

Contributing to Open Source Projects

Presented by Elizabeth Krumbach

lyz@princessleia.com

www.princessleia.com

Introduction

- Skills
- Getting involved
- Benefits

Who am I?

- I've worked as a Debian/Ubuntu Sysadmin for LinuxForce in Philadelphia for 3 years
- I've done certification course development work for Canonical
- I've written tutorials on my own website, on the O'Reilly Linux blog and for debian-administration.org and was earlier this year interviewed for a piece on Debian Lenny for LinuxFormat
- My first “official” F/OSS contribution was in 2005 when I wrote some documentation for the Bitlbee project
- I am the maintainer of a few Debian packages and I head up the Debian LedgerSMB team
- I am involved with various projects within Ubuntu, primarily focused on advocacy and education
- I am a member of the Ubuntu Community Council
- I coordinate the Philadelphia area Linux Users Group (PLUG)

Skills

I want to help, but...

I don't know how!

I am not good at programming!

Programming

Working with Bugs

Testing

Documentation

User Interface

Design

Community

Getting Involved

OK, I picked
a task and chose a project – what do I do now?

What should I expect?

How should I behave?

First Steps

Getting involved “The Right Way”

- Go to their website, look around
- Join mailing list(s), IRC channel, forums
- Get a feel for the community

Involvement

- Respect other contributors
- Follow procedures in place for contributions
- Accept criticism gracefully
- Follow through with commitments
- Be patient

Involvement

- Don't insult the work of your predecessors
- Don't step on toes or duplicate work
- Don't flame or be otherwise nonconstructive
- Don't fork the project unilaterally

Watch out!

- Not every project is active
- You may want to avoid projects that are:
 - Huge and with high entry barriers
 - Run by companies in an “over-the-fence” style
- If you work in IT, you may have restrictions placed on your involvement with open source

Conflict

- We're human, conflicts arise!
- Control your emotions, if you get upset just take a break
- Don't take things personally
- Try not to get discouraged
- Be supportive and encouraging
- Not every project is right for you

Benefits

Involvement in Open Source can be very rewarding
on many levels

Fun!

Friends!

Experience!

Opportunity!

Conclusion

- Understand the project you want to work with
- Be positive and polite
- Involvement is fun and rewarding

Questions?

Credits

Cathy Malmrose – Offered some insight related to her own open source involvement experiences

Mike Joseph – Reviewed slides and offered additions and revisions

David A. Harding – Reviewed slides and offered additions and revisions