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OPEN SOURCE SUMMIT
EUROPE

All Hands on Deck

Mentorship breakdowns and how to prevent them

#ossummit @Divya_Mohan02



Traditional Mentorship



Mentee

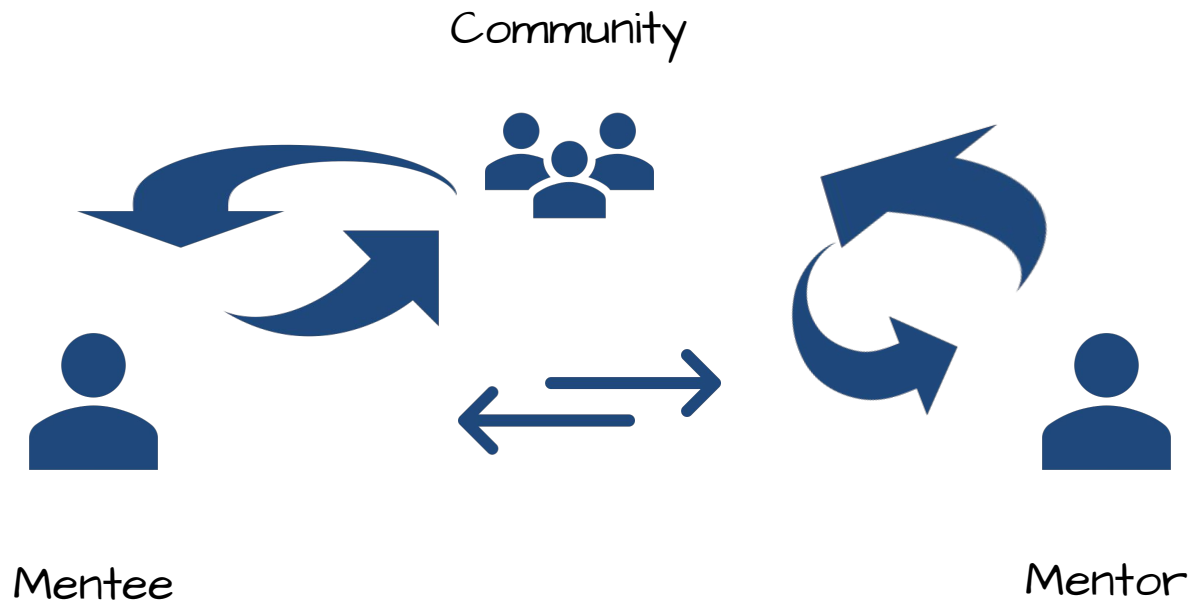


Mentor

Mentorship in OSS

- Who can be a mentor?
 - Community members with experience
 - > 1 year, typically
- What does a mentor do?
 - Support newcomers to the project
 - Explaining architecture
 - Recommending tasks
 - Assisting in development activities

Mentorship in OSS



System(s) of a
(break)down

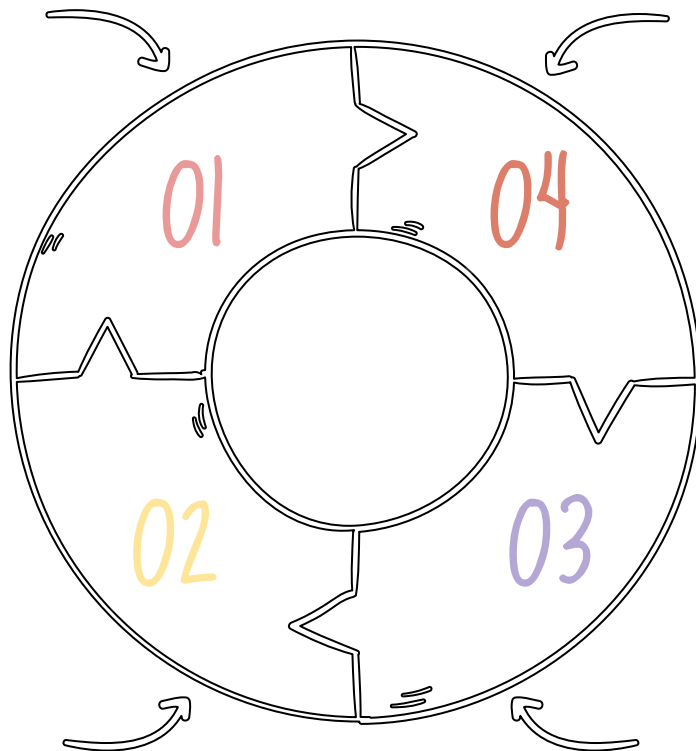
System(s) of a (break)down

PROCESS

INTERPERSONAL

TECHNICAL

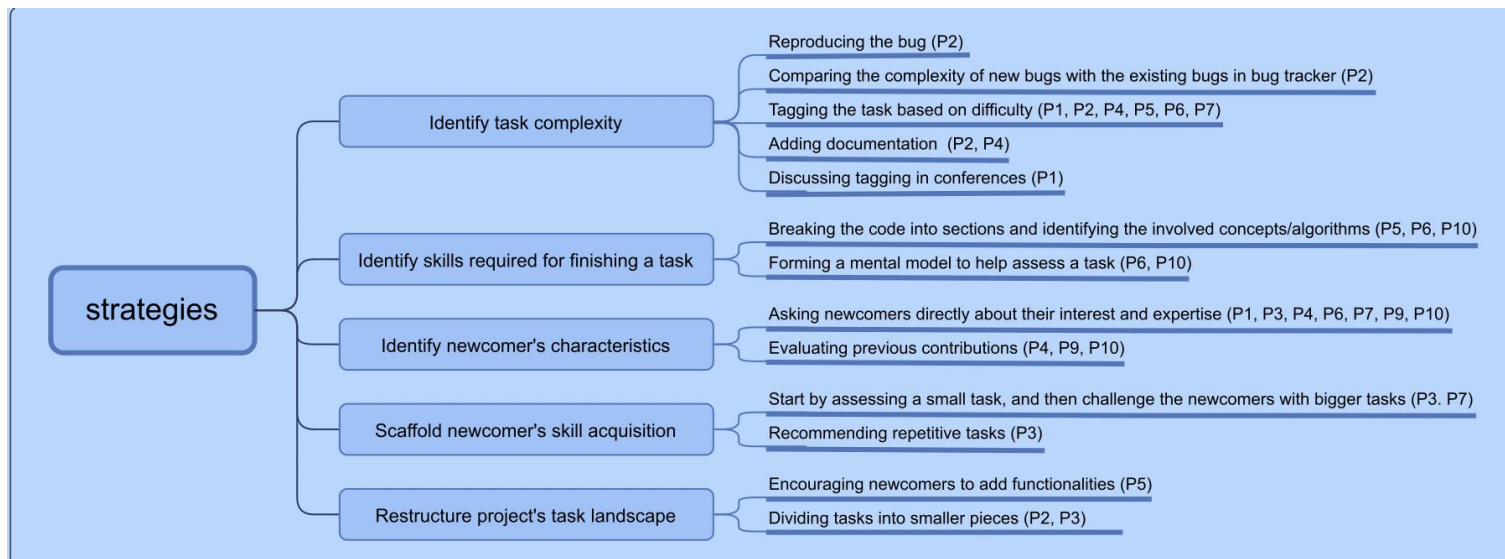
PERSONAL



Procedural breakdowns

- Scope & context not clearly laid out
- No formal procedures for socialization
 - Introduction to community
 - Shifting of responsibilities
 - Promotion across the contribution ladder
- Lack of governance

Procedural breakdowns



Source: Mentorship in OSS, Igor Steinmacher et al¹

Procedural breakdowns

- Effective Socialization =
 - Increased future participation²
 - Increased speed of onboarding³
- Frameworks to be laid down for
 - Contributor ladder
 - Mentor rotation
 - Introduction to the Community

Serve as a New Contributor Ambassador

SIG Docs [approvers](#) can serve as New Contributor Ambassadors.

New Contributor Ambassadors welcome new contributors to SIG-Docs, suggest PRs to new contributors, and mentor new contributors through their first few PR submissions.

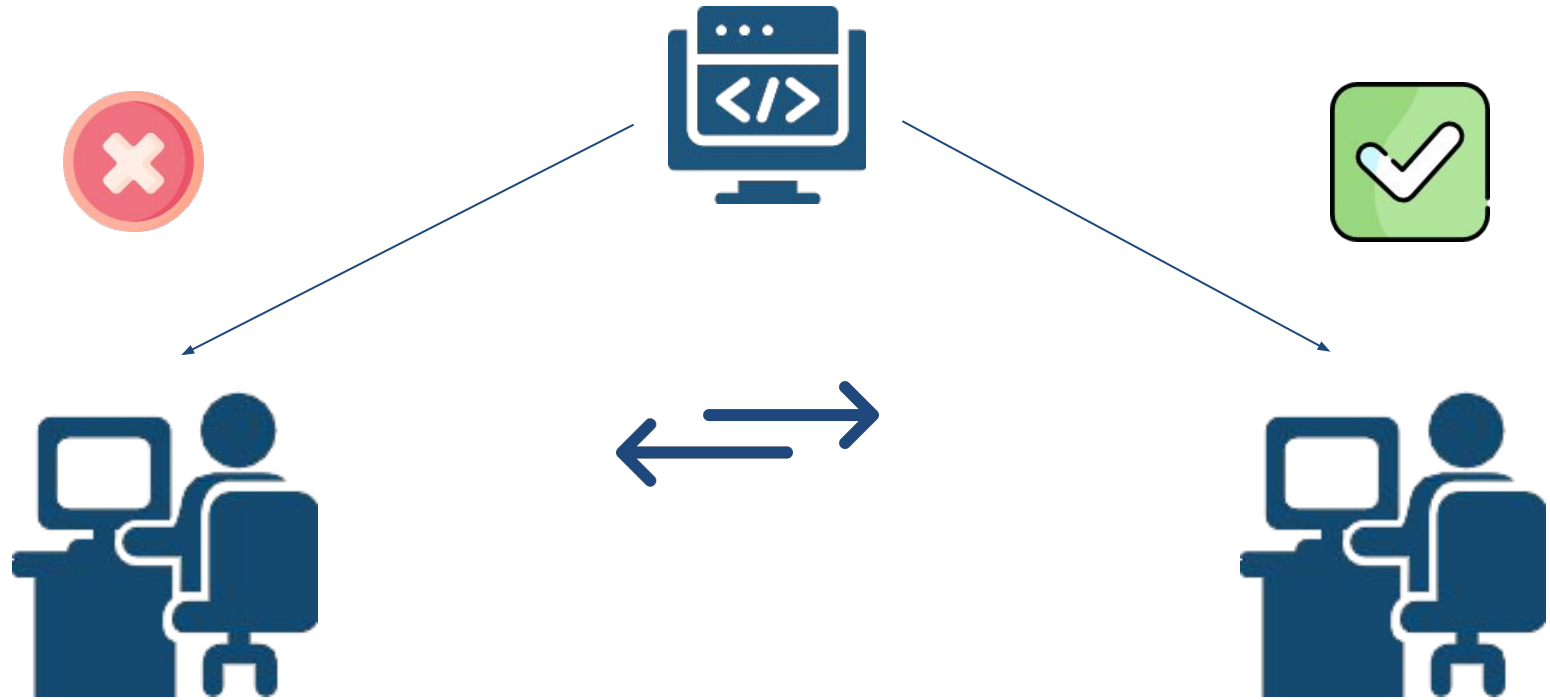
Responsibilities for New Contributor Ambassadors include:

- Monitoring the [#sig-docs Slack channel](#) for questions from new contributors.
- Working with PR wranglers to identify [good first issues](#) for new contributors.
- Mentoring new contributors through their first few PRs to the docs repo.
- Helping new contributors create the more complex PRs they need to become Kubernetes members.
- [Sponsoring contributors](#) on their path to becoming Kubernetes members.
- Hosting a monthly meeting to help and mentor new contributors.

Current New Contributor Ambassadors are announced at each SIG-Docs meeting and in the

Source: <https://kubernetes.io/docs/contribute/advanced/>

Technical breakdowns



Technical breakdowns

- Ephemeral Dev Environments
 - Killercoda
- Browser-based IDE's
 - Gitpod
 - JetBrains

Personal breakdowns

- Context switching
- One-to-(way too)many mentorship
- Ineffective time management

The problem with mentorship programs

"There are countless initiatives today aimed at helping more developers contribute to open source projects. These efforts are widely championed as "good for open source,"... However, in speaking to maintainers privately, I learned that these initiatives frequently cause them to seize with anxiety, because such initiatives often attract low-quality contributors"

Nadia Eghbal, Working in Public

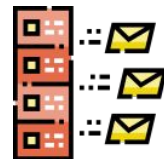
Interpersonal breakdowns

- Cultural differences
- Time zones
- Lack of inclusivity & diversity
- Tracking effectiveness



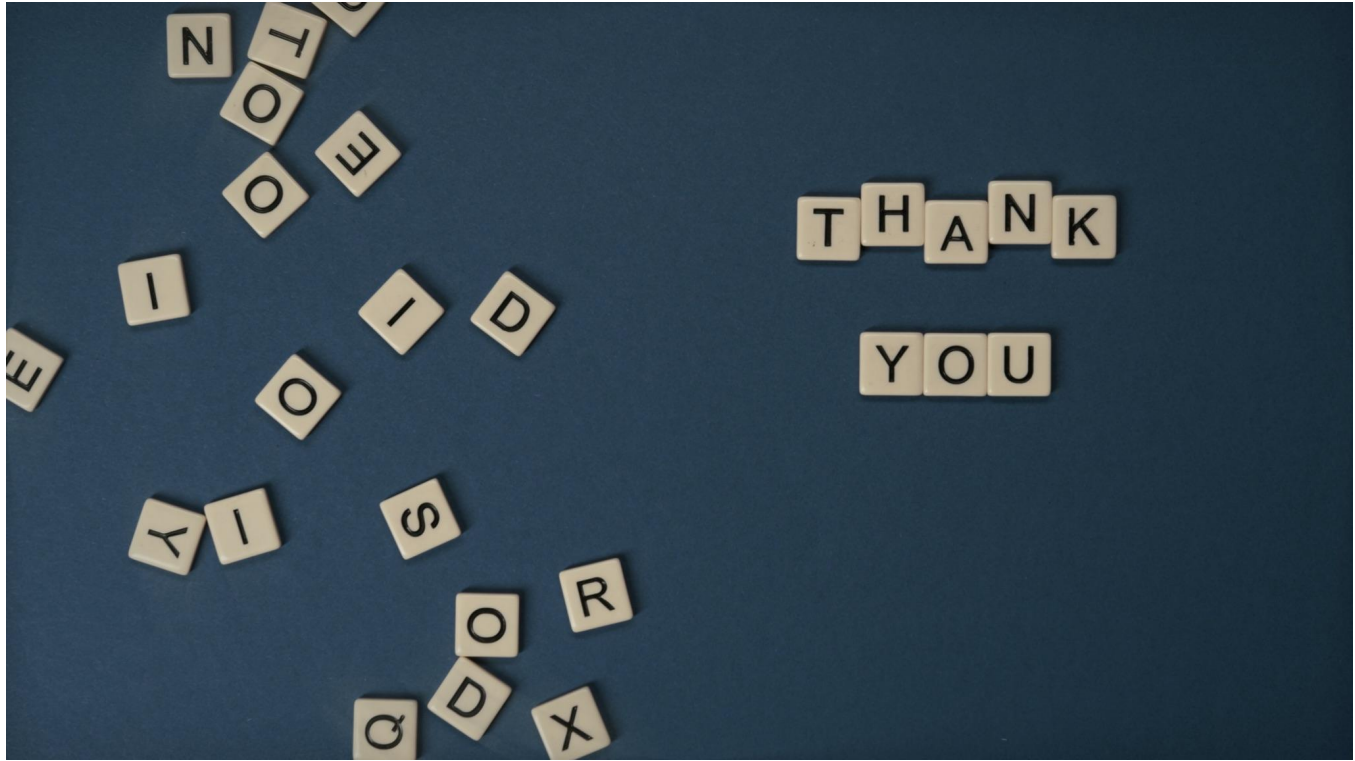
Interpersonal breakdowns

- Asynchronous meetings
- Consensus-seeking rather than consensus-driven
- Standardization & use of more inclusive language
 - Inclusive naming initiative⁴
 - Bots to regulate language usage
- Representation matters!



Resources

- 1 - [Being a Mentor in open source projects, Igor Steinmacher et al](#)
- 2 - ["Welcome!": Social and Psychological Predictors of Volunteer Socializers in Online Communities, Gary Hsieh et al](#)
- 3 - [The role of mentoring and project characteristics for onboarding in open source software projects, Fabian Fagerholm et al](#)
- 4 - [Inclusive Naming Initiative](#)





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