Open Source Project Management

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Open Source Project Management?!

- Classical project management: gant charts, meetings etc..
- Erm.. :-/ ... and now open source – Isn’t this contradictory?
- Maybe just a different kind of management?

- Slides based on the book by Michael ’mika’ Prokop (in German):
Common features of Open Source Projects

- Highly decentralised and multinational
- Varying degrees of expertise
- Weak commitment («Scratch your own itch»)
- Shallow hierarchies
- Usually not profit oriented
- Flexible deadlines
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Speciality of science: Death by PhD
The Three Stages of Quality

- Pure functionality
  - just the code
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- Software engineering best practices
  - Code documentation
  - Build system
  - Unit testing
  - Version control
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- Project management
  - Coordinating efforts
  - Providing infrastructure
  - Marketing/Presswork
Open Source Development Models

- Benevolent dictator
- Elected government
- Meritocracy
Interlude: Choice of Licenses

- GPL (copyleft)
- MIT-X, BSD Three-Clause
- Creative Commons
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- WTFPL, BEERWARE etc...
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**Warning:** NO CUSTOM LICENSES...
Distributed Communication

- E-Mail / Mailinglists
- IRC / IM
- Project Wiki
- Issue-Tracker
- Doodle
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- Important feature: Async
- Avoid having too many channels
  - Twitter, Facebook, Identi.ca, Jabber, Aim, Google-Talk, Skype, SILC...
Getting things done

- Provide a (realistic) roadmap
- Don’t flood the TODO list
- Popular in scientific applications: Sprints
- Don’t spend too long taking decisions
Human Resources

- Reduce the barrier to entry
  - Low hanging fruit in the issue tracker
  - Provide timely feedback on patches
  - Adhere to standards
  - Open development mailinglist

- Acknowledge contributions e.g. AUTHORS file
- All contributions: bug-reports, feature-requests, Logos...

- When to consider someone «a (core-)developer or contributor»
- Check up on missing contributors
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Release Management

- When to release
  - «Release early, release often»
  - «but... don’t release too early»
  - «Release it when it’s done»
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- Automate the process
  - Tag the release
  - Generate the distribution tarballs
  - Upload the tarballs
  - Update the documentation
  - Submit *.dsc file to NeuroDebian
  - ...

Announce the release
Mailinglist, blogpost, frontiers social network...
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Hosting

- Outsource? or roll your own?
  - Depends on project size
  - Depends on your required redundancy
  - Trac, Redmine...

- Popular choices include
  - Github (No mailinglists)
  - Sourceforge (Slow)
  ...
Online Presence

- Corporate Identity
  - Catchy Name (Choose it wisely)
  - Nice Logo

- Register your own domain?

- Important: Provide an SVG Logo
Dissemination

- Conferences
  - Talk or Poster
  - Run a Booth
    - Merchandise
    - Leaflet
    - Meet the developers

- Website
  - Overview of functionality
  - Contact email
  - Documentation

- Reviews and interviews in Journals and Magazines
  - e.g. Frontiers in [...]

- Provide a NeuroDebian package
Conclusion

- Open source tools used to make this presentation:
  - Wiki2beamer
  - \LaTeX\texttt{beamer}

Questions?