Happiness in Open Source

Armin Ronacher
Me

• Armin Ronacher (@mitsuhiko)
• Open Source Person
• Flask, Werkzeug, Jinja, Lektor etc.
• Now working on Sentry
Interrupt Me
Getting There
The Trigger

• Bought a book by Gregor Lingl: “Python für Kids”
• Stumbled upon the German Python Forum
• The former administrator recommends Linux and with it Ubuntu
Back in Time

- 2004: Ubuntu was released
- the first version of Linux I could actually run on my desktop.
- Little bit of PHP Hacking
  - --> ubuntuusers.de
Going with the Flow

• Ubuntu exploded. You could actually see yourself making a “difference”

• got a contribution into ubuntu directly: a simple wallpaper and some translations
Growing Big

• Founding of the German ubuntu society
• Scaling website to multiple servers
• The politics start
Why did it happen?
Hermagor

- My Hometown
- Population: 1,500
- People with an interest in technology: few
- Enter the internet
Next Step: Programming

• Diving into Python development
• learning real programming
• Getting in contact with other Python developers (Georg Brandl)
Learning

• Jinja -> Templates without Django
• Copy pasting code over, trying to improve it
• Learning on IRC from a guy who actually knows parsers.
Release

- First implementation was crap
- Did not stop me from publishing it though
- What is a license?
Open?

• You can do whatever you want with it.
• Wrong
Stumbling Blocks

• Jacob Kaplan–Moss sends me a mail that some of the leftover code from Django in Jinja is missing the License declaration.

• Learning on Licensing
Communication & Culture
There is a difference between IRC and RL
Textual communication can be a problem
IRC/mail does not transfer emotions
Different cultures
Licensing

• Horrible, horrible, horrible, horrible, horrible, horrible, horrible, horrible, horrible, horrible, bad, bad, bad, bad, AAAAaaaargh

• And you can seriously hurt yourself
Goals

• Often you don't want what others do
• And that might not even be obvious
• Learn to say no
Why do it?
Why Open Source?

• Fun
• Rewarding
• Networking for shy people
• A common ground
Learning

• I learn by failing and communicating with others.

• If it wasn't for the open source community I wouldn't be able to find people to talk to.

• Cross language / border
It pays off

• Learning new things
• Getting introduced to interesting people
• The thrill of working together
• Happiness when you see your stuff being used
Staying Motivated
Use It

• You can only build things you use yourself
• Let other's chime in when you stop using it
• Stop using it if you find something better / you need to use something else
Be More Boring

• Sometimes it's important to stay boring
• Don't get carried away by the latest trends
• Don't overstep the original goals
Licensing
BSD or GTFO

• All popular Python modules are MIT/BSD licensed with the occasional LGPL one
• Commercial modules are very, very rare
• GPL libraries ends up being mostly unused

• Why?
Forced Contributions

• “99% of useful code contributions come from people who are motivated to participate in the project regardless of what the license tells them they have to do.” — Steve Streeting
Money: Case Studies
Making Money

- Selling the software?
- Libraries vs Applications
- Selling support?
- BSD/MIT/zlib
Flask

• Impossible to sell

• However an amazing way to bootstrap a career

• More than possible to sell consulting
Sentry

• Open Source not Open Core
• Puts us where others cannot be
• Bootstrapped
Thank You
Contact

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