What open source and J.K. Rowling have in common

Importance of storytelling in open source projects

Speaker: Justin W. Flory
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So, who are you?

- **Fedora contributor**
  - Community Operations team lead, Fedora Magazine editor-in-chief, Fedora Community Blog editor-in-chief, Marketing team member, Ambassador, Diversity Team member, Join SIG participant, Games SIG participant, Fedora Badges sysadmin

- **Open source aficionado**
  - Former community moderator of SpigotMC, occasional MusicBrainz contributor

- **IT student from Rochester, NY**
  - President of RITlug, student captain of FOSS@MAGIC, and more
What I REALLY do in Fedora

• Remove all the titles...
  – Involved in mostly *non-technical fields*
  – Discovering and contributing to a never-ending novel
    • More on this later...
Was the talk title just clickbait?

- So, why J.K. Rowling? Is there magic in open source?
Was the talk title just clickbait?

- So, why J.K. Rowling? Is there magic in open source?
- Storytelling ability
  - Captivation... ready for the next chapter
  - Page turner!
- Rowling’s line of work isn’t unique to literature
  - Uncommon but vital for technical work
But... how is it a part of open source?

• In a world of CODE... COMMITS... SOFTWARE...
  – Where does storytelling fit?

• Meeting a goal... “scratching an itch”
  – Unique problems
Why are stories important?

• **Two audiences: users and contributors**
  - *Users*: Communicating purpose
  - *Contributors*: Knowing multiple sides of a project without being there
    • On the same page
    • Opening windows between different houses

• **Fedora <3 Python!**
How to tell the open source story

- Use of “best practices” and certain tools to help extract story and improve visibility
- **WARNING**: If you were looking some secret software or well-guarded secret to be revealed... sorry.
  - Reaching maximum potential
  - Following tools are ordered LEAST frequent to MOST frequent (but not importance)
• Front door, first impression, first *everything* for anyone for your project
  – ...ever.

• You have one shot! Make it count.

• Prioritize, organize
Announcement mailing lists

• Understandable to worry about sending too many emails, but...

• Be cautious of frequency, but don’t be scared

From: You <project-maintainer@yourproject.org>

To: announce@lists.yourproject.org

Subject: Beta release today - testers needed
• Larger projects: Centralize!

• Smaller projects: Consolidate!

• Short and sweet > long and “why did I ever think this was a good idea”
Social media

- Short, sweet, to the point!

- Did you do something this week? Can you fit it into 140 characters? Great!
Efforts meet results

• **How to measure success?**
  - Case study: Fedora and fedmsg
    - Commits, builds, bugs, blog posts, translations, Ansible playbook runs, ticket comments, Ask Fedora questions
  - See: [Fedora at FOSDEM 2016](j.jwf.io/fedora-fosdem-2016)
Who’s saying hello for the first time?

Fedora Contributors and Onboarded Newcomers in FOSDEM

- Blue bars: contributors
- Red bars: newcomers

2014: 10 contributors, 5 newcomers
2015: 50 contributors, 0 newcomers
2016: 70 contributors, 20 newcomers
“I don’t it’s worth it for Fedora to come to FOSDEM!”

- “Out of 52 contributors who attended FOSDEM 2014…
  - …18 contributors had an increase in their long term activity after FOSDEM and jumped ‘up’ i.e. from lower activity groups before FOSDEM to higher activity groups after FOSDEM…
  - …while 3 contributors had a decrease in their long term activity after FOSDEM and jumped ‘down’ i.e. classified into a lower activity region.”
FEDORA AT FOSDEM

* Introduction blatantly copied from mattdm’s Five Things in Fedora This week post in Magazine.

* Fedora spends quite a bit of energy, time, money, and other resources on Fedora’s presence at conferences. But, it’s unclear how much this actually matters — does it bring in new Fedora users? What about contributors? Well, over on the CommOps team, contributor Bee Padalkar set out to figure out. As I discussed in my State of Fedora talk at DevCon16, a lot of the activity in Fedora infrastructure generates messages on fedmsg — it’s like Twitter for all of our systems talking to each other, rather than for humans.

Bee starts by looking at attendees who got the FOSDEM 2016 Badge at the Fedora booth there, and then observing their activity after the conference. Accounts which start at the conference and then become ongoing, active contributors = measurable conference success. Read about this on the CommOps list, and staying tuned for more analysis of other conferences. And of course my favorite — pretty crashes.* * — mattdm
Efforts meet results

How to show results

- Not everyone is lucky
- Still patterns to understand success
  - Measure commits / issues / pull requests
  - Account registrations
  - Conference / event engagement
  - Translated strings / languages
There is a story.

- *One* person saw a world of wizards, witches, and magic. She shared it. She inspired billions.

- You have a story. Find your story. And share it.
• **Images / Data**
  - **Books** by Mikhail Pavstyum, Unsplash
  - Bhagyashree (Bee) Padalkar, Fedora at FOSDEM
  - Harry Potter: The Perfect Fictional Hero by Annie Ryan

• **Find me!**
  - **Email:** jflory7@fedoraproject.org
  - **Twitter:** @jflory7

• **Motivation**
  - Remy DeCausemaker (decause) for lighting my path into open source and dreaming a dream others didn’t yet see
  - Brian Exelbierd (bexelbie)
  - Fedora CommOps team (you guys rock!)
  - Fedora Magazine editorial team
  - Stephen Jacobs
  - Dan Schneiderman (schneidy)
  - Fedora community for all of the lessons I’ve learned...
  - SpigotMC community and Michael Dardis for starting me in open source
  - So many, many, many more incredible people I could never list here
Thank you!

Questions?

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