

FOSDEM

what it is, why we do it, and how



FOSDEM 101

- Université libre de Bruxelles in Brussels, Belgium, Europe
- Yearly, one weekend in late winter, since 2000
- No commercial angle
- Completely about Open Source, run mainly with Open Source
- No paid staff, volunteers only
- Largest Open Source conference on Earth

Content

- Main track – staff selects talks
 - Lightning talks
- Devrooms – “conference as-a-service”
- Booths
- 40 fringe events
 - Some companies organize their yearly global engineering all-hands around FOSDEM (e.g. Red Hat)
- No beer event since COVID

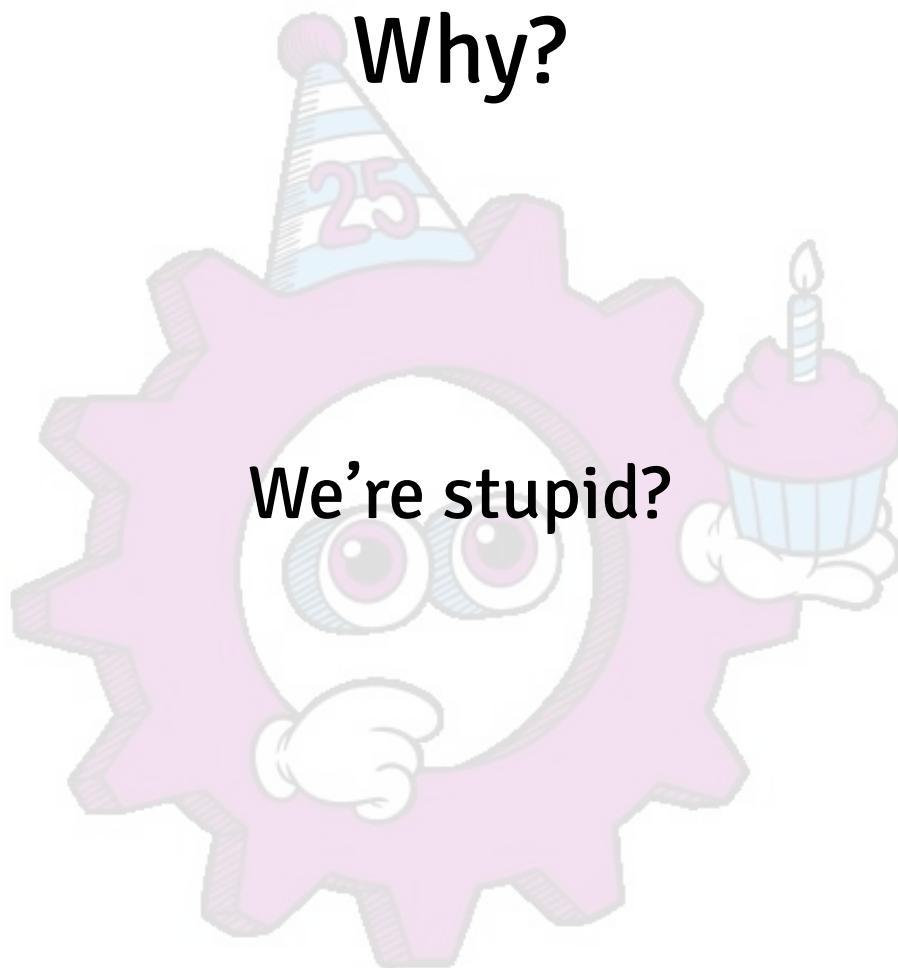
Largest on Earth?!

- 1105 talks/events
 - 38 lightning talks
- 1184 speakers
- 70 tracks/devrooms with 217 devroom managers
- 70 project stands/booths
- 43 BoFs
- 174 volunteers
- 28 unpaid(!) “staff”

Why?



Why?



We're stupid?

Why?



We don't believe in sleep?

Why?

BUT: We believe in Open Source!

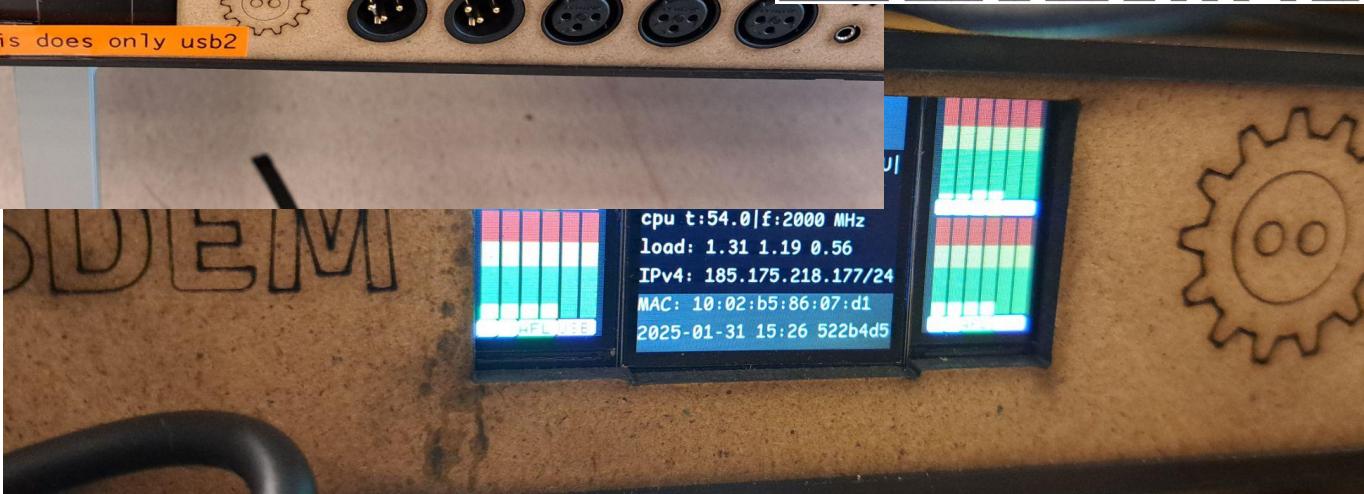
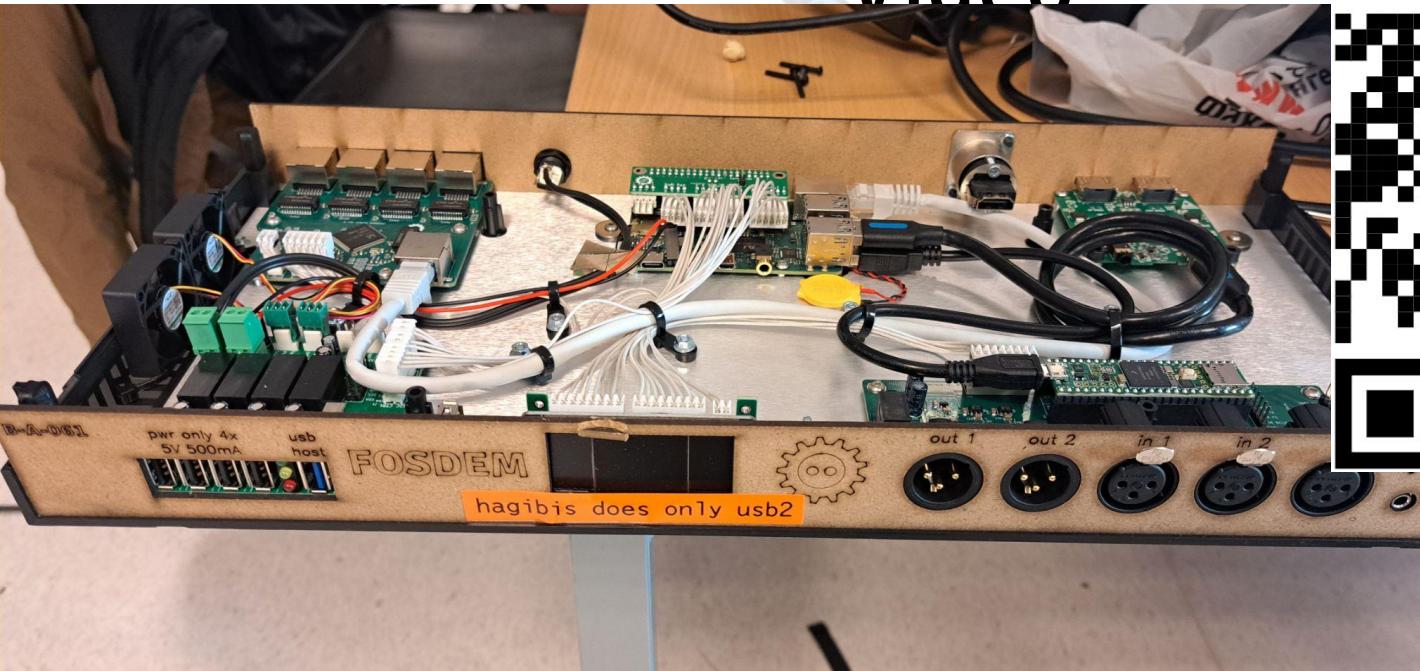
How: people

- FOSDEM staff: working over many years, and under the year
- Devroom managers: Running on top of conference-as-a-service
- Volunteers: Doing everything else; many of them for years
- Strong “training on the job” and an element of self-organizing chaos
 - Recent comment “no one really told me what to do, things just happened, and it was always clear how I could help”

How: Software

- Call for Papers: Pretalx (Penta format, mobile apps, etc)
- Maps: c3nav
- Chat: Matrix
- Inventory: Hopefully eventinfra's tooling soon
- Point of Sale: Not currently OSS, working on it

Video



Video

- Fully open source
- We are happy to help you adopt it, can loan it, can help explain
- Also being used here at this conference!



Video render farm



Timelines

Installation of router

2016: Friday

2017: December

2018: December

2019: December

2020: December

2023: January

2024: January 24th (new 10g uplink)

2025: January 6th

Network up and Running

2015: Saturday 5:00

2016: Friday 19:00

2017: Friday 17:00

2018: Friday 12:00

2019: Thursday, last hiccups fixed Fri. 19:00

2020: Friday 18:00

2023: Friday 20:20

2024: Friday ~14:30

2025: Wednesday 16:00, last hiccups fixed Fri 12:20



Timelines

Monitoring

2016: Saturday 12:00
2017: Saturday 09:00
2018: January
2019: January
2020: January (2019!)
2023: January 13th , kept it running ...
2024: Immediate ;)
2025: Jan 13th, 2023 ;)

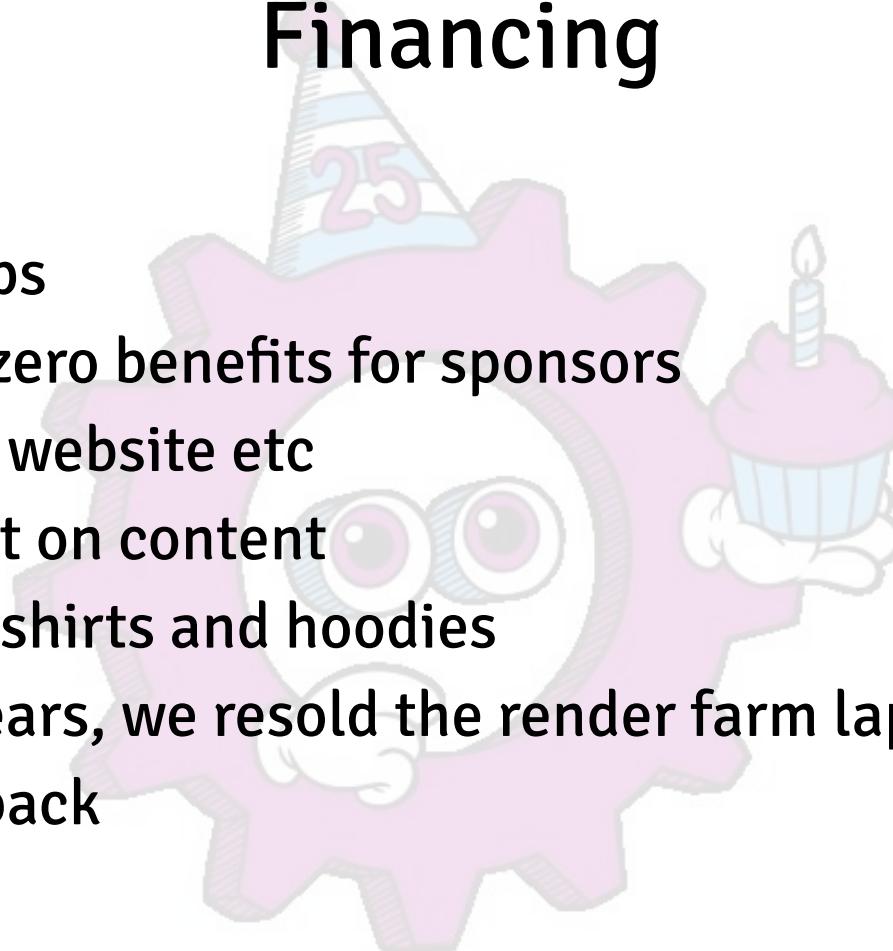
Video

2016: Saturday 11:30
2017: Saturday 09:30
2018: Saturday 08:30
2019: Friday 21:00
2020: Friday 19:00
2023: Friday ~22:00
2024: Friday 23:00
2025: Friday 20:30



Financing

- Sponsorships
 - Almost zero benefits for sponsors
 - Logo on website etc
 - NO input on content
- Selling of t-shirts and hoodies
 - Some years, we resold the render farm laptops to get the money back



Clone our conference

- Clone our Infrastructure: <https://github.com/FOSDEM/infrastructure>
- Check out our video setup: <https://github.com/FOSDEM/video/>



How to get involved

- If you want to attend FOSDEM, come find me
- If you want a booth for your conference, I can't promise anything, but let's talk
- We also started ConfConf, a conference about running conferences:
 - <https://confconf.org/>

