

# How OSS Failed Dispersed Teams

Or...

Writing OSS that People Will Actually Use

Who I Am

Why you should care

Why you should care

I Love FLOSS

GNU/Linux Hippie



Emacs Fiend

# Corporate Infiltrator

Creator/Contributor

<http://github.com/avdi>

# Dispersed Teams

Geographically separated, working together

Sound Familiar?

We practically invented the dispersed team



Developers love FLOSS tools

FLOSS: It's not just cheaper, it's better

...right?

So I have this website

<http://wideteams.com>

# Interviews

Dispersed teams aren't using FLOSS (much)

Why not?



# The remote toolkit

- Voice/Video Chat
- Chat Rooms
- Screen Sharing
- Version Control

# Voice/Video Chat

SIP/H.323

# 1. Choose a Protocol

## 2. Host a Server

# 3. Find clients

## 4. Set up accounts



5. Tell everyone how to  
connect

6. Maintain it

Skype

1. Download it

## 2. Create accounts

# 3. Log in

(4. Complain about how annoying Skype is)

# Chat Rooms



IRC/Jabber

1. Host a server

## 2. Set up a log server

## 4. Set up accounts

5. Get everyone  
connected

## 6. Maintain It

Campfire

1. Set up account



## 2. Define Users

3. Send a link

# Screen Sharing

VNC

1. Get [compatible] software

## 2. Punch hole in firewall

### 3. Figure out SSH tunneling

4. Look up your IP address



## 5. Connect

6. Public wifi? Forget it.

TeamViewer

1. Download it

1. Download it

2. Start it

3. Send session ID

## 4. Connect



# Version Control

**FLOSS!**

**GIT**

...hosted on GitHub

Most teams do centralized  
version control

No one wants to host their own

# Observations

# Social Software



“How will it help to get  
your users laid?” - JWZ

A Means to an End

Connecting people

# The Distributed Mindset

Centralization is underrated

Jabber: Gtalk, GIT: GitHub

Everyone else is there

# Small Teams



No DevOps

# Lessons

1. Do one thing ~~well~~ easily

What's happening?

140

**New!** Add a location to your tweets. [Turn it on](#) - [No thanks](#)

[edit](#)

Tweet

**Latest intridea** That's us! via @wideteams New on the Wide Teams

Podcast: an interview with a 50+ member globally distributed team

<http://bit.ly/a48czu> Retweeted by you about 12 hours ago

## 2. Lower the Barrier to Entry

Do the Web UI First

Services, not protocols

Clients will follow



# 3. Release Early

But you knew that

# Diaspora

[#diaspora](#) - 500 forks, almost no merges.



dscm gone bad.

<http://github.com/diaspora/diaspora/network>

10:04 AM Oct 5th via TweetDeck

Retweeted by 3 people

 Reply  Retweet



[aslak\\_hellesoy](#)

Aslak Hellesøy

## 4. Host it

One Well-Known Host

Leave the distributed  
architecture for 2.0

...or forget it entirely

5. Sell it



You need to pay for hosting

You need good feedback

You need an incentive

Your users need confidence

# Projects

# talkerapp.com

[Home](#) [Tour](#) [Pricing & Signup](#)



## TALKER

Fast, intuitive and extensible group chat

**PASTE WITH EASE** →

**IMAGES & VIDEOS** →

**FEED NOTIFICATIONS** →



← **SEARCH THE CHAT**

← **UPLOAD AND SHARE FILES**

### Group workflow

Talker encourages good group dynamics. Helps teams gel and get things done together.

### No IM client

Run from inside a browser. It is as easy as visiting a web page.

### Fewer meetings

Real time chat reduces the need for lengthy meetings. Spend time working instead.


### Work remotely

Don't let distance be an issue. Chat with colleagues anywhere!

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# teambox.com


Teambox


corrin

All Projects ▾ All Tasks Calendar and charts Time Tracking


Comment on: Earthworks Yoga


+ NEW PROJECT


What are you working on? Share ideas, links, updates.


Attach 


Text Styling Preview Save

Frank Kramer created a task in Earthworks Yoga Sun August 8, 2010

✓ Contact area businesses for banner exchange on  Design

Frank Kramer **NEW** → **F. KRAMER** Sun August 8, 2010 ▾  
Please contact Green Earth Cafe, Nellie's Tacos, Fenton's, RDOZ, and Cato's about a banner exchange with EarthworksYoga.com. Verbiage for your email can be found here in Teambox on the Pages tab.


Corrina Kottke **NEW** → **WOLD** Tue August 10, 2010 ▾  
How cool!


Define what needs to be done. assign this task to somebody.

PROJECTS

And more  
Clean studio  
Clean the house  
Compete  
Corral  
Earthworks Yoga  
Marketing  
Personal project

Show 1 Archived Projects...

 Subscribe to feeds...

 Subscribe to calendar

# EtherPad

The screenshot displays the EtherPad web interface. At the top, a blue header bar contains the text "EtherPad". Below this, a navigation bar includes a "Public Pad" link, "Pad Options", "Import/Export", "Saved revisions", "Time Slider", and a "Home" button. A toolbar with various editing icons (bold, italic, underline, strikethrough, list, link, unlink, color, undo, redo, link icon, and a document icon) is positioned above the main text area. The main text area is a large white space with a vertical line number margin on the left (1-5). It contains the following text: "Welcome to EtherPad!", "This pad text is synchronized as you type, so that everyone viewing this page sees the same text. This allows you to collaborate seamlessly on documents!", and a cursor at the end of the first line. To the right of the main text area is a sidebar. It features a purple square icon, a text input field with the placeholder "< enter your name >", a link labeled "Invite" followed by the text "other users and they will show up here.", a blue button labeled "Share this pad", and a date stamp "October 14, 2010" above a large empty white space.

EtherPad

Public Pad

Pad Options Import/Export Saved revisions Time Slider Home

**B** *I* U ~~S~~

1 |  
2 Welcome to EtherPad!  
3  
4 This pad text is synchronized as you type, so that everyone viewing this page sees the same  
5 text. This allows you to collaborate seamlessly on documents!

< enter your name >


[Invite](#) other users and they will show up here.

Share this pad

October 14, 2010



# dimdim.com



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Groups

Businesses




*"Dimdim's technology provides our customers with the simple, cost-effective and full-featured Web conferencing solution they need to get their business done."*

— Wendy Steinle, Novell



*"Our new application allows people to interact and collaborate virtually, almost as if they were in the same room."*

—Samih Elhage,  
President, Nortel



# Google Wave

# Conclusion

We need more OSS

**Fix It!**

Thank You

Avdi Grimm

Twitter: @avdi / @wideteams

<http://avdi.org/devblog>

<http://wideteams.com>

<http://shiprise.net>