Collaborative Software Development: Lessons from Open Source

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Since the Mozilla Science Lab launched three years ago, we've tested ways to help the research community work together to build new tools for science. Through our open source projects and code sprints, we've seen that despite the interest in scientific software development, that sustaining development and doing so collaboratively remain a challenge.

Pulling from the open source community, we've developed trainings and mentorship programs to bring some of those lessons and values to the scientific software community. The materials in our Working Open Workshop take the norms and protocols for open source community organization and development and unpack tips to facilitate collaborative learning and contributorship. We are investing in leaders and facilitators who can help the research community learn to build software together.

The Working Open Workshop followed by one-on-one mentorship focuses on a few practical ways to get started in open source, such as roadmapping, identifying pathways for new participants, engaging with contributors, open licensing and software citation.

By working openly, a project lead demonstrates and encourages learning and participation. While mentorship and community engagement are vital throughout the life of a project, a few key steps can help jumpstart community involvement. This talk will outline a few ways to help elevate contributors to work more collaboratively and sustainably in the open.