From TrainedMonkey™ to Google SoC Mentor

(How to become an OOo developer and what to do to make the path smoother)

by Fridrich Štrba
Agenda

- My path
- Difficulties
- Build Developer Community
- Attract and keep developers
From TrainedMonkey™ ...

- Education
- FOSS projects
- Position inside the OpenOffice.org community
Education

- Engineer of Technical Cybernetics – University of Žilina (Slovakia)

- Diploma in Journalism – University of Fribourg (Switzerland)

- Bachelor's Degree in International Relations – University of Geneva (Switzerland)

- Master's Degree in International Law – Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva (Switzerland)
FOSS Projects

- libwpd (http://libwpd.sourceforge.net/)
- libwpg (http://sourceforge.net/projects/libwpg)
- AbiWord (http://www.abisource.com/)
- OpenOffice.org (http://www.openoffice.org)
WordPerfect™ import filter maintainer

Alternative Java SDKs
- IBM
- BEA Systems

Miscellaneous build fixes
Humble beginnings – libwpd

Windows® version of wpd2sxw

WriterPerfect for Windows® – installer maintainer

Diving into C++

libwpd maintainer
...to SoC mentor (2)

- ooo-build and WriterPerfect
- NeoOffice/J and WordPerfect™ import filter
- CWS libwpdupgrade
- OpenOffice.org WordPerfect™ import filter maintainer
- CWS morejava
- Google Summer of Code 2006 mentor
Difficulties & annoyances

- Reputation of OpenOffice.org among other functionally similar FOSS applications
- Complexity and "weirdness" of the source tree and build system
- Time consuming, unclear and sometimes bureaucratic integration procedures.
"OpenOffice.org is *de facto* Sun corporate shop!"

JCA - "They want to steal my copyright!"

"To push innovation through is nearly impossible!"
### Contributor Statistics

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Contributor Statistics for OpenOffice.org Conference

- **1st position**: 87.03%
- **2nd position**: 93.76%
- **3rd position**: 98.75%
- **4th position**: 96.53%

Total contributors: 171188
Developer community

The goal:
15% of community contributions

Community will not generate spontaneously

Needs a deliberate effort to be built!
Community building

- Marketing the project versus marketing the product
- Making it fun to hack on OpenOffice.org and passing the message to others
- Example of Miguel de Icaza and Nat Friedman
Large source tree

Increase the **modularity** of the source code!

One OpenOffice.org build can take a day or more on mainstream hardware

A lot of precious hacking time is lost while building

Answers:

- Improving the build process
- Modularization, modularization,...

Did I forget to say "modularization"?
An opportunity to learn

Institutionalized peer code review !!!

Non-linear learning curve and discouraging size of the source tree

- QA is excellent for finding errors, but ...
- Code review is helping to prevent errors, improve the code's quality and improve both peers' coding skills

A need to "coach" new developers, help them before they get discouraged and build a great relationship with them.

- Example of ooo-build
Bureaucratic process

- Some **structure** is **necessary** for a project of this size.

- For a developer contributing in one's free **time**, wasting **time** is a major drawback.

- A benevolent contributor does not benefit from **informal links** that can exist in Hamburg offices.

- Towards **community** iTTeam members.
Questions and stoning session

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."

_Revelation 2:7_