

Navigating Software as a Service in a Digital Hellscape

A case study about:



coops4coops.ca

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Prepared for



Canadian Worker Co-op Federation
Conference 2025



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Not an Expert



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Operations Coordinator



Tech Lead

What are we talking about

1. The Digital Hellscape
2. SAAS and Cooperative Compatibility
3. What can we do?
4. Coops4Coops: A Case Study
5. Let's ideate

The Cybernetic Hypothesis

“[The Cybernetic Hypothesis] proposes to conceive biological, physical, and social behaviors as something integrally programmed and re-programmable.”

Consume the magical world to
create a digital simulacrum

Augment neo-liberal control

Subordinate human individuality

Mailchimp Assistant

Today

Hello! Would you like to connect with an expert for assistance? Please provide a response to start the chat discussion. A simple "yes" will do.

✓ speak to a representative

You – Now

Please wait while we connect you. – Now

Info – Now

Are you looking to connect with a Sales expert about upgrading or opening a new account OR are you looking for support with an existing account?

Sales

Type your message

AI Companion

Daily Standup

List my action items from this meeting

All sources

Mode

Drive sales with Google Ads

Try for free Save 15% on 10,000+ contacts

Try our Standard plan for free!

Find out why customers see up to 24x ROI* using the Standard plan with a 14-day trial†. Cancel or downgrade to our Essentials or basic Free plans at any time.

Generative AI features

Customized email templates

Active insights to audience growth and conversion

Customizable group forms

Enhanced automations

Personalized onboarding

See all plans →

Free

Team

Business

For developers and early exploration

For growing, collaborative teams

For teams who need more

\$0 / mo + \$0 / mo per standard user* per end user†

\$10 / mo + \$5 / mo per standard user* per end user†

\$50 / mo + \$10 / mo per standard user* per end user†

Get started for free

Get started

Get started

Unlimited web & mobile apps

500 workflow runs/month

5GB of database capacity

5GB of file storage

Everything in Free, plus...

5,000 workflow runs/month

Staging resource environment

App release versions

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Yes, I accept

No, thank you

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Log in or sign up in seconds

Use your email or another service to continue with Canva (it's free).

Continue with Google

Continue with Facebook

Continue with email

Afficher dans l'appli Reddit

Ouvrir

DIGITAL HELLSCAPE



exwife-of-frankenstein

21h

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Oct 16 · 21 hours ago

Youtube is full of ads, spotify is full of ads, tumblr is full of ads, pinterest is full of ads. Everything uses ai. Every new update makes the website/app worse. Youtube auto translates almost every video I want to watch. Sometimes pinterest only loads ads for me. Check out this new ai feature. Here's a new update that breaks ur laptop. Here's a new update that breaks ur phone. Why are u complaining about ur phone, just get the newest iphone lol. Join my patreon. Join my membership. Pay a monthly membership to get all features. Upgrade your membership to get even more features. Subscribe to netflix. Subscribe to disney. Subscribe to amazon. Subscribe to hulu. This content isn't available in ur country. This content was removed. This website was removed. This feature only exists for apple. This app only exists for apple. U need to a WiFi connection to play this game. U need an account. We need your email to finish creating this account. We need your number to finish creating your account. We need your id to finish creating your account. In order to delete your account please write an email. In order to delete your account you need a laptop. Oops our database was hacked and ur information was stolen. Ur data was sold from this random website u used once 10 years ago. Spam call. Spam call. Spam call.

#IM GOING INSANE #NOTHING WORKS NOTHING

Shrinking Internet Landscape

- **The Internet's “Mainstream Arenas”**
 - **Google** Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
 - **Meta** (Instagram/Facebook), contingent on consistent content generation and user engagement
 - **Email Campaigns** (presuming you have an email list)
 - **Advertisements** / promoted posts
 - **AI chat-bots** regurgitating info from a limited data set

AI

- Homogenization of the internet
- Hollowing out human creativity
- Propagating uncertainty/disinfo
- Accelerating transformation (derogatory)

THE ATTENTION ECONOMY

The scarce resource of users' attention or engagement with a product, content, platform, or service. In other words, it treats human attention as a commodity that can be monetized.

Social media platforms are designed to maximize user engagement

The rise of surveillance capitalism, the practice of companies collecting personal data to buy and sell for profit.

Epistemic attention deficit: marginalized groups narratives are algorithmically de-prioritized for being niche.

SOFTWARE AS A SERVICE

software applications hosted by a third-party provider, offered to customers on a paid/freemium subscription basis



Some downsides of SAAS:

- Unlike the production of goods / physical services, SAAS often works backwards from what clientel are willing to pay
 - SAAS are built to be infinitely replicatable with little additional cost
- Tiered pricing schemes always encourage end-users to upgrade
 - Functionalities are paywalled behind higher tiers
 - Access to the SAAS is often charged on a per-user basis, limiting access to the tool based on financial liquidity
- Your access to services can be changed or cut at any time
- Prices can go up, and you're already locked into their ecosystem
- SAAS homogenizes tools and approaches

SAAS and Cooperatives: Compatible?

SAAS Behaviour	Cooperative Principle
Ecosystem lock-in	[1] Voluntary Membership
Competition focused, constrained IP	[6] Cooperation amongst Cooperatives
Predatory pricing schemes	[3] Member Economic Participation
Information Asymmetry	[5] Education, Training and Information
Infinite Growth	[7] Concern for Community
Top-down Product Advancement	[2] Democratic Member Control

What do we do?

Navigating the Present

Select SAAS with care

- How long have they been on the market?
- Do you **personally** know anyone using this tool?

Be wary of Ecosystem Lock-in

- Assess what systems would be used and how hard it would be to move away
- Assess general inter-operability

Try before you buy

- Use free trials to your advantage
- Connect with sales to request longer demo period, reduced rates

Building the Future

Identify shared pain points and escalate

- Assess what systems would be used and how hard it would be to move away
- Assess general inter-operability

Support Open Source and Cooperatives

- Capitalist SAAS has mountains of financial and technical resources, its up to us to invest in alternatives

Look inwards

- SAAS creates/propagates problems only it can solve
- Find ways to use software like a paintbrush to express your truth

On the other end of the Spectrum

Open Source Software

PROS

- Created, updated, maintained by ANY OF its users
- Highly Extensible: anyone can suggest and fork new improvements
- No ecosystem lock-in
- Typically free
- Complete code transparency

CONS

- Not an all-in-one turn-key solution
- Requires end-user technical expertise
 - Setting up a server, backups, failsafes, security
- No guaranteed customer support
- Possibility to be deprecated / lose long-term support



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A foray into building tools for the
cooperative ecosystem

Services

Region

- Brand & Identity Development
- Business Development
- Construction & Infrastructure
- Energy & Utilities
- Financial Services
- Hospitality
- HR & Member Relations
- Information Technology (IT)
- Marketing & Promotion
- Office & Admin Support

Board Training & Leadership Development

Cooperative Governance Training

Impact Measurement

Co-op Directory

Black Women Professionals Co-op (BWP)
 Multi-stakeholder Co-op
 National

Services
Board Training & Leadership Development Cooperati

Whole Woman Network
 Multi-stakeholder Co-op
 National

Services
Cooperative Governance Training

CoopZone
 Consumer Co-op
 National

Services
Cooperative Governance Training

Louder Than Ten Workers Coop
 Worker Co-op
 Nat, BC

Services
Impact Measurement

Convergence Co-op
 Worker Co-op
 Quebec

Services
Cooperative Governance Training

C3D Solutions Coope
 Worker Co-op
 Nat, QC

Services
Board Training & Leadership Development

Lahrk Consulting Coop
 Worker Co-op
 Manitoba

Services
Impact Measurement

Tapestry Collective Coop
 Worker Co-op
 British Colombia

Services
Cooperative Governance Training

Contraste Co-op
 Worker Co-op
 Nat, QC

Services
Board Training & Leadership Development

Louder Than Ten Workers Coop

Nat, BC

Worker Co-op

Website

Email



When you join Louder Than Ten, you're joining a tight-knit, supportive community of digital project managers, business owners, and team leads who work in digital organizations. Teams that work with us improve their efficiency by up to 40% and reduce their project bleed by 27%.

We can help you get your operations on track, snap sales and project management into alignment, and refine processes that empower your team and elevate your organization.

Services Offered

Impact Measurement

Cooperative Governance Training

Board Training & Leadership Development

HR Consulting

Recruitment

Business Development

Strategic Planning

Member of



BC Co-operative Association



Canadian Worker's Co-op Federation



November 2025

A simple question, a complicated answer:

Is there a directory of Coops from across Canada that offer Business to Business (B2B) services?

Provincial Associations:

BCCA Member directory, OCA member directory, Réseau Coop member directory which tends to only include their members....

Google/Bing/DuckDuckGo:

Will list (and even prioritize) organizations that are not cooperatives, not in Canada, or not even offering the specific service sought after.

Relational Channels:

Other Cooperative federations, various resource pages from trusted groups

FRAGMENTED

INACCURATE

INCOMPLETE

There is no single place to find cooperatives offering the services you may need

WE COOPS 4 COOPS is born!

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Cooperative First

Only active cooperatives offering B2B services with websites can be listed on the platform, ensuring relevance and alignment with cooperative principles.

Data Transparent

Listed co-ops and support organizations (associations) receive reports and a login which shows their profile metrics and engagement data as well as enables them to update their information.

Revenue Agnostic

Coops4Coops is not monetized by advertisements, does not offer pay-to-promote pricing for listed co-ops, and will always prioritize freedom of access.

Network Focused

Built for associations, federations and networks, Coops4Coops enhances the visibility of their members while reinforcing the strength of the national network itself!



A New Co-op Paradigm

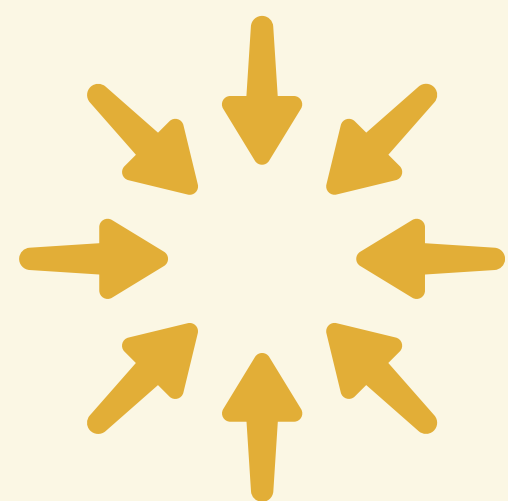
Leveraging our Co-operative Competitive Advantage

- **Shared Services & Scale:** Co-ops can pool resources (back-office, procurement, advocacy) to do more together than alone!
- **Trust & Loyalty:** Member-ownership builds credibility and long-term commitment that other business models can't match.
- **Collective Strength:** Collaboration across sectors (food, housing, fisheries, energy, finance) amplifies impact in rural and remote communities.

Advancing Regional Co-operative Interconnection in the Digital Age

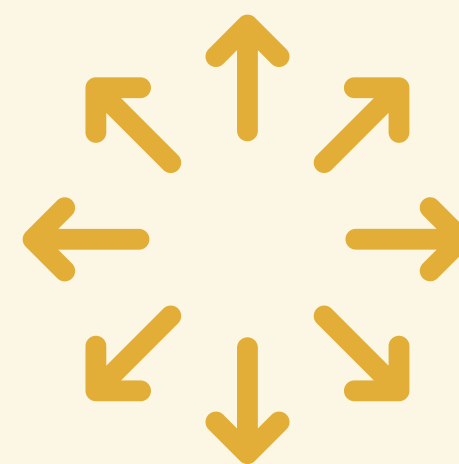
- **Visibility Beyond Your Region:** Listing ensures your co-op can be found by members, funders, and partners across Canada, not just locally.
- **New tools all the time:** decision fatigue means that new tools must be easy to adopt and frictionless.
- **Belong to Something Bigger:** Digital interconnection shows your co-op is part of a wider, trusted movement with shared strength!

Building Power by Being Found & Finding Each Other



Listed Co-op
“being found”

- Increase Visibility & Legitimacy Nationally
- Tell Your Story & Raise Your Profile
- Unlock New Opportunities



Directory Users
“finding each other”

- Discover New Partners
- Mutual Support & Learning
- Grow Stronger Together

Addressing the Trust Gap

First layer of Trust: Verified Listed Co-ops

-  Only legally registered co-ops with an active website can be listed

Second layer of Trust: Intercooperation Signal

-  Association badges surface shared movement values

Data Transparency

Listed Co-op Backend View:

Individual Co-op Data



Lichen Community Systems Worker Coop...



Apr 1, 2025 - Aug 30, 2025



Organization Clicks

37



Appeared In

405 searches

Clickthroughs



9

Website



1

Email

Most Sought after Services:

1. Software Development
2. Board & Leadership Training
3. Graphic Design
4. Construction & Architecture
5. Brand & Identity Development
6. Strategic Planning

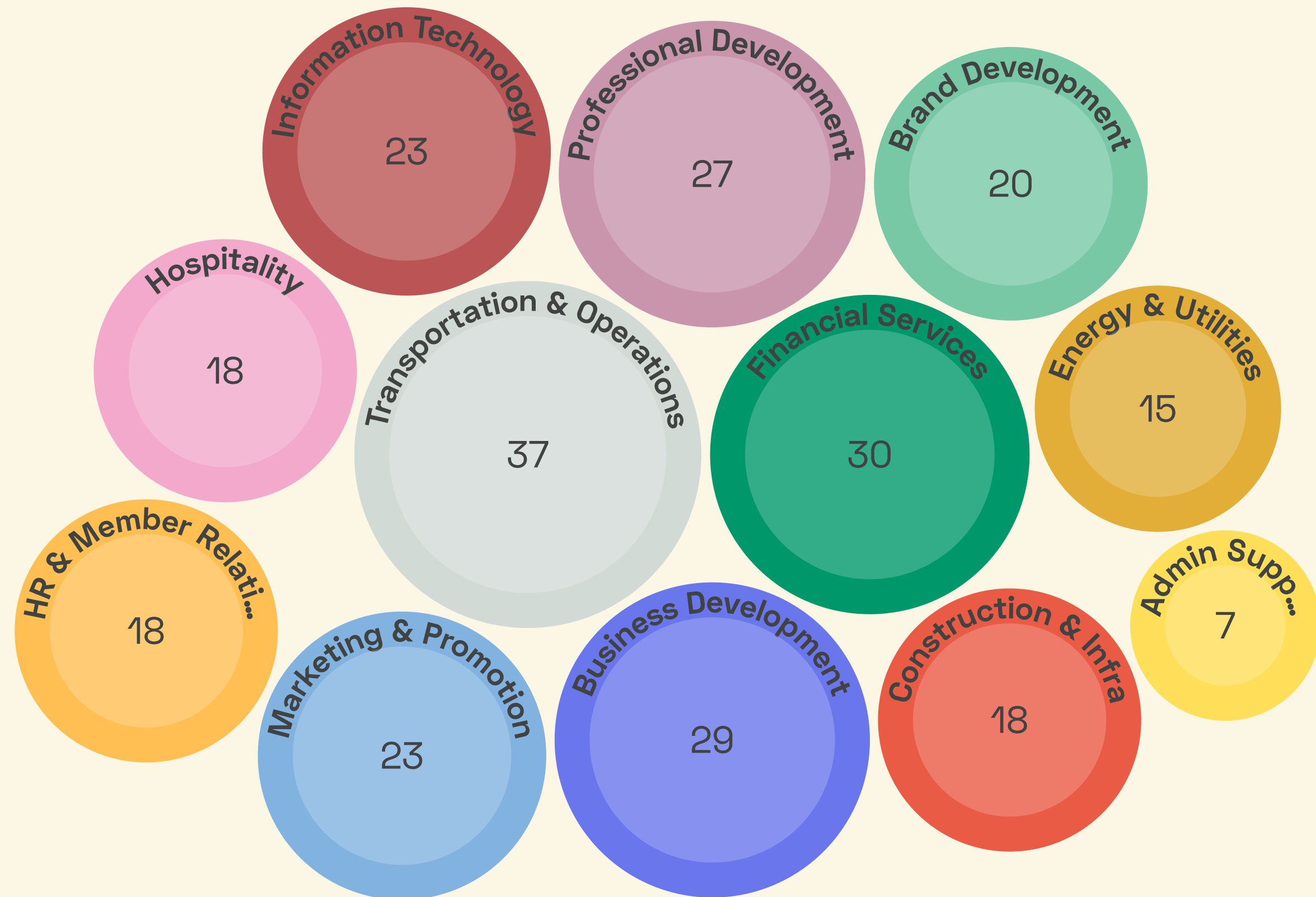
Data Insights

Most Present Services

1. Board Training & Leadership Development
2. IT Support
3. Cooperative Governance Training
4. Content & Storytelling
5. Transportation & Logistics

Least Present Services

1. Auditing & Compliance
2. Legal Consultation
3. Oil & Gas
4. Inventory & Vendor Management
5. Member & Volunteer Management





Coops4Coops Future

Lessons Learned

1. Create using tools that allow you the most mobility/ability to iterate
2. Validate your unique value proposition, often
3. The attention economy is thick, inter-personal connection is critical

Future Development

1. Testaments/reviews from other coops
2. Visualize which coops are using which coops services
3. Better data transparency
4. More connection with co-ops themselves



Who's behind Coops4Coops



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Stewarded by

**Solidarity Economy Incubation
for Zero Emissions**

solidarityeconomy.ca



Founding Members



**What does a technologically
harmonious co-op ecosystem**

FEEL like?

**What tools are needed to
liberate ourselves from the
digital hellscape?**





Cooperative Codebase Survey

**Participate in the development
of a communal cooperative
online marketplace**



Thank You!

Check it out now!

COOPS4COOPS.CA

Questions?

info@coops4coops.ca