

Joshua R. Simmons

Senior Open Source Strategist, Community
Organizer, Nonprofit Leader, and Speaker

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Josh Simmons builds bridges between for-profits, nonprofits, and public institutions to address systemic issues in open source. He has a track record of cultivating great relationships with FLOSS communities.

Passionate about the commons, civic engagement, and inclusive community building, Josh is best known as a respected member of the worldwide open source software community: he served as President and Chair of the Open Source Initiative's board. During his six-year tenure he oversaw a restructuring of the board and staff to better serve the open source ecosystem.

- 25+ years as a user of open source, and 10+ years as an advocate and contributor.
- 20+ years building websites, web applications, and hacking together little tools.
- 15+ years community building and outreach experience.
- 10+ years media relations and public speaking experience.
- 10+ years of organizing both community and corporate conferences.

Affiliations

- Co-organizer of **North Bay Python**, a **Software Freedom Conservancy** member project
- Operations Lead for **Petaluma Pride**, a **Petaluma People Services Center** member project
- Organizer of the **Public Health Pledge**
- Advisor for **OASIS Open Projects**

Public Materials

- Personal website: joshsimmons.com
- Speaking engagements: joshsimmons.com/talks
- Articles, interviews, and media appearances: joshsimmons.com/media

Experience

Tidelift from 2021 to 2023

Senior Principal Foundations Advocate from 2022 to 2023

- Build and manage relationships with open source foundations to support member projects, maintainers, and design novel programs to create healthier, more resilient open source communities.
- Advocate for open source foundations in a changing industry and regulatory environment.

Senior Ecosystem Strategy Lead in 2022

- Built a team with a Program Management and Developer Relations practice that prioritized operational excellence, organization-wide enablement, and an improved experience for upstream partners.
- Eliminated process and documentation debt, establishing institutional knowledge and cross-departmental partnerships to support consistent operations.

Ecosystem Strategy Lead from 2021 to 2022

- Chaired the Upstream conference, creating the vision and recruiting high profile speakers in partnership with Marketing, and co-founded Maintainer Month in collaboration with colleagues at GitHub.
- Recruited maintainers to participate in pilot programs in support of Product and Engineering work toward product-market fit and an improved user experience.
- Assessed process, data, and staffing to identify gaps and illuminate a path to operational excellence.

Campaign Manager for Blake Hooper for Supervisor 2022 from 2021 to 2022

- Built a core team of 12 dedicated volunteers, and 3 paid staffers, that engaged hundreds more to reach the more than 100,000 people in Sonoma County's District 2.
- Established infrastructure, meeting cadences and practices, and a team culture that's been described by many volunteers as the most humane and nontoxic political organization they ever worked with.
- Drove design and production processes, as well as press relations, online marketing, and advertising.
- Managed budget priorities and ended with just enough in reserve to maintain basic infrastructure.

Open Source Initiative from 2016 to 2022

Chairperson from 2021 to 2022

- Landed the many years project, across multiple classes of board members, to transform OSI from a working board to a supervisory board and empower staff to carry out the mission of the organization.
- Fulfilled my promise to the organization and the greater community to retire the role of President, handing the power and responsibility of being the public face of OSI over to the Executive Director.
- Supported expansion of membership and further professionalization across all programmatic activity.

President from 2020 to 2021

- Steadied the organization through pandemic-driven staff churn, temporarily taking on staff duties while recruiting and onboarding, first, an interim General Manager, and then an Executive Director.
- Engaged a leadership consultant to lead the board through candid self-reflection, vision and goal setting, ultimately redefining the role of the board and the way it worked with staff.
- Reinvigorated board engagement, ensuring every officer role and committee was staffed and had the beginnings of a succession plan in place.

Vice President from 2019 to 2020

- Represented OSI in the media and at critical industry events to protect and promote open source amid efforts, by both activists and VC-backed startups, to coopt the Open Source Definition.
- Supported staff-driven efforts to channel and focus the board's passion through annual exercises including goal setting and performance evaluations.
- Continued recruiting new board candidates to fill key gaps and enable succession planning.

Chief Financial Officer from 2017 to 2019

- Created an organizational development proposal, regrounding a fractious board in our mission and values, while clarifying short and long term staffing needs and driving board reform toward that end.
- Built a budget and financial projections to help the board make better informed decisions about how to allocate resources and drive increased fundraising activity.
- Recruited enthusiastic people from a diversity of backgrounds to run for the OSI board, helping to welcome the board's first class of all women board members.

Director from 2016 to 2017

- Recruited organizations OSI's to strengthen the alliance to protect and promote open source.
- Established productive working relationships with fellow board members and critical industry luminaries.
- Built enthusiasm for OSI's work and increased its individual membership.

Senior Open Source Strategist at Salesforce from 2019 to 2020

- Started Salesforce's FOSS Fund, engaging staff to direct regular donations to open source projects.
- Streamlined compliance review for open source contributions, driving 25% increase in contributions.
- Support internal teams in raising awareness and building healthier communities around their open source projects.

Open Source Outreach Program Manager at Google from 2016 to 2019

- Created a working group of communications managers, marketers, and open source leadership across strategy, outreach, and compliance to harmonize open source communications across Alphabet.
- Built the communications program, managed 7 social channels and served as editor-in-chief publishing 80 blog posts from 70 authors per year, doubling audience size and read time.
- Designed, built, and maintained tools and infrastructure to support programs like Google Summer of Code, saving time, reducing error rates, and providing a better experience for program participants.

Community Manager at O'Reilly Media from 2013 to 2016

- Pioneered the Community Manager role for O'Reilly, writing guidelines, developing processes, building tools, and helping to grow the team from one to five.
- Navigated multiple crises that spilled onto social media and into in-person events, each time prioritizing safety, managing the story, and using the experience to mitigate future risk.
- Advised on editorial and marketing strategy, doing research and outreach to recruit readers, authors, attendees, sponsors, and community partners.

Other Roles

- **Co-founder** of Web & Interactive Media Professionals (WIMP) from 2011 to 2015
- **CEO** at Bluebird Interactive from 2011 to 2013
- **Freelance Web Developer and Digital Marketing Consultant** from 2002 to 2011

Community Involvement

- Appointed member of the **General Plan Advisory Committee** and **Technology Advisory Committee** for the **City of Petaluma** from 2020 to present
- Co-organizer for **North Bay Python** from 2017 to present
- Advisor for **Open Source Community Africa** from 2018 to 2020
- Program Committee Member for **Copyleft Conf** from 2018 to 2020
- Advisor to **Utah Open Source Foundation** from 2017 to 2018
- Advisor to **Libraries.io** from 2017 to 2018
- Digital Media Advisor at **Santa Rosa Junior College** from 2013 to 2016
- Program Chair of **North Bay Web Conference** in 2011
- Co-organizer of **TEDxSantaRosa** in 2011