PubSweet, workflow and workspaces

Before designing your PubSweet platform, there are some core PubSweet concepts to become familiar with.

The genesis of PubSweet followed the observation that many "big box" platforms had a single (and therefore prescriptive) approach to what journal publishing workflow should look like, or at least, how workflow should be tracked. PubSweet's proposition is that there is no one journal workflow, nor is there one book workflow, micropublications workflow, and so on, although they do all share some common fundamentals. PubSweet is not prescriptive about your workflow, but it does make some assumptions about how that workflow is realized. Just two will do for now - the rest are better described in other chapters.

The first assumption is that publishing workflows should occur in the web. Currently the web has not really affected publishing workflow, with two exceptions:

1. Using the browser as an interface to what are essentially data stores (manuscript submission systems or, in the case of books, title management systems).
2. Using the web to deliver books and articles.

The web offers the opportunity for publishing to leverage tools for collaboration that could reach beyond the submission moment (into the lab), past the point of publication ("living documents") and everything in between. PubSweet takes the position that the web is the most powerful collaborative network of our time, and needs to be brought into the heart of publishing workflows.

Secondly, PubSweet has the concept of **workspaces** (often also refered to as "components", "front end components" or just "spaces"). To bring publishing to the web, we need our workflows to inhabit the browser; we need to see the browser as a workspace, or rather a series of workspaces that instantiate our desired workflow.

Perhaps the easiest way to illustrate this idea of workspaces is by example. In your online experience, you have probably come across the notion of a dashboard. Many web platforms have them — Wordpress Dashboard for example, or Google Dashboard — a common space where you can get an overview of all things you need in order to get on with the particular task at hand. Dashboards are good examples of a particular kind of workspace. PubSweet enables your workflow by chaining together a series of workspaces, then directing the right people to the right workspaces at the right moments so they can do what they have to do.

For example, Editoria, as it is configured for the University of California Press, has the following roles: Production Editor, Copy Editor, Author. Works come in from the acquisitions department in the form of a folder of MS Word documents. The Production Editor creates a new book from the Dashboard and uploads these documents into Editoria. The Production Editor then collaborates with the Author and Copy Editor on each book by re-arranging the structure in the Book Builder workspace and editing individual chapters using the editor (you could also call it a chapter-editing-workspace, if you wish). There is a lot of other detail, such as controlling who should have access to what and when (more on all this later) but in essence, everything is performed in three workspaces: the Dashboard, The Book Builder, and the Editor. A high-level system architecture for the Editoria platform looks like this:

Editoria Workspaces

Let's contrast that with a completely different workflow. Collabra Psychology is a journal that also operates out of the University of California Press. Coko is building a new platform for Collabra on top of PubSweet. The roles are pretty standard for a journal: Managing Editor, Senior Editor, Handling Editor, Author, and Reviewer. The workflow is also pretty standard: An Author creates a new submission (from the Dashboard), creates and submits a manuscript and associated metadata from the Submission Page, then a series of Editors manage the workflow from the Decision Control workspace. Reviewers are assigned from the Manage Review workspace, and then reviewers read the article, write and submit reviews from dedicated Review workspaces.

The total number of workspaces for Collabra Psychology then is 6 - Dashboard, Submission Page, Manuscript, Decision Control, Manage Review, and the Review workspaces. The high level workspaces architecture looks like this: