

Space Station 13: Transitioning to Open Source

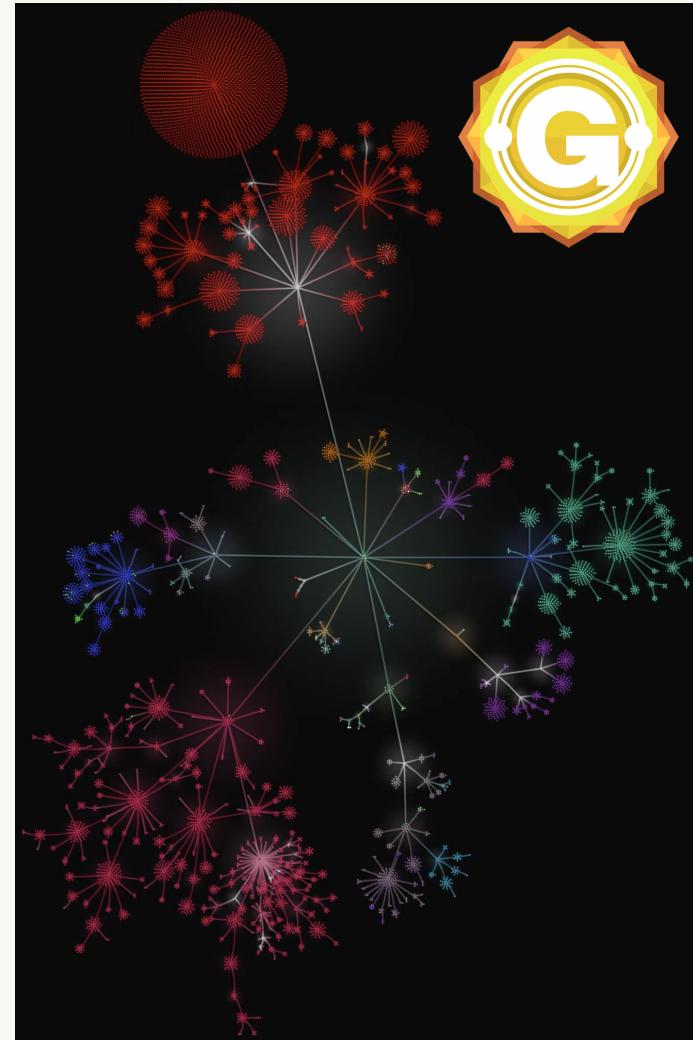
Kai Richardson

Maintainer for Goonstation



Goonstation?

- Game Community
- ~120 players online
- Open-Source* for 3 Years
 - 59,000* commits
 - 330+ contributors
 - Merge 10-20 contributions / day



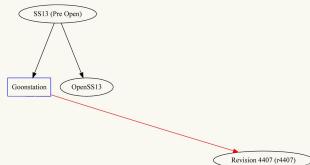
SS13?

- Multiplayer Role-Playing Game
- Started in 2003
 - ...more like 2009
- Revision 4407



Prehistoric SS13

SS13 Codebases



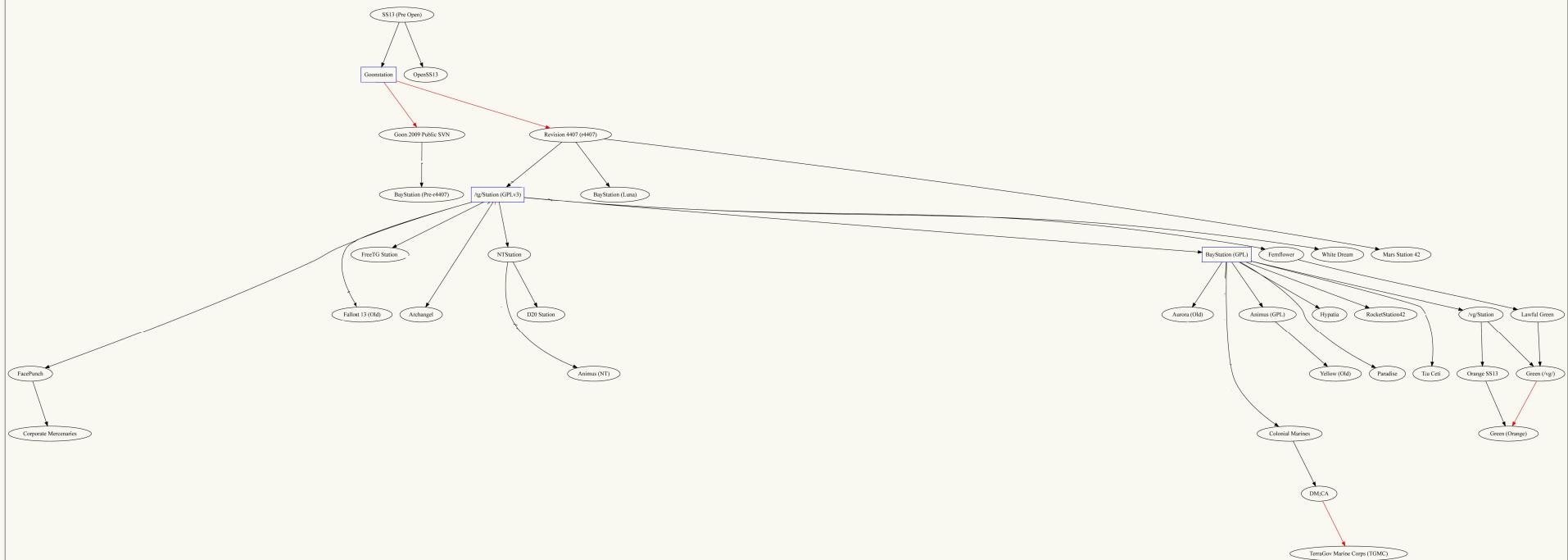
Forks...

SS13 Codebases



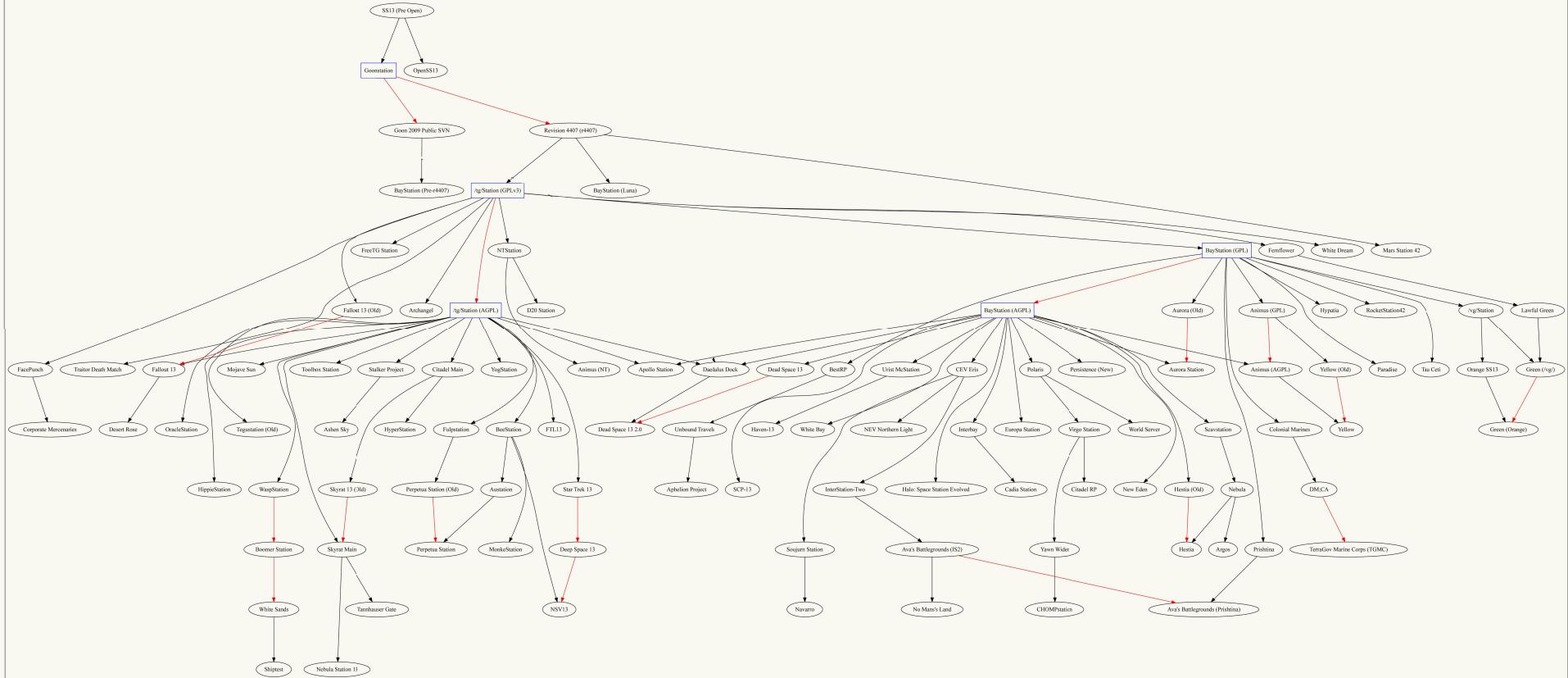
More forks...

SS13 Codebases



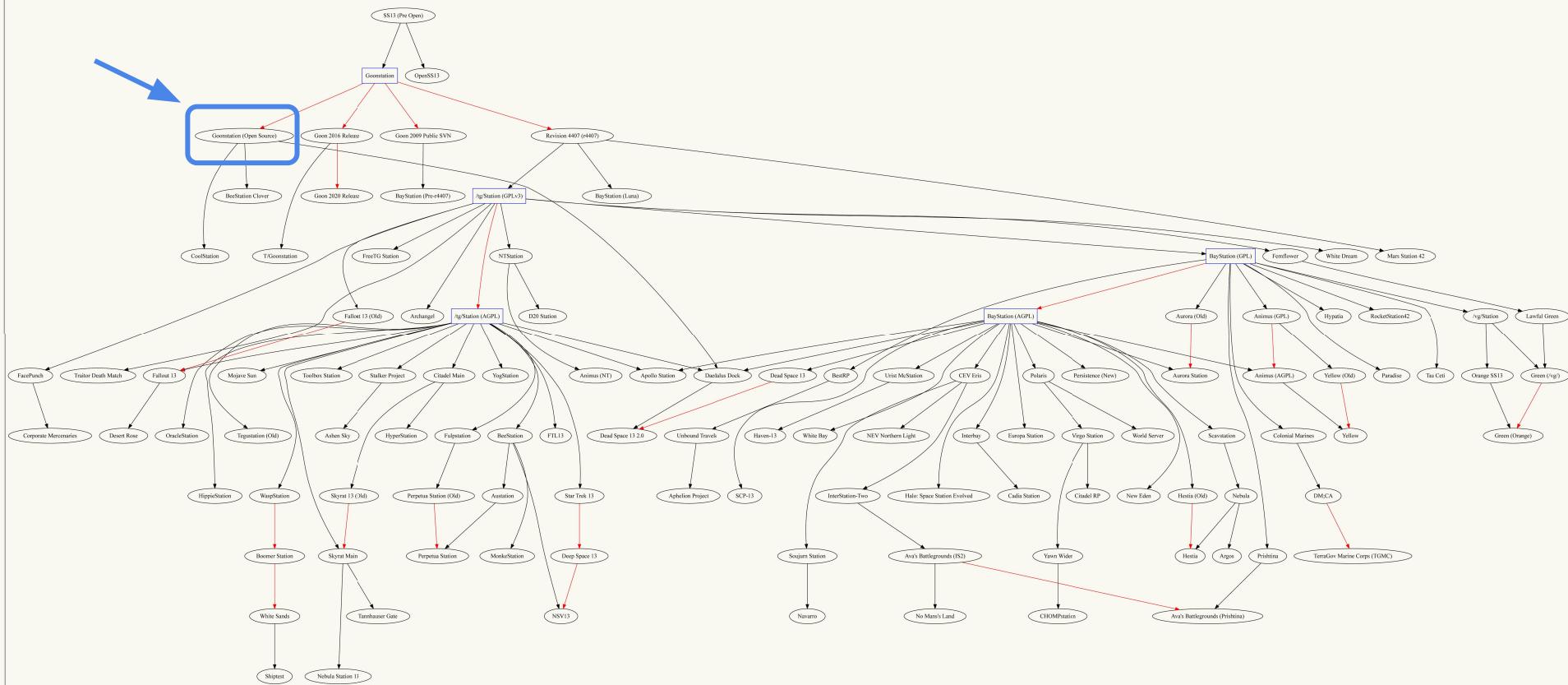
That's a lot of forks...

SS13 Codebases



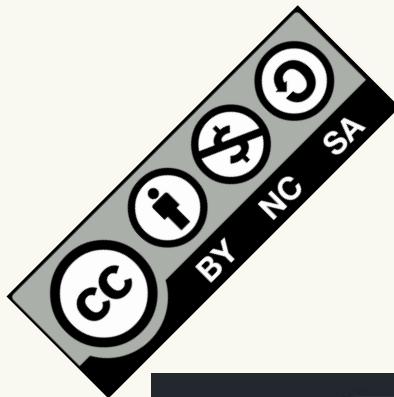
SS13 Today

SS13 Codebases



Open Source

- April 1st, 2020
- Small (~3%) secret submodule
 - Server-Side Extension?



goonstation Public

Repository for the Goonstation branch of SS13

● DM ⭐ 280 🏷 1,104 ⚙ 1,534 ⚡ 64 Updated 5 hours ago

goonstation-secret Private

⚠️⚠️ SECRET - Goonstation Secret Repository - SECRET ⚡️⚠️

● DM ⭐ 0 🏷 0 ⚙ 0 ⚡️ 1 Updated 2 days ago

Goonstation Split-Code Initiative

For many years, the Goonstation codebase has been developed privately by selected staff members. There are several compelling reasons for maintaining an private codebase. For example, it's our view that the nature of some game mechanics warrant some secrecy, without which there is little sense of mystery or discovery. In addition, if our codebase were public, /tg/station would just steal all of our cool features like chemistry and chat stacking.

However, with two leaks and subsequent official releases, we began to question our past motivations and we asked ourselves: "What's the point in keeping our codebase closed source anymore?"

Well, the most convincing answer we could come up with is keeping our secret content secret. Some content is better when discovered through dives in deep space rather than dives through GitHub. Certainly, we wish to preserve the sense of pride and accomplishment that accompanies finally figuring out the Good Ending.

But what if I told you that we could have our lightly-fried Shitty Bill's spleen meat cake and eat it too? A codebase open to the public for contributing, but also having secrets such as chem recipes hidden. Well, long story short, it's possible and we did it. Also pool in the game again.

Starting today, Goonstation's public codebase will be located at <https://github.com/goonstation/goonstation>. Any member of the community will be able to make pull requests, which will be reviewed and potentially accepted. No more strange patch compare stuff! The (small) secret portion of the codebase will continue to be developed internally, and the game server will run a combination of the two thanks to git's submodule feature.

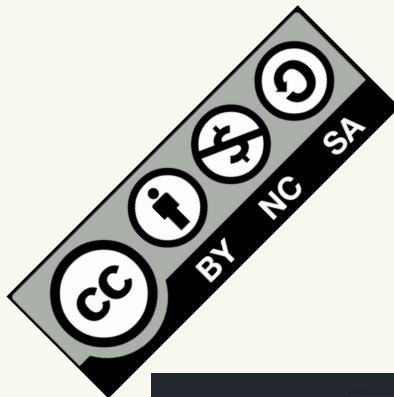
Space Station 13 has been a labor of love to many of us for years; for some more than a decade. However, now is the time to open up contributions to all, and to ease the process of development for everyone. Let's all make a fun game about space.

-The Goonstation Team



Open Source

- April 1st, 2020
- Small (~3%) secret submodule
 - Server-Side Extension?
- Otherwise fully open-source
 - Website
 - API & CI/CD
 - Bots



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The screenshot shows two GitHub repository cards. The top card is for 'goonstation' (Public), which is described as 'Repository for the Goonstation branch of SS13'. It has 280 stars, 1,104 forks, 1,534 issues, 64 pull requests, and was updated 5 hours ago. The bottom card is for 'goonstation-secret' (Private), which is described as 'SECRET - Goonstation Secret Repository - SECRET'. It has 0 stars, 0 forks, 0 issues, 1 pull request, and was updated 2 days ago. Both cards include the Goonstation logo icon.

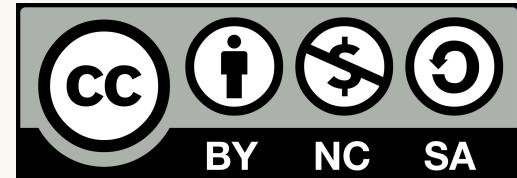
Repository	Status	Stars	Forks	Issues	Pulls	Last Update
goonstation	Public	280	1,104	1,534	64	Updated 5 hours ago
goonstation-secret	Private	0	0	0	1	Updated 2 days ago

Initial Decisions



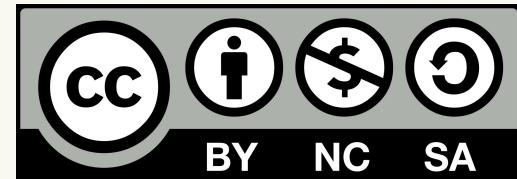
Licensing

- More permissive (MIT)
- More copyleft (AGPL)
- For us, CC-BY-NC-SA
 - Not really for code...
 - Inherited



Licensing

- More permissive (MIT)
- More copyleft (AGPL)
- For us, CC-BY-NC-SA
 - Not really for code...
 - Inherited
- A complex decision



Costs

- Servers cost money



Costs

- Servers cost money
- Soliciting donations from community
- Various platforms:
 - Patreon®
 - GitHub Sponsors®
 - Ko-Fi®
 - All proprietary...



Distribution

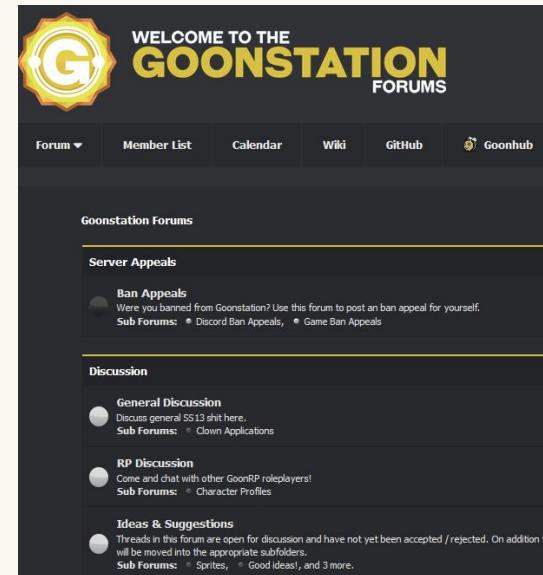
- Where's the source?
 - Accessibility
- SS13 is on GitHub®
 - Greater community & forks
- GitLab / self-hosted git



Communication



- Chatting vs long-form discussion
- Primarily use Discord[®] and a forum (MyBB)
 - Revolt?
- GitHub[®] Discussions?



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Goonstation Forums. At the top, there's a yellow circular logo with a stylized 'G' and the text "WELCOME TO THE GOONSTATION FORUMS". Below the header, there's a navigation bar with links for "Forum", "Member List", "Calendar", "Wiki", "GitHub", and "Goonhub". The main content area has a dark background with yellow text. It features several forum categories: "Goonstation Forums", "Server Appeals" (with sub-forums for Ban Appeals and Game Ban Appeals), "Discussion" (with sub-forums for General Discussion and RP Discussion), and "Ideas & Suggestions" (with sub-forums for Sprites, Goodideas, and 3 more). Each category has a brief description and a link to its sub-forums.

Initial Steps Recap

- Licensing
- Costs
- Distribution
- Communication



Contributor Experience

First Time User Experience

- Initial onboarding is critical
- Streamlined and easy to follow
- All skill levels



In-Depth Onboarding Guide

- Singular point of entry
- Basic workflow
- Simple & advanced topics
- Guides within



- Goonstation Development Guide
 - Disclaimer
 - So, how do I get started?
 - Step 1: Downloading Visual Studio Code
 - Step 2: Forking
 - Step 3: Git Good
 - Step 4: Extension-O-Rama
 - Step 5: Remote Control
 - Step 6: Fixing Up
 - Making Changes
 - Step 1: Branching
 - Step 2: Change It Up
 - Step 3: Testing your code
 - Step 4: Up On Stage
 - Step 5: Publishing to GitHub
 - Making a Pull Request
 - Feedback and You
 - Merge Conflict
 - Staying In Sync

In-Depth Onboarding Guide

Goonstation Development Guide

- Goonstation Development Guide
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CONTRIBUTING

Clear Contributing Guidelines

- Guidelines for everything!
 - Code
 - Sprites
 - Audio
 - More!



 README

 DOCS

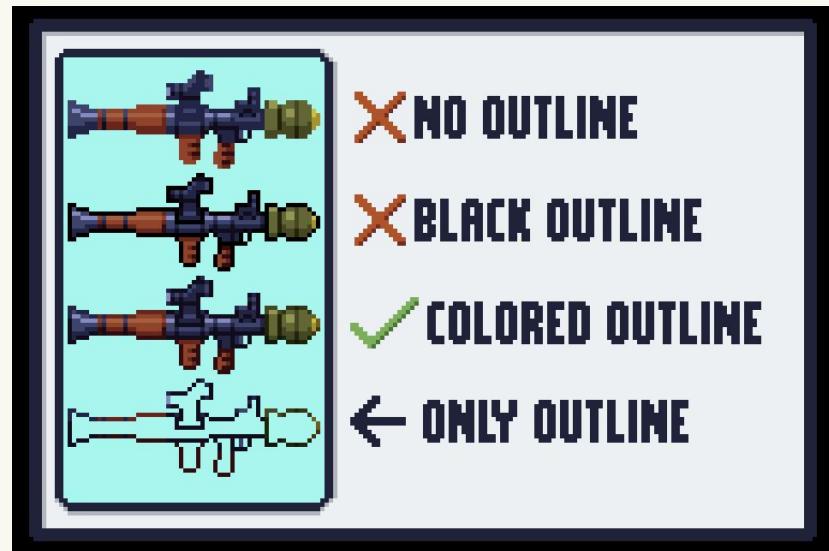
 CODE

 SPRITES

 AUDIO

 MAPS

Clear Contributing Guidelines



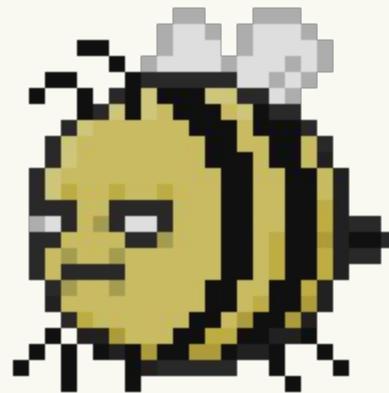
Digestible Onboarding

- Intentionally lower the bar
 - ‘Monthly’ contests
- Small yet visible contributions
 - Small map piece
- Empowers non-traditional contributors



Controversial Changes

- Disagreements
 - Balance Changes
 - Removals
 - Not Merging
- Inevitable
- Transparent decision-making & communication



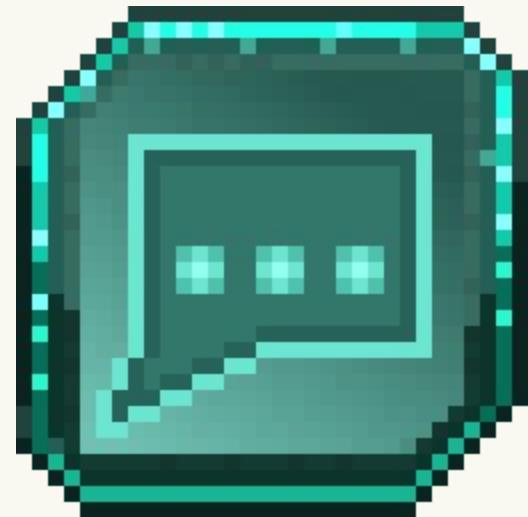
Town Halls

- Town Halls as Q&A
- Hasn't really worked
 - Too much time
 - Duplicate questions
- Asynchronous?
 - Still lots of time...
- Not the worst



Communication

- Clarity on how the team feels
- Continuous feedback

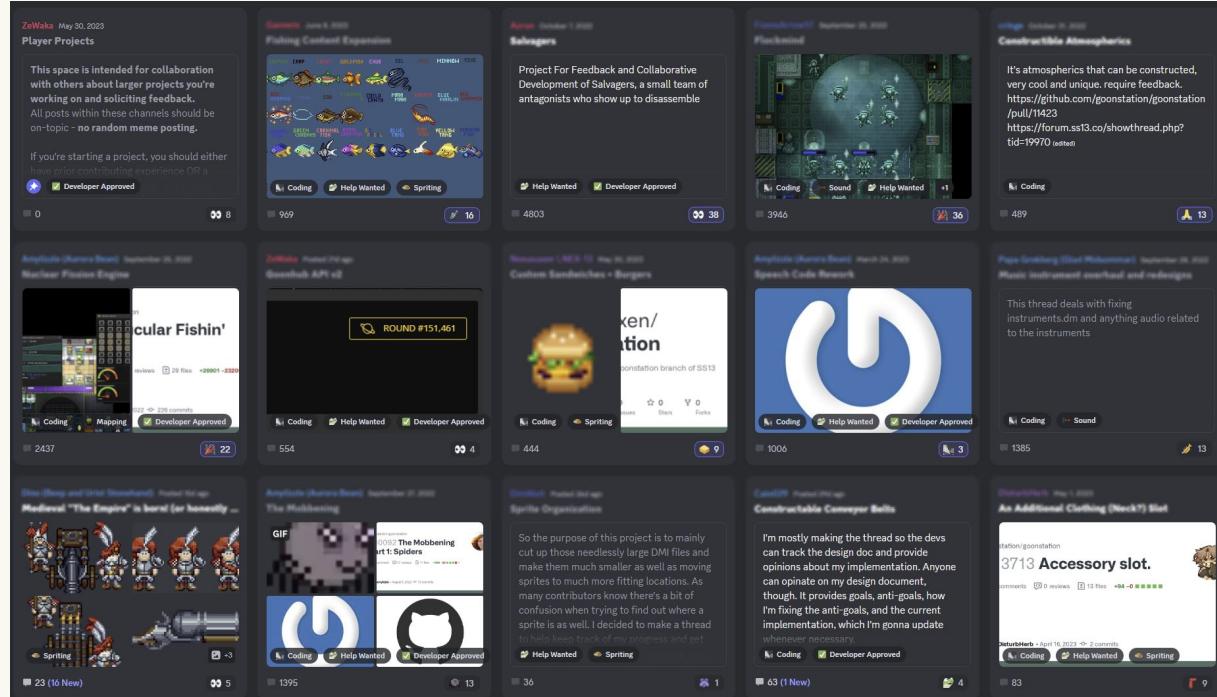


#Player-Projects

- Forum

#Player-Projects

- Forum
- Project Threads
- Official project venue
- Advertising & feedback



Player Project Difficulties

- Problem: Idea dumping ground
- Solution: Design Documents



Design Document

How to Write a Good Design Doc (originally by Mothblocks)

Abstract

An abstract is a short blurb, about a paragraph or two, succinctly describing your feature. This should mostly be "why", but can include "what".

Goals

This is a numbered list clearly detailing your goals for the feature. As per usual, this should be a mixture of both why and what.

Non-goals

Just like goals, but the opposite! Every feature has boundaries it won't step over. These should be written as if they start with "We will not..." .

Content

Now's where you get into clear detail about everything your feature does. **You should still be explaining 'why' things are that way, as you describe what.** Be as detailed as possible.

This shouldn't be under a "Content" header, that's just for the sake of this document.

The example is provided in [this example design doc](#).

Alternatives

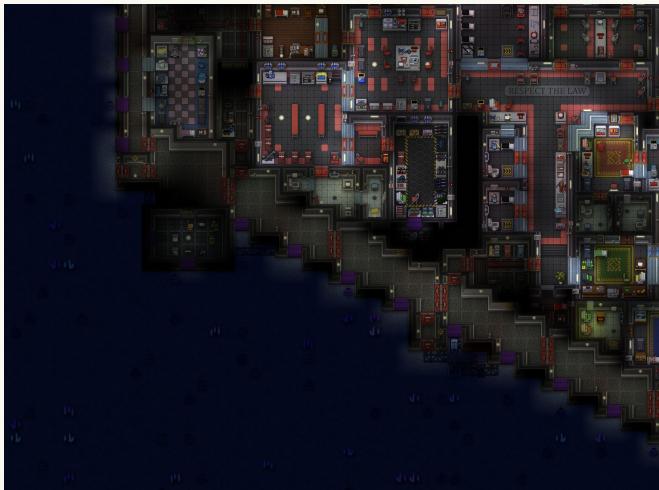
Provide potential alternatives to your feature, either ones that align with your design values, or ones that don't that you suspect will be suggested. If you are including the latter, make sure to explain why you didn't choose that.

Potential Changes

Most of the time you're not going to get the best design first try. It helps to try your best to predict what *could* go wrong, and suggest alternatives that can be taken, without sacrificing your design.

Success!

- Single* Contributor: New Map
- Multiple Contributors: New Gamemode
- Maintainer-Sponsored: Fishing



Agreement

- Some changes are incompatible
 - Something else entirely
- Open-source: fork
- Other novel usages



Contributor Recap

- New contributors:
 - In-depth onboarding guide
 - Clear contributing guidelines
 - Digestible onboarding ideas
- Controversial changes:
 - Town Halls?
 - #Player-Projects
 - Design Documents



Maintainer Experience

Combating Burnout

- Completely Free
 - All volunteer
- People do what they want
 - ‘When you code it’
- Critical: don’t overextend



Feature Freezes

- No new features
- Address issue backlog
- Large refactors
- Take a break



Backlog

- Timely Reviewing
 - Difficult
- Enlist community



Triage

- Easy to join
- Label PRs & issues
- Request reviews
- Simple form
 - Low barrier

A screenshot of a web form titled "Triage Team Form". The form is dark-themed. At the top, it says "Hi contributor friend! Just fill out this short form to get triage team access." Below that, it lists criteria for approval:

- * Has actively engaged with Goonstation development (Example: making or reviewing a PR).
- * Has demonstrated themselves to be polite and welcoming representatives of the project.
- * Is comfortable with following the Triage Team Guidelines: <https://bit.ly/goontriageguidelines>

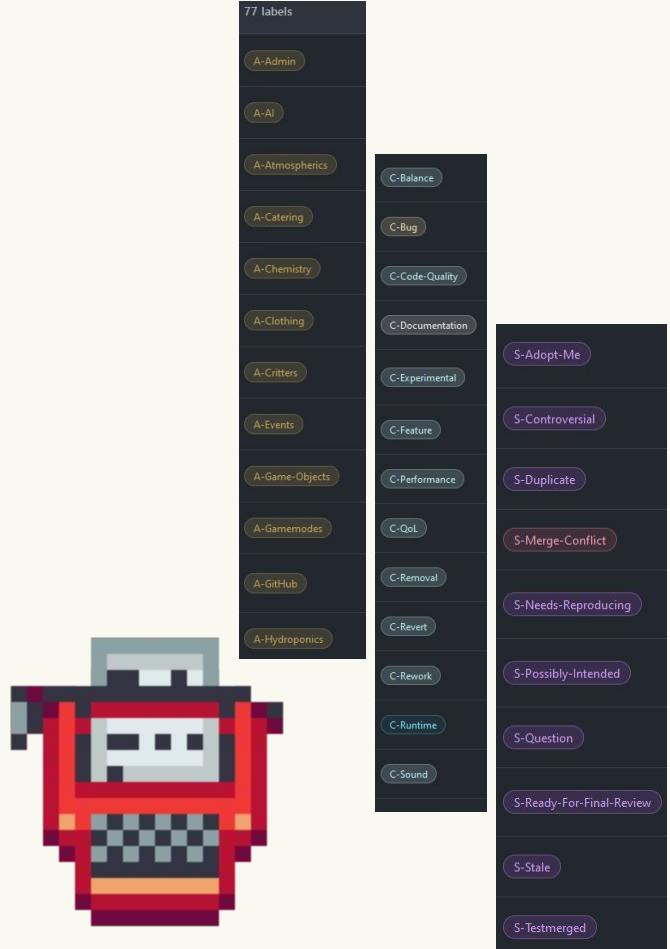
The form has two fields:

- 1. BYOND ckey***
The username you use ingame (preferably without spaces)
- 2. GitHub Username***

Submit

Organization

- Area
- Category
- Status



Organization

- Area
- Category
- Status
- ‘S-Ready-For-Final-Review’
 - Community Reviews

77 labels
A-Admin
A-AI
A-Atmospherics
A-Catering
A-Chemistry
A-Clothing
A-Critters
A-Events
A-Game-Objects
A-Gamemodes
A-GitHub
A-Hydroponics
C-Balance
C-Bug
C-Code-Quality
C-Documentation
C-Experimental
C-Feature
C-Performance
C-QoL
C-Removal
C-Revert
C-Rework
C-Runtime
C-Sound
S-Adapt-Me
S-Controversial
S-Duplicate
S-Merge-Conflict
S-Needs-Reproducing
S-Possibly-Intended
S-Question
S-Ready-For-Final-Review
S-Stale
S-Testmerged



Maintainer Recap

- Burnout
 - Feature Freezes (breaks)
- Enlist the community!
 - Triage Team
 - Community Review



Closing Thoughts

- A challenge
 - But achievable!
- Try out community ideas!
- Open-source rocks!



Acknowledgements

Team & Community!

For more:

Alice Cecile: Your Open Source Repo Needs A Project Manager @ RustConf

Pepper Riemer: Space Station 13: Behind one of the Largest Open Source Games @ GDC



Image Attributions

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Thanks!