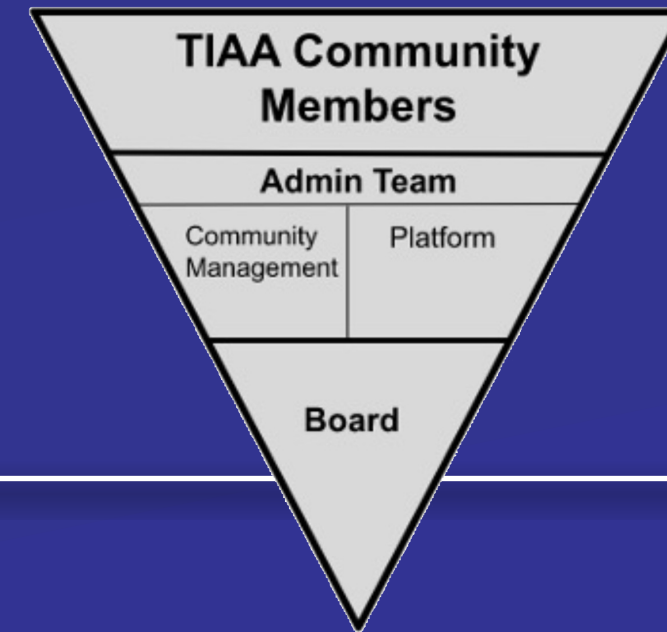
Anyone with experience in . . . ?

- Chairing a group conscience
- Dealing with conflict between virtual and in-person meeting attendance

How TIAA-forum.org Works

- The forum was built on “Discourse,” one of the most popular forum platforms available
- Member posts (conversations) are grouped under “Categories,” which cover a wide spectrum of AA and its service structure
- All content on the forum is searchable
- Members can post new topics (questions, information to share, etc.), or contribute to existing discussions by posting replies
- Any AA member or person doing work for AA can join tiaa-forum.org
- WordPress “front end”

Organization



Community

- Poses the questions, share the answers – the heart of TIAA-forum.org
- “Private” – comprised of AA members and people who are in service to AA

Admin Team

- Responsible for the day-to-day administration of the forum
- Meets monthly
- Platform Sub-team:

Responsible for infrastructure management

- Community Management Sub-team:

Community Support and moderation of Forum following the principle:

“...does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes...” – keep it simple – policies outlined in our FAQ

Board

- Elected by membership to 3 year terms
- Officers: President (Chair), Treasurer, Secretary
- Meets Quarterly (+members’ meeting and conversations on the forum)
- Establishes by-laws, policies, budget, approval of expenditures, etc

Any member can volunteer/stand for any job

- Rotation is encouraged

Legally and for tax purposes:

- TIAA-forum is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

Supported Through Our Own Contributions

- The forum leverages the same principles of financial governance as the AA program - there are no dues or fees, but we do have a Contribute button
- All support staff are volunteers, with regular rotation of responsibilities
- Our annual budget is developed in consultation with the Admin Team and our Board and presented at our Annual Members' Meeting and approved by the Board
- Members can contribute as they wish and can, but there is no requirement
- The major costs are software and hosting
- There is no financial affiliation with GSO, or any other AA entity
- For tax purposes, the forum is registered as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity.

Regular Reviews of Utilization Patterns

Community Management team monthly reviews *(see next slide, graphs)*

- Utilization trends – number of sign-ups, posts, and pageviews
- Monitors situations in which moderators need to take action

Platform team currently researching use of Google Analytics

- Installed currently on a test system
- Evaluating data provided via reports on usage patterns
- Ensuring no anonymity concerns/impact on our community

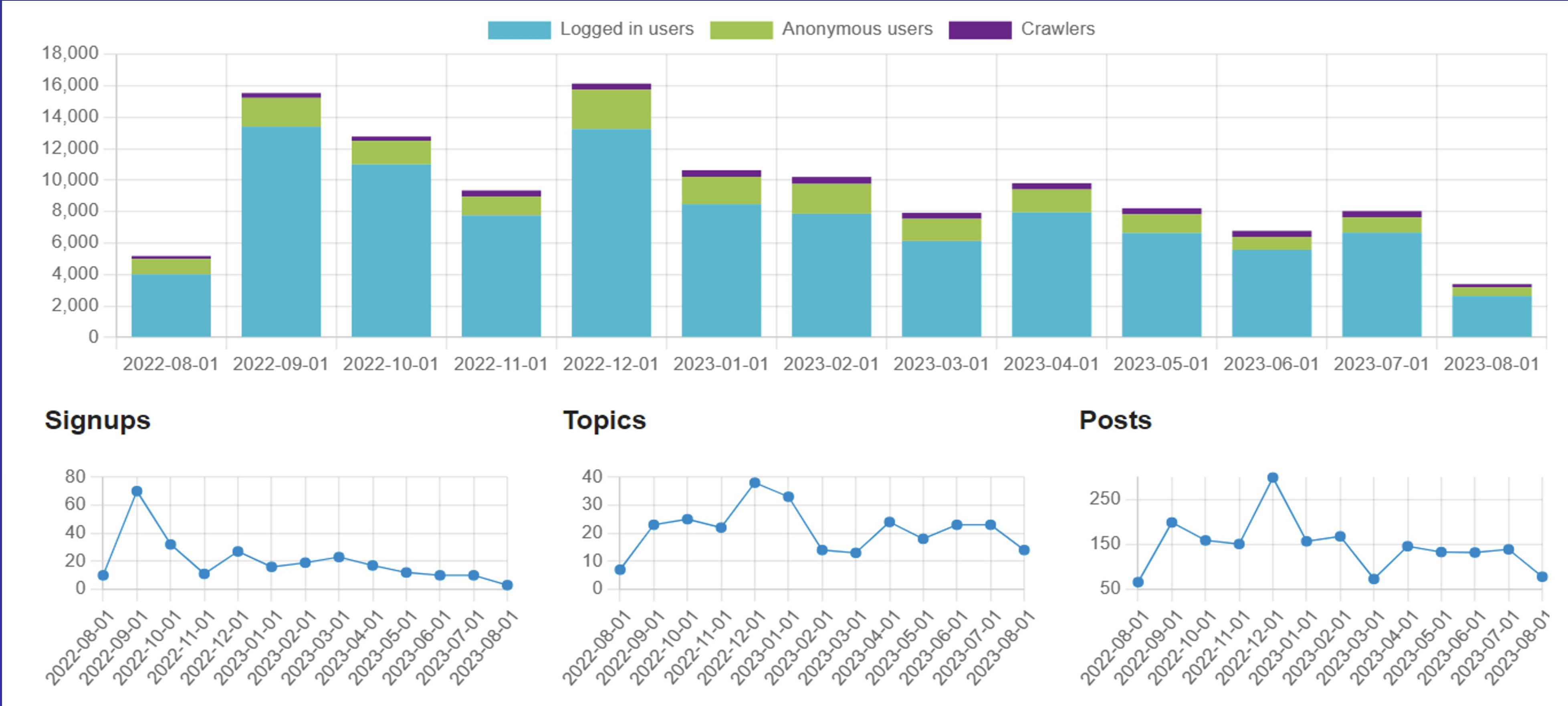
Challenges (for which we need your help)

- Need better data to determine what users want or would like to see in the Forum
- Determine why people who might find utility in our forum do not use it

Data Collection and evaluation efforts

- Done to ensure that we are basing decisions about future direction, features, and budget on solid evidence, not speculation or guesswork
- Continuous improvement of outreach efforts based on data about actual usage

Consolidated Pageviews



What's new and upcoming?

~~Moved from self-hosted to~~ Discourse.com managed service on 6/15/22

- (Mostly) transparent to our members
- Managed service removes administrative vulnerabilities

A refresh on our WordPress front end

- A change we're calling "Forum 2.0"
- Place some "hot topics" outside of our private forum
- Information that could be useful to the fellowship about common items of discussion
- Improved SEO, new theme/look, more utility for our community and beyond

Growth

- Adding a new "interest group" for people supporting AA Archives work
- Communicate more with people who might find utility in our forum – (*Intergroups, Districts, Areas, Groups, Workshops, Conventions, etc.*)

Continuous improvement

- New Member Guide developed
- Improved security
- Videos, new and improved features, and tools

(shameless) Plug for help

- Admin Team
- Community Management Team
- Platform team
 - ▶ Front-end design / UI experience
 - ▶ WordPress experience
 - ▶ Rails/Ember/Docker programming and support experience
 - ▶ Community development and support
- Board
- Members' Meeting is held virtually in December of each year

**Join
Participate
Contribute
Tell Your Friends
Volunteer**

Thank you!

Forum Board

Mike (chair), Cheri, Joel, Lisa, Ross, Sam (treasurer), Scott (secretary), Shap

Forum Admin Team

Lew (lead), Dave, Mike, Ross, Tim

Admin Platform Sub-team

Tim (lead), Dave, Eric, Lew

Admin Community Management Sub-team

Ross (lead), Jeannie, Mike, Shap, Lois, Viv, Brad

But, most of all,
we want to thank
our wonderful
members –
all of you!

Questions?
