

Nurturing an Open Source community is like tending a garden

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ASF member
Pig, Parquet, Arrow, Marquez, OpenLineage, ...

Is this the right analogy?

- You can't force plants to grow
- You can only create the space and plant the seeds
- You aren't in control of the environment, just your garden
- Gardens can get out of control really quickly if they aren't tended



By The Great Vine, Hampton Court Palace, Surrey by Christine Matthews, CC BY-SA 2.0,
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https://www.flickr.com/photos/happy_sleepy/2925002770

Agenda

- What is Open Source?
- Why do I need to tend to my community?
- How to nurture.
- And it's all worth it!



What is Open Source?



Site of the Reformers' Tree, Hyde Park, London
By August Schwerdfeger - Own work, CC BY 4.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=66807735>

Open Source comes in different shapes and sizes

- License
- Governance
- Foundations



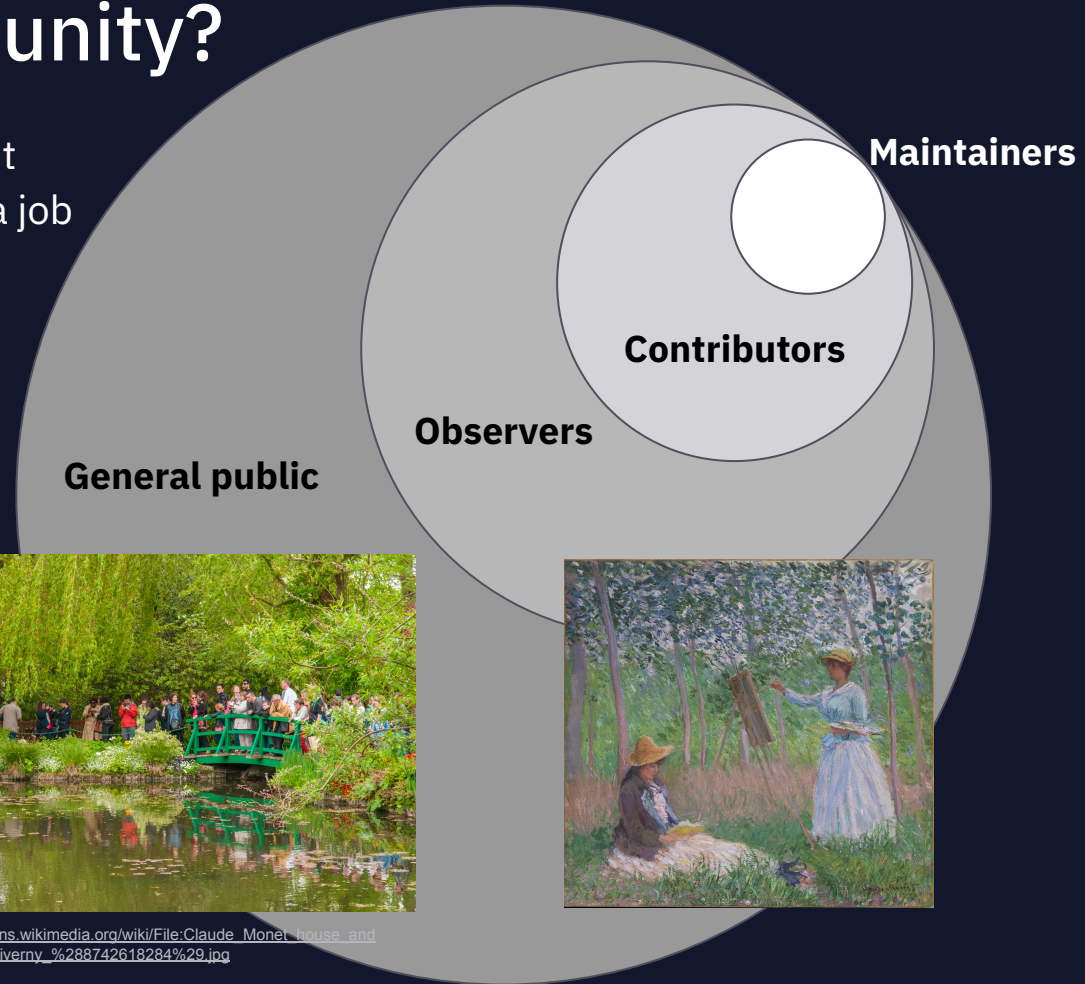
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/matthieu-aubry/5233794818>



By Tobias Kleinlercher / Wikipedia - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=52562680>

What makes a community?

- All community members are important
- Contributing or Maintaining might be a job
- What are maintainer roles?
 - Committer vs PMC



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ugardener/37818309356>



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Claude_Monet_house_and_garden_in_Giverny_%288742618284%29.jpg

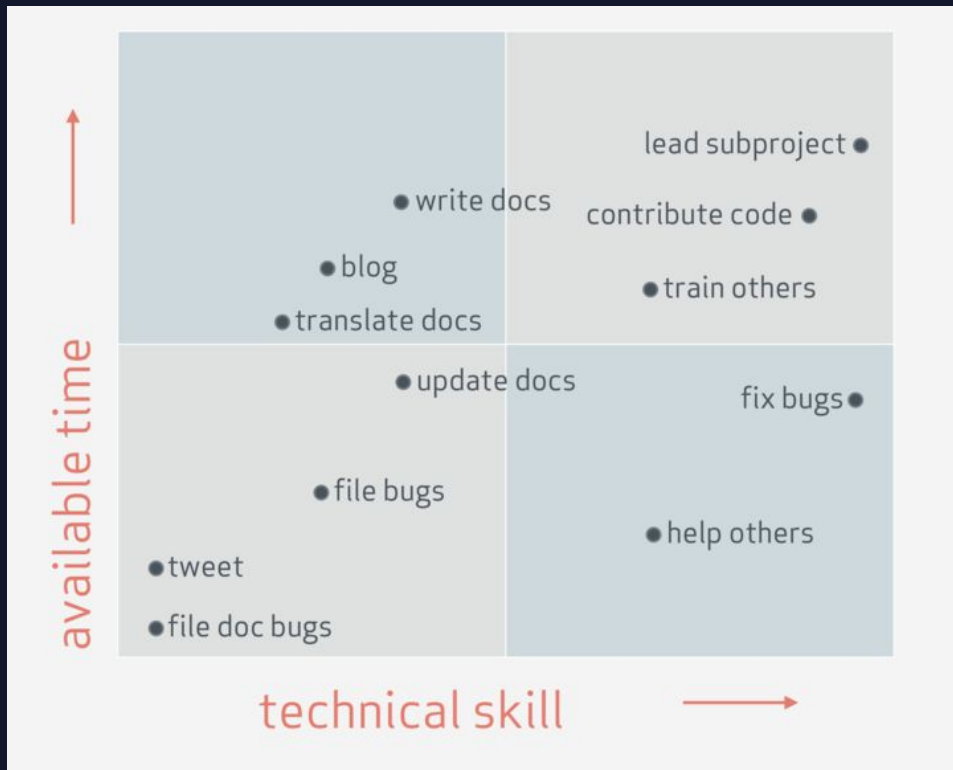


What's a contribution?

- Asking or answering questions
- Bug reports
- Documentation
- Bug fixes
- Code contributions

From Ross Turk

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7099823227295686657/>



Why do I need to tend to my community?



Why does the community need caring for?

- Friction inherent in async global communication
- Lack of attention?
- Uncertainty: Is the energy I spend on the project worthwhile?



Contributor's perspective

- Am I allowed to chime in?
 - Some people might show up with a PR
 - Some people need to be given permission
- How hard is it to get my first contribution in?



Maintainer's perspective

- Overwhelming: The entire world can have input on this.
- Do I have the time to give attention to every contributor?



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Boy_in_blue_t-shirt_watering_plants.jpg



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/argonne/17265401886>



How to nurture



Setting expectations

- Contributing:
 - What to do before submitting a PR?
 - How does a PR get merged?
 - What makes sense to contribute?
- Release cadence:
 - How often?
 - How does the decision of releasing happen?
- Governance:
 - How does one become or stop being a maintainer?



By Nick Ares - originally posted to Flickr as Giant Pumpkin Festival 10.20.07.013.
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By Majid Amlashi - Imported from 500px (archived version) by the Archive Team. (detail page), CC0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=71847608>

Reduce friction to contribution

- Tooling and processes:
 - Are weeds taking over?
 - Is your CI always green?
 - Is setting up a local environment easy?
 - Is your release process clear?
 - Do you have CODEOWNERS?



Recognizing contributions



Reduce friction to use

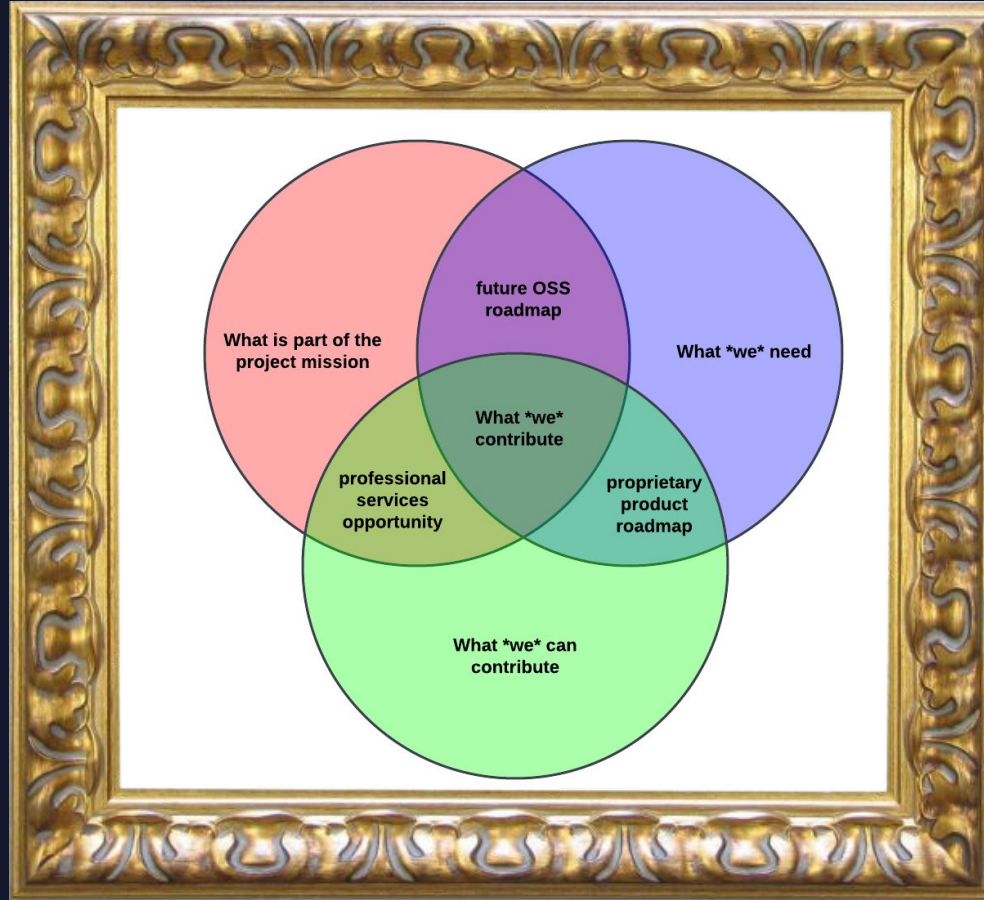
- Regular releases:
 - Monthly
 - Main always shippable
 - Allowing community to request releases
- Documentation



Contributors become stakeholders



What's an open source project road map?



Community requires communication, building trust and connections

- **Async** communication is **necessary** in a distributed global community
- However async communication is **not the most natural** or efficient form of communication
- Synchronous communication excludes people in incompatible timezones
- In-person communication excludes people in different locations
- Spoken languages also get in the way



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2008_community_garden_JacksonvilleFL_2527237610.png



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sharing_the_harvest_at_a_community_garden.jpg



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Summer_Rayne_Oakes_teaching_at_community_garden.jpg

Augmenting async communication by adding synchronicity

- Video conferencing helps getting remote people together.
- In-person meetups help forming connection
- Regular sync meetings:
 - Define agenda async or on the spot
 - Be accessible to the community (vary time for video calls, vary location for in person meetups, English as most spoken language)
 - Open to anyone
 - Publish notes and recordings for people who couldn't join
 - Follow up async



By Grec man - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,
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First Lady Michelle Obama joins school children and chefs for the annual fall harvest of the White House Kitchen



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/icraf/7407858352>

And it's all worth it!



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Claude_Monet_house_and_garden_in_Giverny_%28288741490771%29.jpg



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