


KubeCon | CloudNativeCon

North America 2023

Kubeburned Out? How to Get Things Done Efficiently Within the Kubernetes Community

Carlos Panato - Software Engineer

@comedordexis / @cpanato

Sascha Grunert - Software Engineer

@saschagrunert

- Contributing to Kubernetes since 5 years
- Mostly working on SIG Release and SIG Node topics
- Everything related to container runtimes
- Trying to bring the community forward as CNCF Ambassador
- My 3 year old at home told me I should find a controllable dump truck for him at KubeCon

- K8s Sig-Release Tech Lead
- Former K8s Steering Committee member
- All Things on sigstore
- Releases and Automation all the code and infra @ Chainguard
- Grill master aficionado
- Barista in the free time

What we will talk about

1. Where to start
2. Staying involved
3. Becoming an expert
4. Maintain your circle of influence
5. Final thoughts

Where to start - Get overwhelmed

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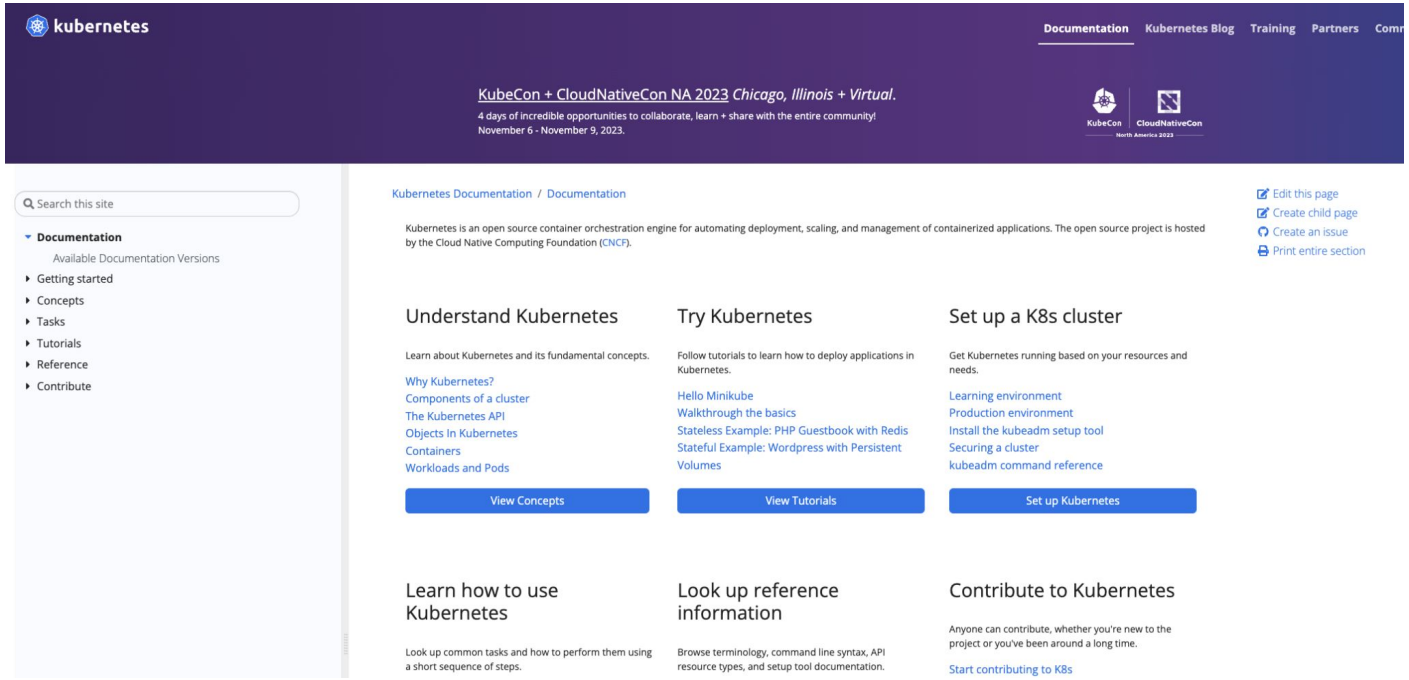

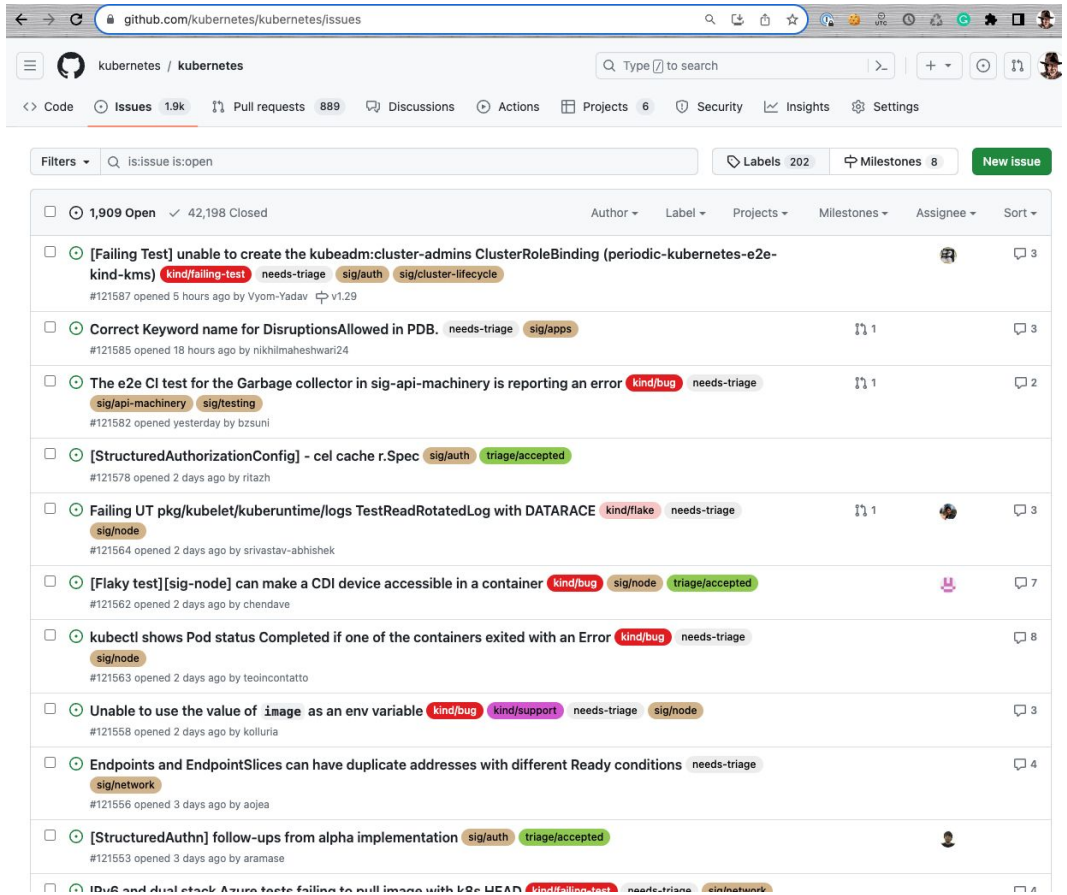

Where to start - Get overwhelmed

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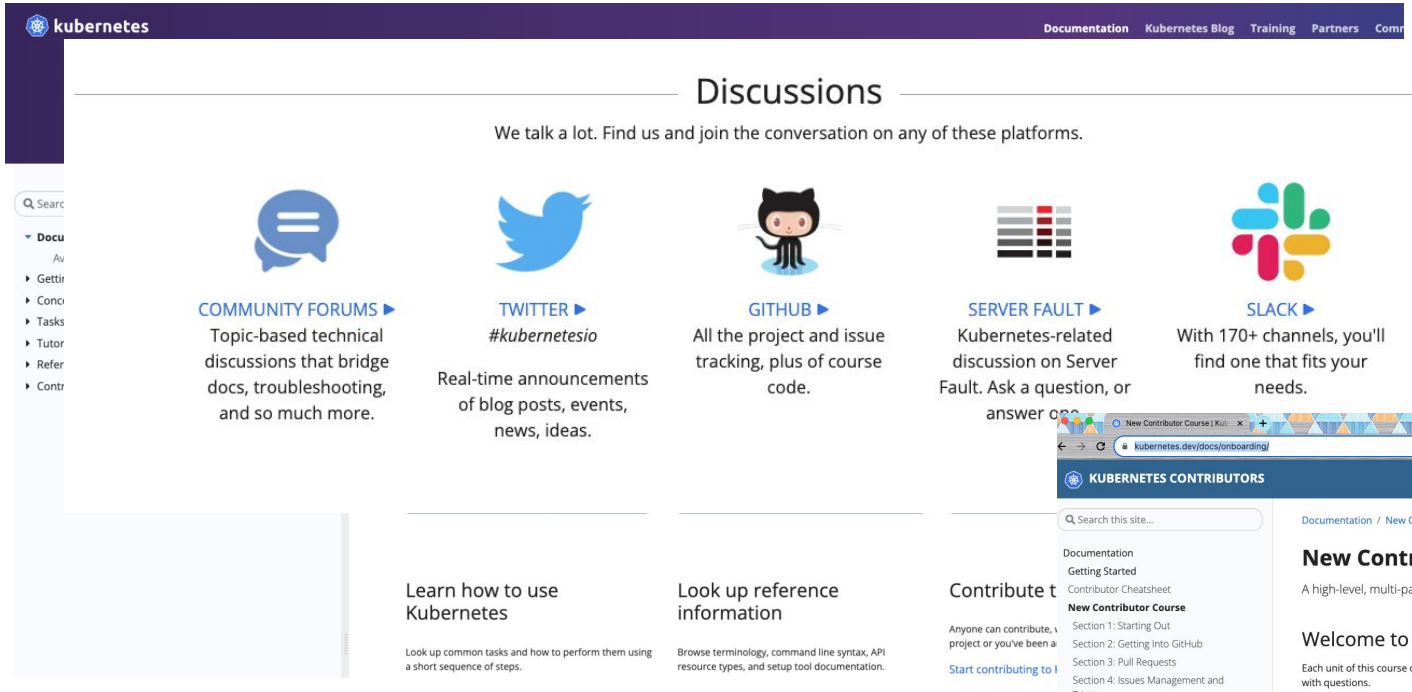

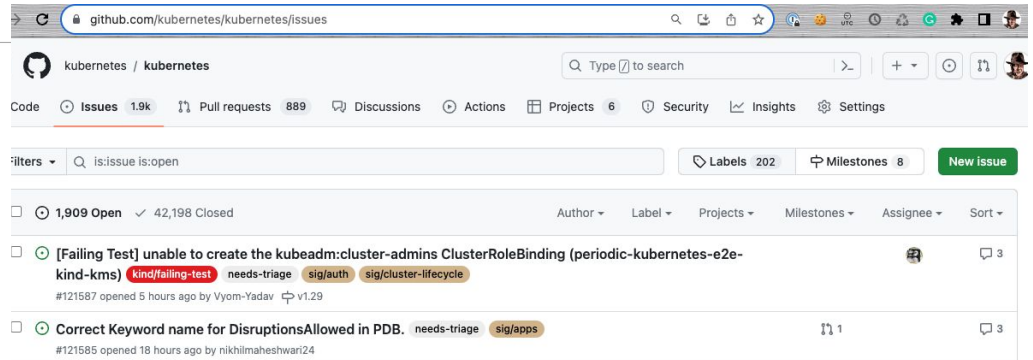

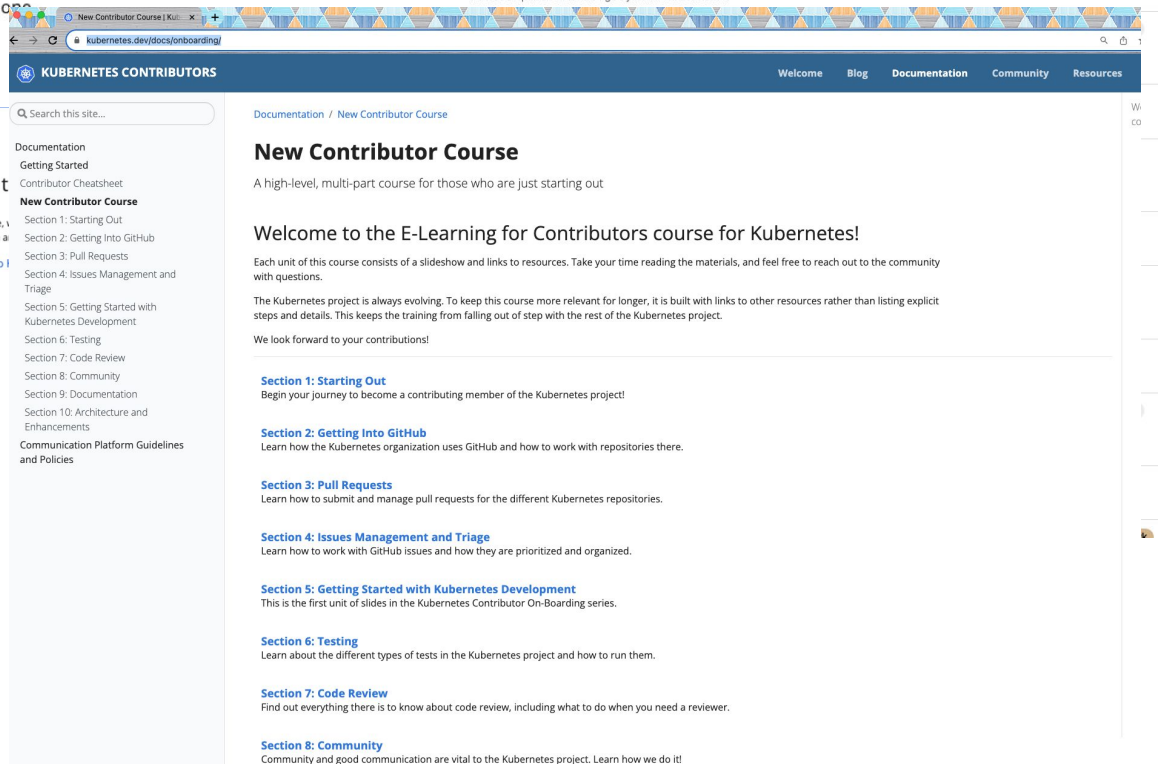

Where to start - Get overwhelmed

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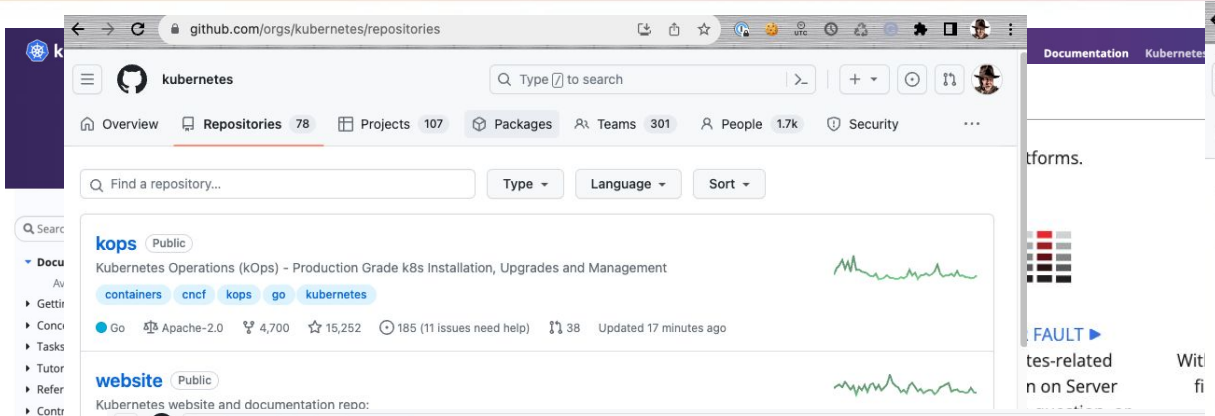
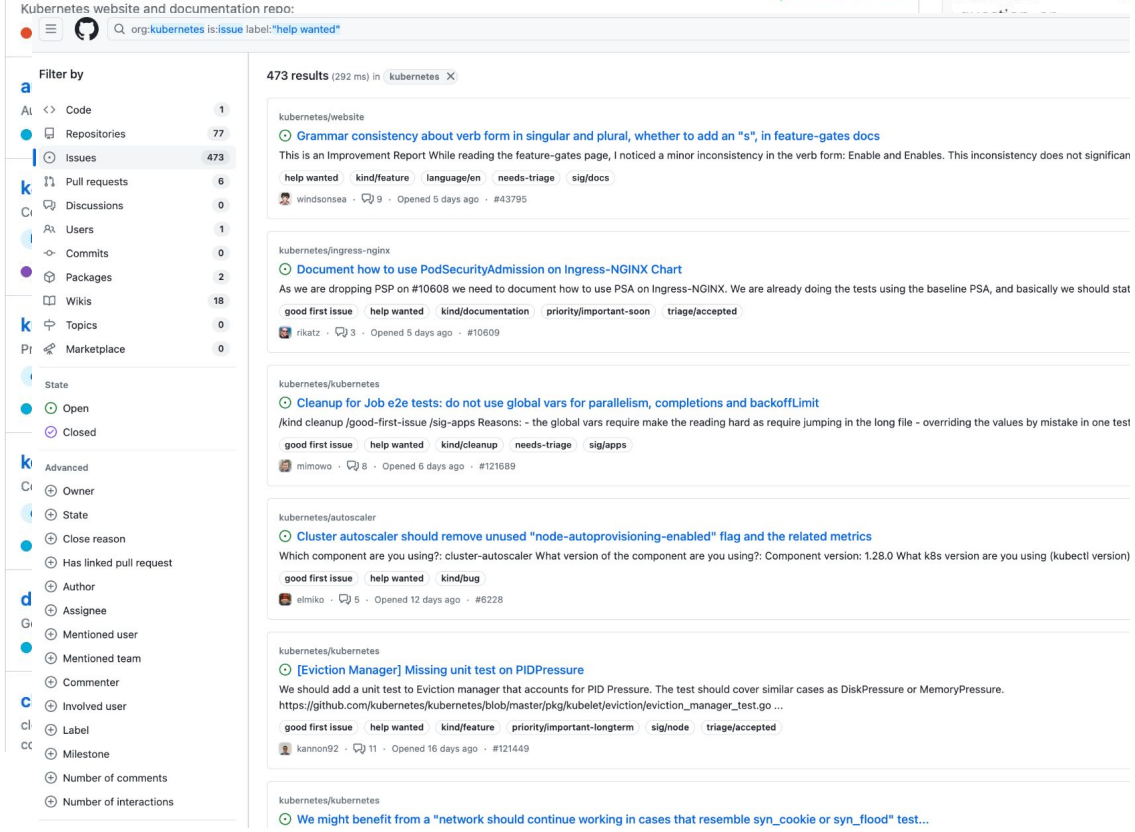
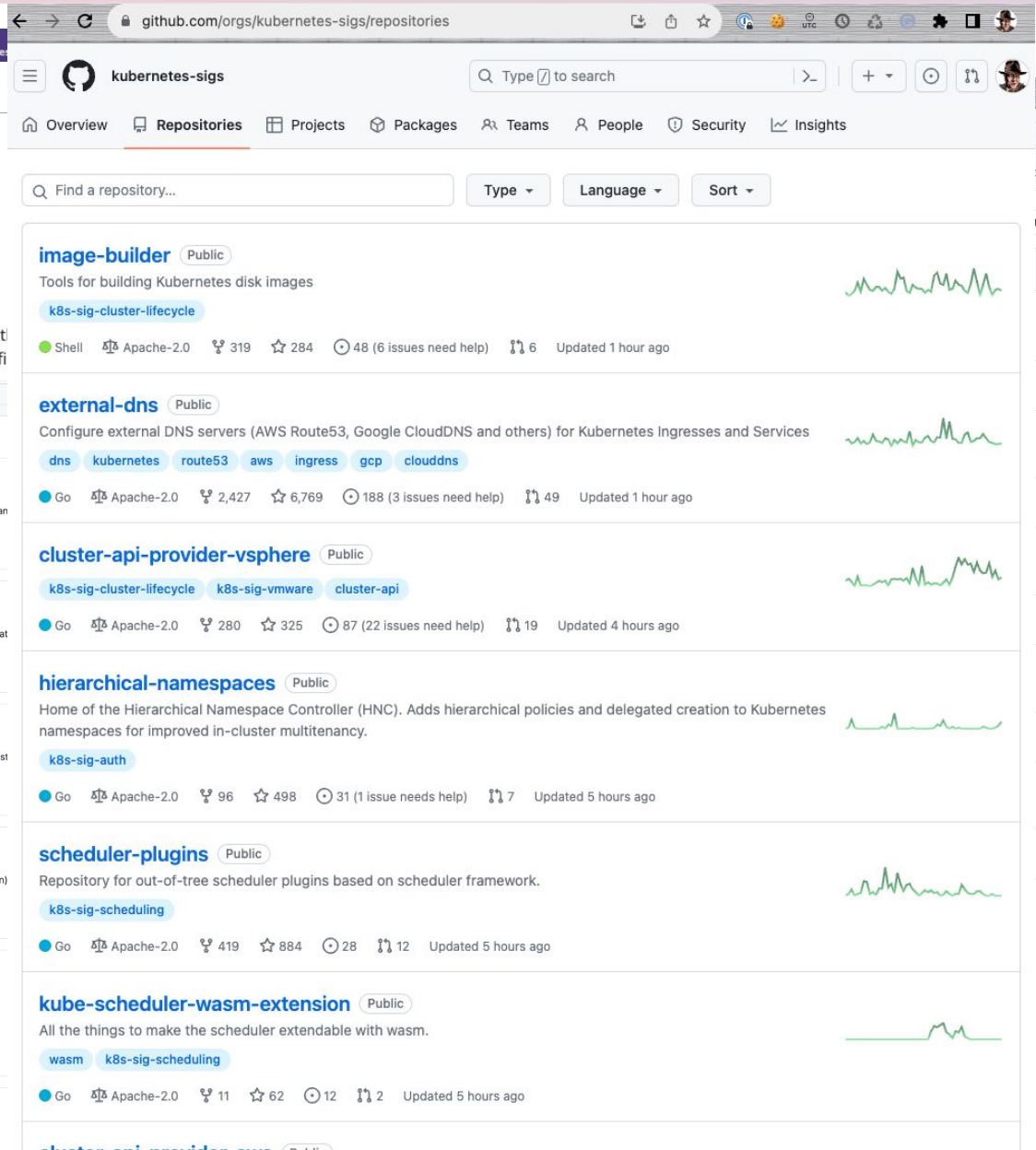






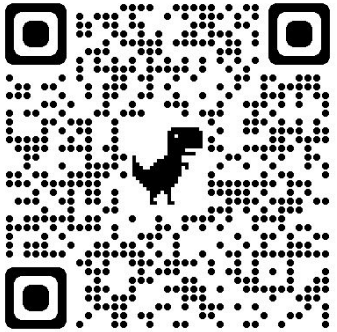
Where to start - Get overwhelmed

Where to start

Find areas of personal interest via Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Special Interest Groups

Name	Label	Chairs	Contact	Meetings
API Machinery	api-machinery	* David Eads, Red Hat * Federico Bongiovanni, Google	* Slack * Mailing List	* Kubebuilder Meeting: Thursdays at 11:00 PT (Pacific Time) (biweekly) * Regular SIG Meeting: Wednesdays at 11:00 PT (Pacific Time) (biweekly)
Apps	apps	* Janet Kuo, Google * Kenneth Owens, Snowflake * Maciej Szulik, Red Hat	* Slack * Mailing List	* Regular SIG Meeting: Mondays at 9:00 PT (Pacific Time) (biweekly)
Architecture	architecture	* Derek Carr, Red Hat * Davanum Srinivas, Amazon * John Belamaric, Google	* Slack * Mailing List	* Enhancements Subproject Meeting: Thursdays at 10:00 PT (Pacific Time) (biweekly) * Production Readiness Office Hours: Wednesdays at 12:00 PT (Pacific Time) (biweekly) * Regular SIG Meeting: Thursdays at 11:00 PT (Pacific Time) (biweekly) * code organization Office Hours: Thursdays at 14:00 PT (Pacific Time) (biweekly) * conformance office Hours: Wednesdays at 18:00 UTC (First Wednesday of the month)
Auth	auth	* Mo Khan, Microsoft * Mike Danese, Google * Rita Zhang, Microsoft	* Slack * Mailing List	* Regular SIG Meeting: Wednesdays at 11:00 PT (Pacific Time) (biweekly) * Secrets Store CSI Meeting: Thursdays at 9:00 PT (Pacific Time) (biweekly) * Weekly Issues/PR Triage Meeting: Mondays at 9:00 PT (Pacific Time) (weekly)
Autoscaling	autoscaling	* Guy Templeton, Skyscanner * Marcin Wielgus, Google	* Slack * Mailing List	* Regular SIG Meeting: Mondays at 16:00 Poland (weekly)
CLI	cli	* Katrina Verey, Independent * Eddie Zaneski, Chainguard, Inc * Natasha Sarkar, Google	* Slack * Mailing List	* Bug Scrub: Wednesdays at 09:00 PT (Pacific Time) (every four weeks) * KRM Functions Subproject Meeting: Wednesdays at 10:30 PT (Pacific Time) (biweekly) * Kustomize Bug Scrub: Wednesdays at 09:00 PT (Pacific Time) (every four weeks) * Regular SIG Meeting: Wednesdays at 09:00 PT (Pacific Time) (biweekly)
Cloud Provider	cloud-provider	* Bridget Kromhout, Microsoft * Michael McCune, Red Hat	* Slack * Mailing List	* Regular SIG Meeting: Wednesdays at 9:00 PT (Pacific Time) (biweekly) * (cloud-provider-extraction-migration) Weekly Sync removing the in-tree cloud providers led by @cheftako and @mcrute: Thursdays at 13:30 PT (Pacific Time) (weekly) * (provider-alibaba-cloud) Regular Alibaba Cloud Subproject Meeting: Tuesdays at 12:00 UTC (monthly 2020 start date: Jan. 7th) * (provider-aws) Regular AWS Subproject Meeting: Fridays at 9:00 PT (Pacific Time) (biweekly 2019 start date: Jan. 11th) * (provider-azure) Azure Subproject Meeting: Tuesdays at 16:00 PT (Pacific Time) (monthly - third Tuesday) * (provider-gcp) Regular GCP Subproject Meeting: Thursdays at 16:00 UTC (biweekly) * (provider-ibmcloud) Regular IBM Subproject Meeting: Wednesdays at 14:00 ET (Eastern Time) (monthly - last Wednesday every month) * (provider-oci) Regular Oracle Cloud Subproject Meeting: Tuesdays at 06:00 PT (Pacific Time) (First Tuesday of each month) * (provider-openstack) Regular OpenStack Subproject Meeting: Wednesdays at 08:00 PT (Pacific Time) (biweekly starting Wednesday March 20, 2019) * (provider-vsphere) Cloud Provider vSphere monthly syncup: Wednesdays at 09:00 PT (Pacific Time) (monthly - first Wednesday every month)
Cluster Lifecycle	cluster-lifecycle	* Justin Santa Barbara, Google * Lubomir Ivanov, VMware * Vince Prignano, Red Hat	* Slack * Mailing List	* Regular SIG Meeting: Tuesdays at 09:00 PT (Pacific Time) (biweekly) * (cluster-addons) Cluster Addons meeting: Tuesdays at 09:00 PT (Pacific Time) (biweekly) * (cluster-api) Cluster API office hours: Wednesdays at 10:00 PT (Pacific Time) (weekly)



Where to start

Maintain an overview about the project

- Try to attend the SIG(s) you choose
  - To ask questions
  - To understand the project, issues, roadmap
- If not possible, try to watch the recordings and ask questions in Slack
- Read the SIG documentation
- Check the repositories, issues and PRs to understand the work
- Read the code the part you are interested

Where to start

Educate yourself about topics of interest

- What you like to do
- Things that you know and want to improve
- Things you don't know but you would like to learn
- Things that you don't like much but maybe can be something really interesting
- Attend other SIGs meetings, watch the recordings

Where to start

Iterate continuously and fail fast

- Work in smaller Pull Requests
- Understand how CI/PROW works
- Use the PR feedback review to learn and improve your PR

Staying involved

Establish routines for contributions

- Plan a time that you will dedicate for it

Examples:

- Every day before you start your work, maybe 1 hour
- Every Tuesday and Thursday after your work
- 1-2 hours during the weekend

Staying involved

Make your work public and transparent

- Always communicate the status of your work in the Issue/PR
- Ask for help if you are stuck
- If you cannot work anymore in the issue that you got assigned:
  - Let people know that you will not work on that, remove the assignment
  - If possible, add some status / code snippet in the issue, that might help the other person that will take the issue.

Staying involved

Recognizing for work

- Celebrate small achievements
- If you like, write a blog post about the change you made
- Recognize others as well

Staying involved

Avoid burnout from the beginning on

- It is okay to say no
- Don't take too many issues
- Take breaks, short / longs are fine, just let people know

Staying involved

Avoid burnout from the beginning on

Becoming an expert

Couple contributions to Kubernetes enhancements (KEPs) and releases:

“Why Can’t Kubernetes Devs Just Add This New Feature? Seems So Easy!”

Ricardo Katz & Carlos Panato - KubeCon NA 2022 (Detroit)

👉 

- Working on Kubernetes enhancements takes time
- It requires meeting all the deadlines in a release cycle
- Features needs to be graduated and maintained

The conservative Kubernetes approach makes it harder to facilitate experimental technologies.

Becoming an expert

Why should I even care about enhancements? 🤷

- They’re great opportunities to grow into specific areas for expert level domain knowledge
- Helping the community to succeed means personal success:
  - Having something distinct to celebrate
  - Interacting more closely with other contributors
  - Understanding the project politics

Enhancements are great to establish a permanent footprint within the community by using the right tricks to avoid being burned out on them.

Becoming an expert

How to start an alpha enhancement without getting burned out

1. Do the necessary prework
   - Find interested people by using SIGs
   - Research the reasons for the current state
   - Connect end user stories and reduce complexity
2. Outline a first KEP draft in [kubernetes/enhancements]
   - Demonstrates the will to drive the work
   - Leave enough room for iterating on alternatives

The whole initial enhancement creation should be decoupled from any release process or deadline.

Becoming an expert

Goal: Get the enhancement through the release cycle…

- It’s daunting get get stuck in traffic jam
- Many different parties involved

Making progress over time is the most critical mental aspect.

Image by macrovector on Freepik

Becoming an expert

Propose the enhancement for a release cycle

- Get approval from the SIG and identify supporters
- Set personal goals for the hard deadlines within the release cycle

Start hacking

- Surf ahead of the wave of deadlines
- Always consider the enhancement to slip a release
- Avoid getting bound to external dependencies
- Leave enough time to celebrate 🎉

Becoming an expert

How to graduate an enhancement efficiently

- Understand why an enhancement has not been graduated yet
- Propose the graduation to the SIG
  - Demonstrate the will to drive the whole effort
  - Rework of the KEP ahead of time
- Consider to (temporarily) step back if the complexity is too large

Graduating features is more appreciated in the community compared to introducing new ones.

Becoming an expert

Level up: Mentor new contributors

- Onboarding new folks within the community is essential for a healthy and sustainable project
- Leave the right breadcrumbs for new folks to pick-up the work
  - Connect issues and enhancements
  - Offer people to directly discuss more complex topics
- Point undecided people into the right areas for possible contributions
- Consider submitting parts of the project to programs like the Linux Foundation Mentorship Program

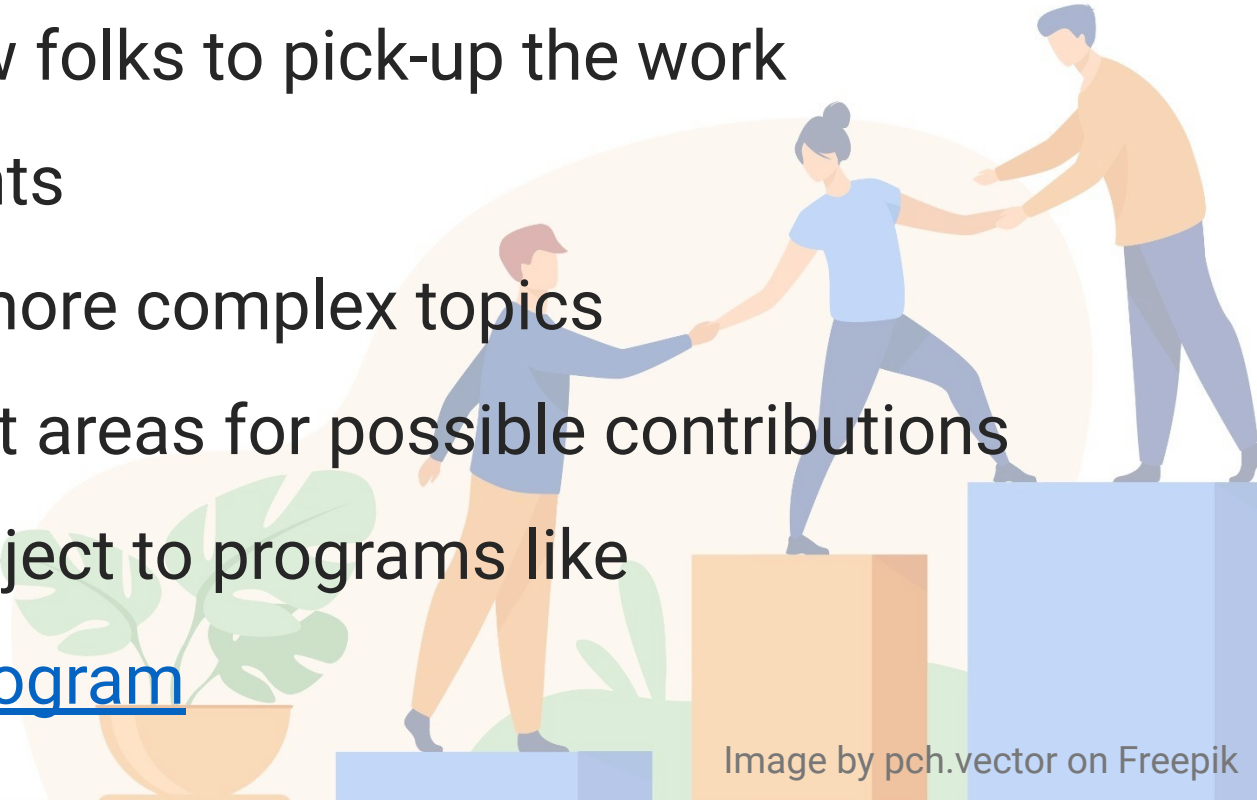


Image by pch.vector on Freepik

Becoming an expert

Look for more advanced roles within the community

- Demonstrate commitment to your personal areas of interest
- Propose yourself as OWNER
- Participate in CNCF Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs)
- Express interest in becoming a SIG Technical Lead or Chair
- Consider running for the yearly Steering Committee election

Continuously re-evaluate your personal goals: What would it mean for myself if I became … in the community?

Becoming an expert

Speaking about politics

- Companies have interest in moving Kubernetes into various directions
- Corporations want to maintain a footprint of influence

From time to time, things seem to happen magically… 🪄

- If it’s not your company, then it’s outside of your circle of influence
- Avoid being dragged into other companies problems

Being aware that politics in such a large project exists is the key to balance the importance of topics.

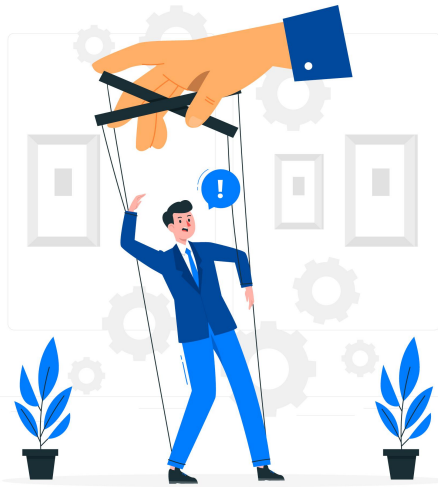


Image by storyset on Freepik

Becoming an expert

Consider stepping back, when …

- a topic is not able to move forward because of external dependencies
- a role does not add any value to your work
- something feels draining
- priorities have changed

Communicate your commitment to the community continuously to establish feedback loops.

Being able to step back is a strong skill and helps to maintain the bigger picture.

Maintain your circle of influence

You can’t know everything, but the community can!

- Experts from all over the world work on Kubernetes, use them!
- Understanding the project structure is essential for knowledge exchange
- Self-educate to be able to raise the right questions to the right audience
- Get to know people and their working domains

Finding questions nobody asked before will drive the project forward.

Finding the right solutions to those questions will lead into innovation.

Maintain your circle of influence

The right timing brings the most success

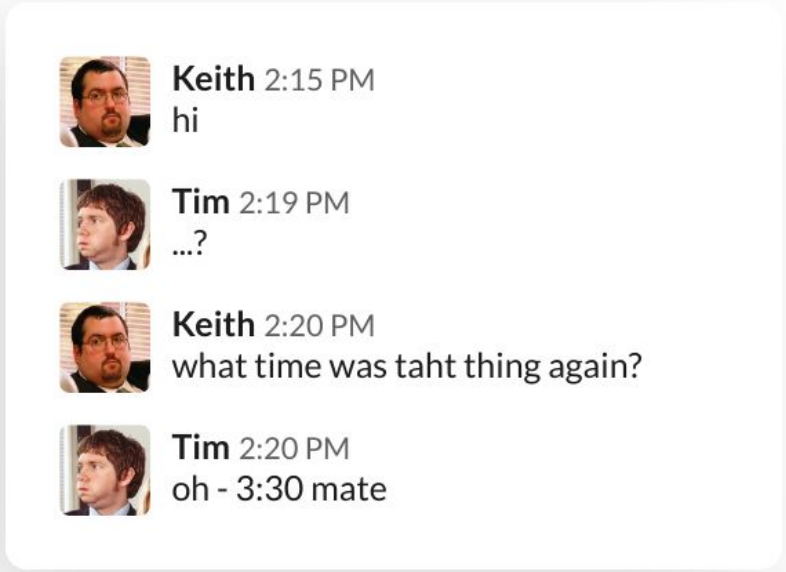
- Timing enhancements correctly into the release cycle makes people work together more efficiently
- Proposing enhancements at the right point in time will make people listen
- Raising questions at the right time gives the highest chance to find the right answer
- Establishing an asynchronous workstyle makes people more-likely to work together with you

Maintain your circle of influence

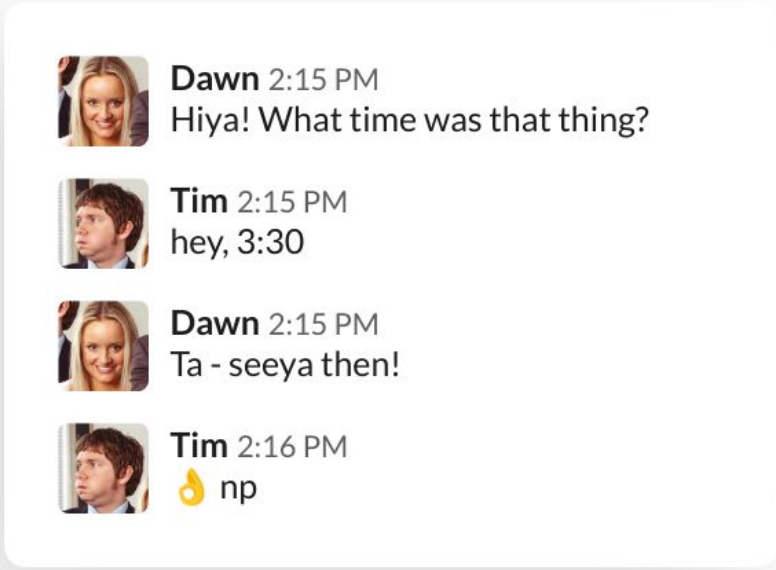
A great communication style leads into less burnout.

https://nohello.net

❌ Don't do this



✅ Instead try this



Final thoughts

- Helping others to succeed is the way to contribute to a community
- Avoiding burnout from the beginning is not simple
- Habits which feel right today may be draining over months or years
- You always have the possibility to step back
- It’s about making progress on your personal high priority topics
- Avoid being dragged into the problems of others

Your mental (and of course physical) health is the most important part of you and your professional career. Invest in it continuously.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Thank you!