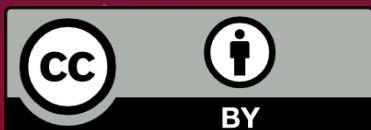


Community census: Understanding users & maintainer personas with a community survey

Niklas Merz



COMMUNITY
OVER CODE



Agenda

1. Why this talk?
2. Facts about me
3. Looking at the village
4. Interesting Survey results
5. Finding people to pick up the work
6. Motivation
7. Types of maintainers
8. Is the project sustainable?

Why

- Many projects have a very small but dedicated maintainer group
- Users and maintainers have different perceptions and goals for a project
- Check the health of the project
- Inform user group about state of the project
- Identify areas for improvement
- Attract new maintainers

Facts about me

- Apache Cordova User
- Apache Cordova contributor in my old job
- Active Committer & PMC
- No longer real user of Cordova but maintainer in my free time
- I suck at writing CSS
- This presentation is styled using CSS



Looking at the village

- Every project is different
- Is the project sustainable and healthy?
- People available for fixes and security issues
- Getting releases out and votes done in time
- Size, demographics, age & maturity of project, nothing stays the same forever

Running a survey

- Collected questions on GitHub
- Google Survey
- Announced & promoted it on website and social media
- Open for a month
- Around 200 responses

Interesting Survey results

- Good usage data on platforms
- Open questions with great feedback
- Lot's of work for open questions
- Most used platforms match our expectation
- Personal feel of pressing issues confirmed
- Documentation is the biggest issue

Pick up the work

- We got some ideas for large tasks from the survey
- Scratch your own itch
- How about the other more boring or difficult tasks?
- Documentation is critical

Motivation

“Creation is an intrinsic motivator, maintenance usually requires extrinsic motivation”

@BALUPTON. via isaacs/github (“Working in Public - The making and maintenance of open source software” by Nadia Eghbal.)

Maintainer personas

Warning: AI Content Incoming

ChatGPT painted the following
pictures

Silent hero

- Stays in background
- Does a lot of coding work
- Important tasks:
 - Releases
 - Updates, refactorings
 - Documentation
 - Many more
- Drives progress



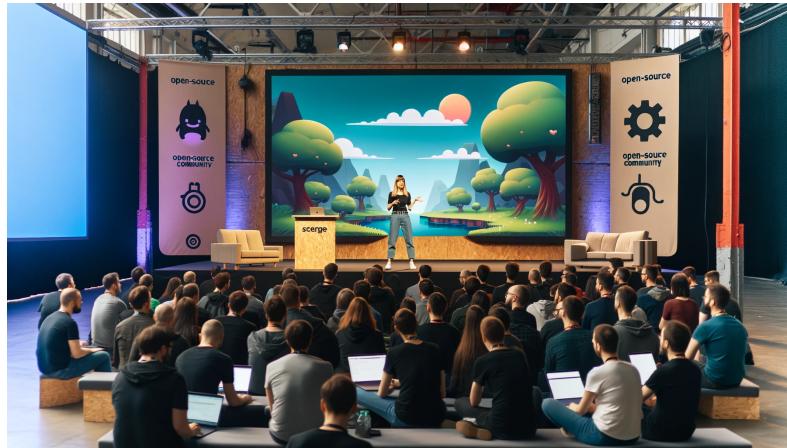
Helping hand

- Contact person for the community
- Answers a lot of user questions
- Issue triage and response



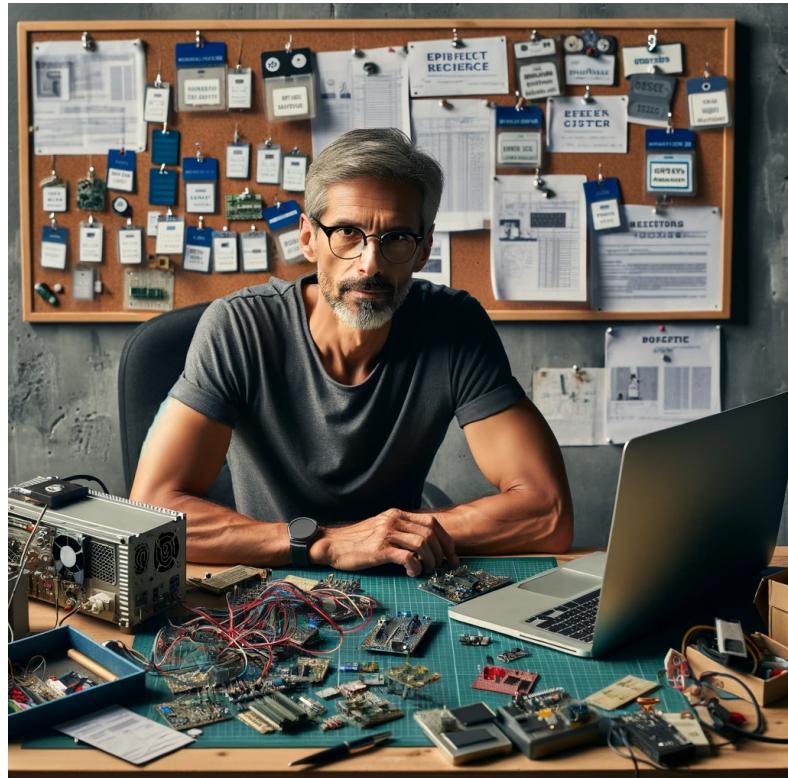
Advocate

- Voice of the project
- Talks and promotions
- Website, Documentation, Podcasts etc.



Founder/Legend

- Started the project or contributor since "the early days"
- Lots of deep knowledge
- Knows the history behind things
- Sometimes hard to reach because they may have moved on to other things



Which type are you?

Do know anybody suitable for open roles in your project?

Ideas for personas?



Is the project sustainable?

- People available for fixes and security issues
- Decisions are made and not stalled
- Getting releases out (votes)
- Technical debt is addressed, refactorings are done successfully
- Development getting stuck
- Maintainer burnout

Closing words

- Survey are helpful to get a feel for the project
- Projects need occassional health checks
- **Maintainers** please encourage contributions
- **Open source beginners** please just start contributing

Questions or Ideas?

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