

# Developer-first Gradle builds

Sterling Greene & Paul Merlin



# Gradle

# Agenda

**Challenges** ☐

Maintenance and understanding

**Developer first builds** ☐

Vision and current state

**Demos** ☐

Don't say it, declare it

**What's next?** ☐

A peak into the future



# Who are we?





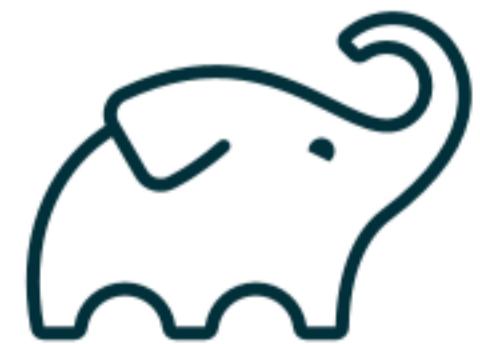
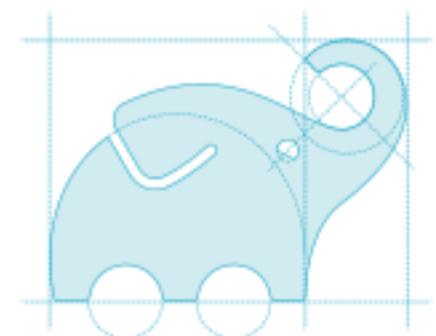
```
speaker {  
    name = "Paul Merlin"  
    company = "Gradle"  
    joined = 2015  
    currently = "Declarative Gradle"  
    previously = "Performance, Kotlin DSL, Configuration Cache"  
    github = "eskatos"  
    mastodon = "@eskatos@mastodon.social"  
}
```

```
speaker {  
    name = "Sterling Greene"  
    company = "Gradle"  
    joined = 2014  
    currently = "Declarative Gradle"  
    previously = "JVM, Core, Native, Build Cache"  
    github = "big-guy"  
    x = "@argfile"  
}
```

# Gradle



Since 2008, our mission is to accelerate developer productivity.





# Gradle Build Tool

Apache licenced software build tool

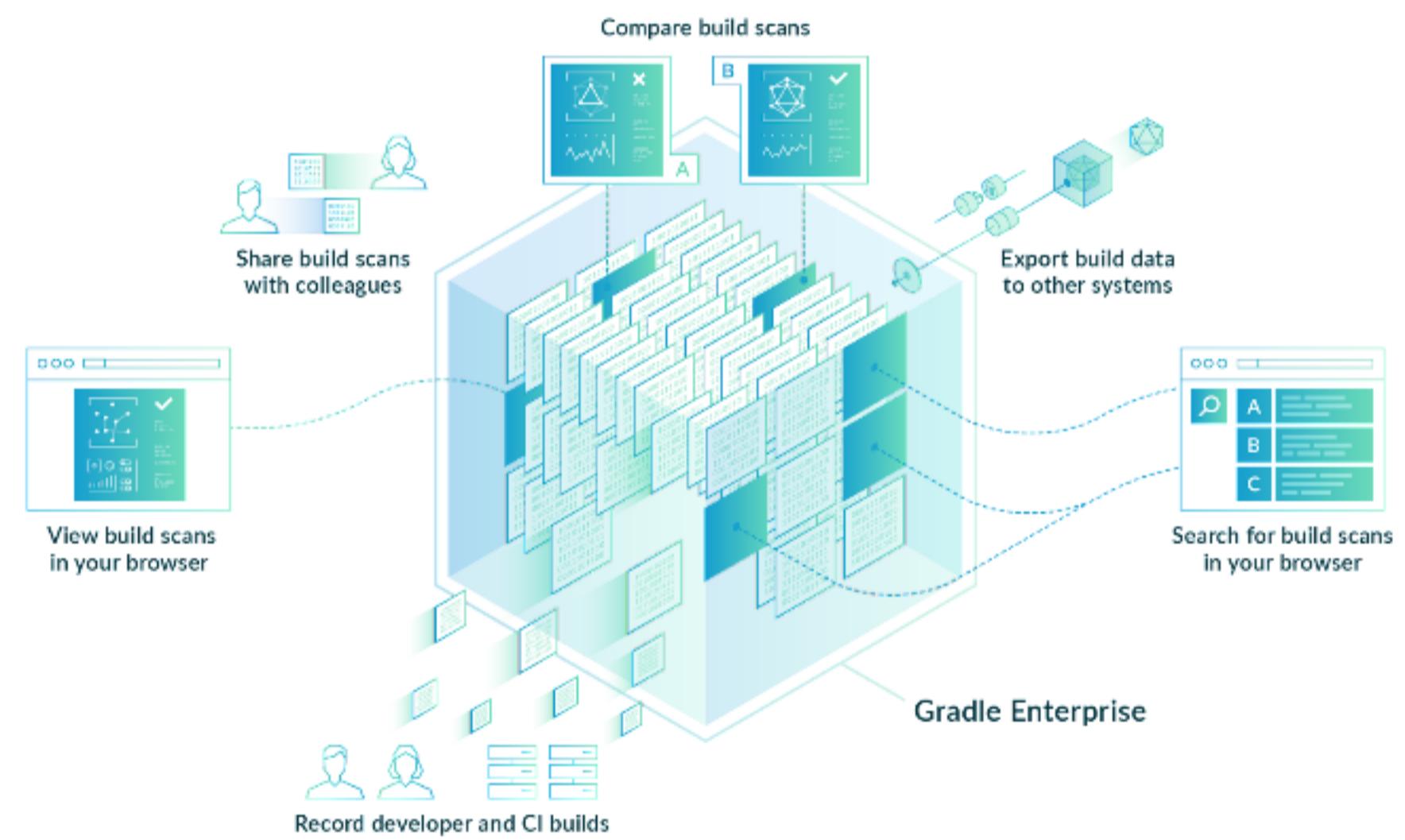
With 50M+ monthly downloads and one of the top 20 popular open source projects according to [TechCrunch](#).



# DEVELOCITY



Devvelocity, commercial product, is the first Developer Productivity Engineering (DPE) integrated solution.



Gradle



Android



Maven



Bazel

**sbt**

Scala



# Build Scan®



A permanent record of what happens during a build.

DEVELOCITY gradle clean sanityCheck May 22 2024 09:20:13 CEST [Build Scans](#) | [Sign in](#)

[Summary](#)   
Started today at 09:20:13 CEST, finished today at 09:21:35 CEST   
Gradle 8.9-20240417001901+0000, Develocity plugin 3.17.3  
Composite build (3 included builds)  
[Build Type Scans](#) [CI CompileAll Scan](#) [Git Commit Scans](#) [Source](#) [TeamCity Build](#)  
[Explore console log](#)

**0 failures**  
This build did not contain any failures.

**30 build deprecations**  
Listener registration using `Gradle.addListener()` has been deprecated.  
Listener registration using `Gradle.useLogger()` has been deprecated.  
Build service 'KotlinToolingDiagnosticsCollector\_1055134414' is being used by task 'build-logic:binary-compatibility:checkKotlinGradlePluginConfigurationErrors' without the corresponding declaration via 'Task#usesService'. This behavior has been deprecated.  
Build service 'KotlinToolingDiagnosticsCollector\_1055134414' is being used by task 'build-logic:build-init-samples:checkKotlinGradlePluginConfigurationErrors' without the corresponding declaration via 'Task#usesService'. This behavior has been deprecated.  
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Build service 'KotlinToolingDiagnosticsCollector\_1055134414' is being used by task 'build-logic:buildquality:checkKotlinGradlePluginConfigurationErrors' without the corresponding declaration via 'Task#usesService'. This behavior has been deprecated.  
[Explore build deprecations](#)

12297 tasks, 846 transforms executed in 197 projects in 1m 22s, with 4176 avoided tasks saving 1h 1m 0.338s

:architecture-test:checkBinaryCompatibility	18.640s
:docs:javadocAll	13.559s
:performance:writeTmpPerformanceScenarioDefinitions	8.659s
:tooling-api:toolingApiShadedJar	7.199s
:architecture-test:extractGradleApiInfo	5.572s
:build-logic:buildquality:compileTestKotlin - FROM-CACHE	5.078s

[Explore timeline](#)

**1m 22s total build time**

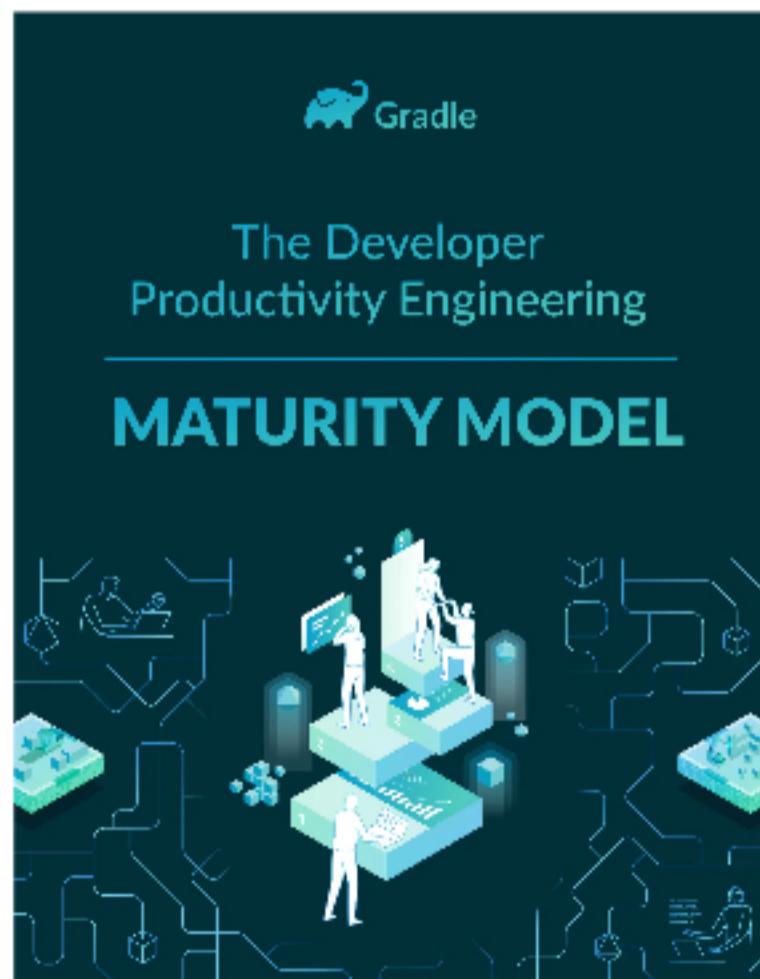
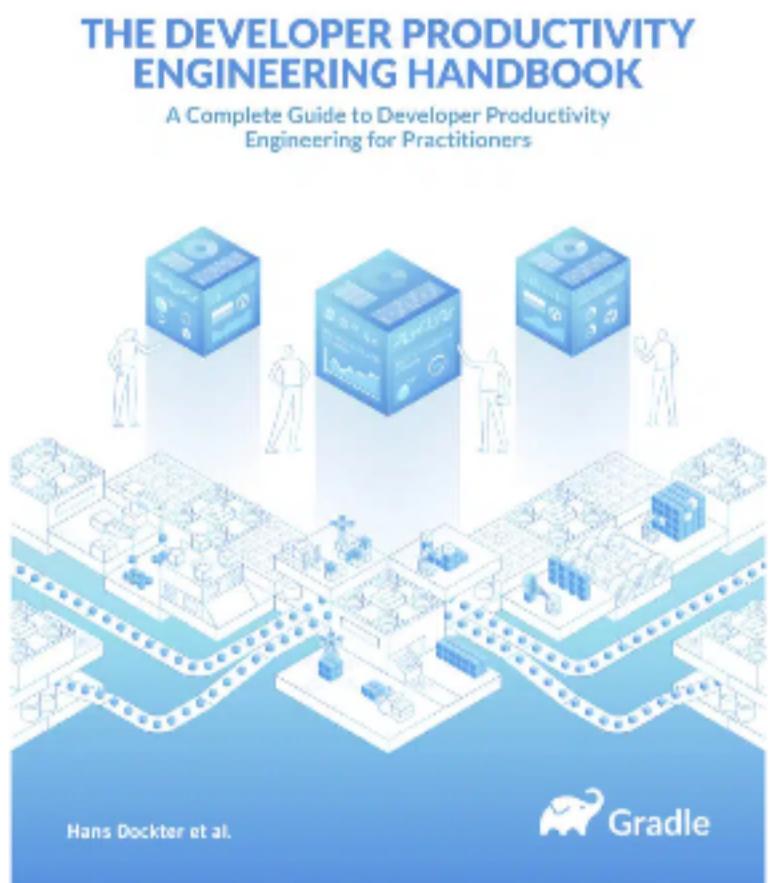
Initialization & configuration	33.150s
Execution	48.957s





# Developer Productivity Engineering

DPE is an emerging software practice that relies on acceleration technologies and data analysis to improve developer productivity.



[gradle.com/developer-productivity-engineering](http://gradle.com/developer-productivity-engineering)



[dpe.org](http://dpe.org)



DPE Lowdown - [Youtube Playlist](#)  
DPE Showdown - [Youtube Playlist](#)



# NEW: DPE University



- Free courses at [dpeuniversity.gradle.com](https://dpeuniversity.gradle.com)
- 6 Gradle courses - from Beginner to Advanced levels
- More courses on Maven, Develocity etc...



# Challenges □

Gradle is flexible and extensible

Drawbacks

# Challenges □

Gradle is flexible and extensible

Drawbacks

- Build scripts speak Gradle and not your domain.
- Build scripts can be a mess.
- Tooling can only help so much.

# Challenges - Jeg taler Gradle

## build.gradle.kts

```
plugins {
    java
}

repositories {
    mavenCentral()
}

dependencies {
    testImplementation(libs.junit.jupiter)

    testRuntimeOnly("org.junit.platform:junit-platform-launcher")

    api(libs.commonsmath3)

    implementation(libs.guava)
}

tasks.named<Test>("test") {
    useJUnitPlatform()
}
```

# Challenges - 🚧

## build.gradle.kts

```
plugins {
    id("my-conventions")
}

apply {
    from("dependencies.gradle.kts")
}

tasks.named<Test>("test") {
    useJUnitPlatform()
    jvmArgs "-Dsamples=${projectDir.absolutePath}/samples"
}

... 500 lines ...

tasks.named<Test>("test") {
    useJUnitPlatform {
        includeTags("Fast")
    }
}
```

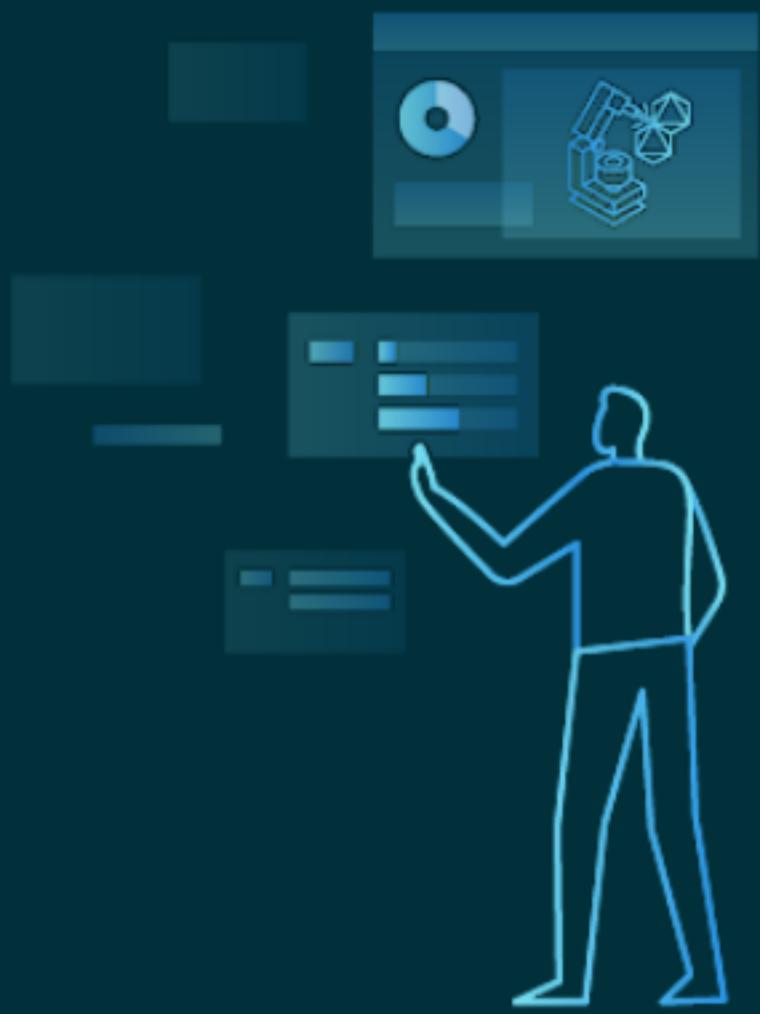
# Challenges - Gauntlet for toolability

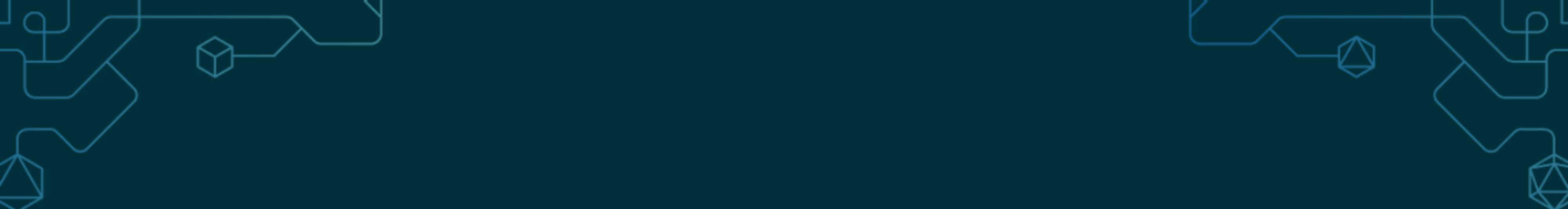
## build.gradle.kts

```
android {  
    namespace = "com.example.${project.name}"  
}  
  
dependencies {  
    testImplementation(libs.junit.jupiter)  
    testRuntimeOnly("org.junit.platform:junit-platform-launcher")  
  
    api(libs.common.math3)  
  
    if (!buildingForJava17()) {  
        implementation(libs.java17CompatibilityShim)  
    }  
  
    implementation(libs.guava)  
  
    listOf("foo", "bar").forEach { name ->  
        implementation("org:${name}:1.0")  
    }  
}  
  
fun buildingForJava17() = JavaVersion.current() == JavaVersion.VERSION_17
```

# Questions

- Who has needed a flexible and extensible build system?
- Who has seen a complex build?





# Overcoming challenges



# Overcoming challenges - Definitions

- Software Definition
  - *What* needs to be built
  - Kind of software, languages, target platforms
  - Dependencies, toolchains, quality checks etc...
- Build Logic
  - *How* the software will be built
  - Adds new capabilities, integrate tools
  - Supplies convention to the software definition



# Overcoming challenges - Recommendations

Gradle can look declarative

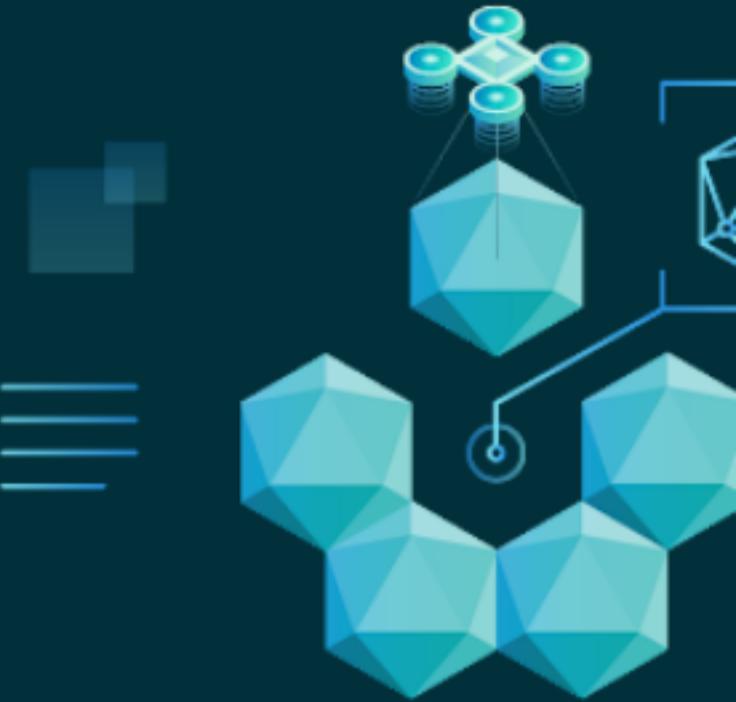
- Keep build logic in plugins
- Give your convention plugins meaningful names
- Keep your build scripts simple - condition and loop free

# Overcoming challenges -

## build.gradle.kts

```
plugins {  
    id("backend-library-conventions")  
}  
  
dependencies {  
    api(libs.commons.math3)  
    implementation(libs.guava)  
}
```

But this might not be enough.



# Developer-first builds



Vision



# Developer-first builds - Vision

*Elegant and extensible declarative build language that allows developers to describe any kind of software in a clear and understandable way.*

- Extensible, flexible
- Declarative 😊
- Clear and understandable 😊



# Software Developers & Build Engineers

- Software Developers - Majority in most teams
  - Improve software by shipping features, fixing bugs ...
- Build Engineers - Frequent in larger teams
  - Maintain the build, make developers productive
- ↔ ↘ Frequent in smaller teams
  - Who's the Gradle expert?



# Software Definition vs Build Logic

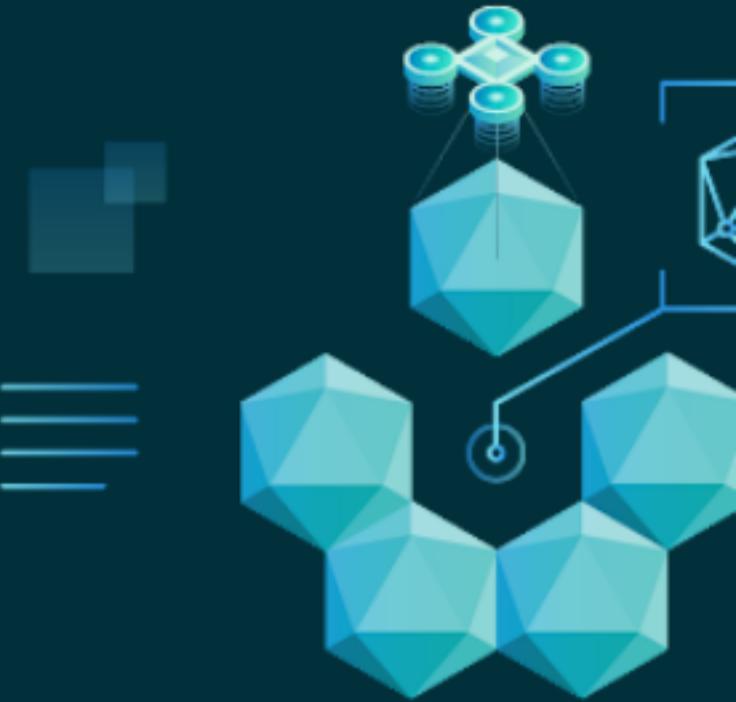
- Software Definition - *What* needs to be built
  - Meant to be read and modified by Software Developers
  - Resides in settings and projects definitions
- Build Logic - *How* the software will be built
  - Meant to be read and modified by Build Engineers
  - Resides in plugins (local or external)



# Developer-first builds - Tactical goals

- Separate software definition and build logic with a declarative DSL
- Match the software definition to the software domain
- Excellent Tooling and IDE Integration

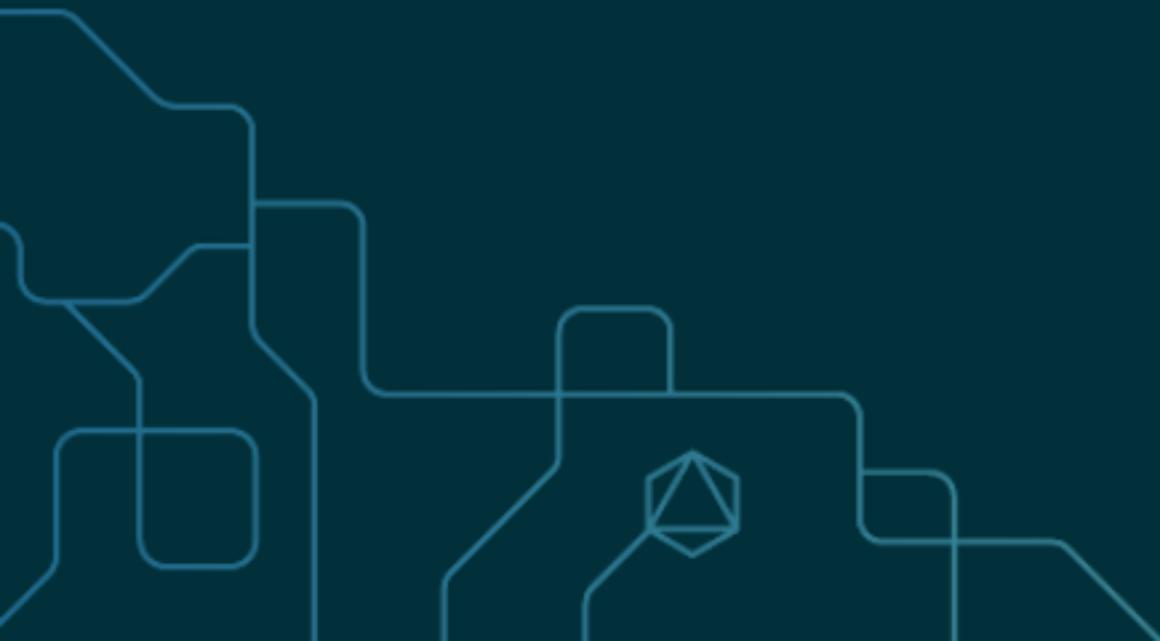




# Developer-first builds



Current state



# Developer-first builds - Teams

We work on this together □

- Multiple teams at Gradle (DSL, Software, IDE)
- Android Studio team at Google
- IntelliJ, Kotlin & Amper teams at JetBrains



# Developer-first builds - Disclaimers

- These are experiments.
- Prototypes require a Gradle nightly.
- IDE features require an Android Studio nightly.
- Prototypes are changing all the time and are not ready for production use.



# Developer-first builds - Declarative Configuration Language

- Purely declarative
- Small subset of the Kotlin language
- Fast and resilient parser
- Schemas & Documents



# Developer-first builds - Tooling

- Get projects schemas via Gradle's Tooling API
  - After build settings are evaluated
  - Before configuring any project
- Load documents for project definitions
  - Validate using the schema
  - DOM-like API
- This is data!
  - JSON Serialization

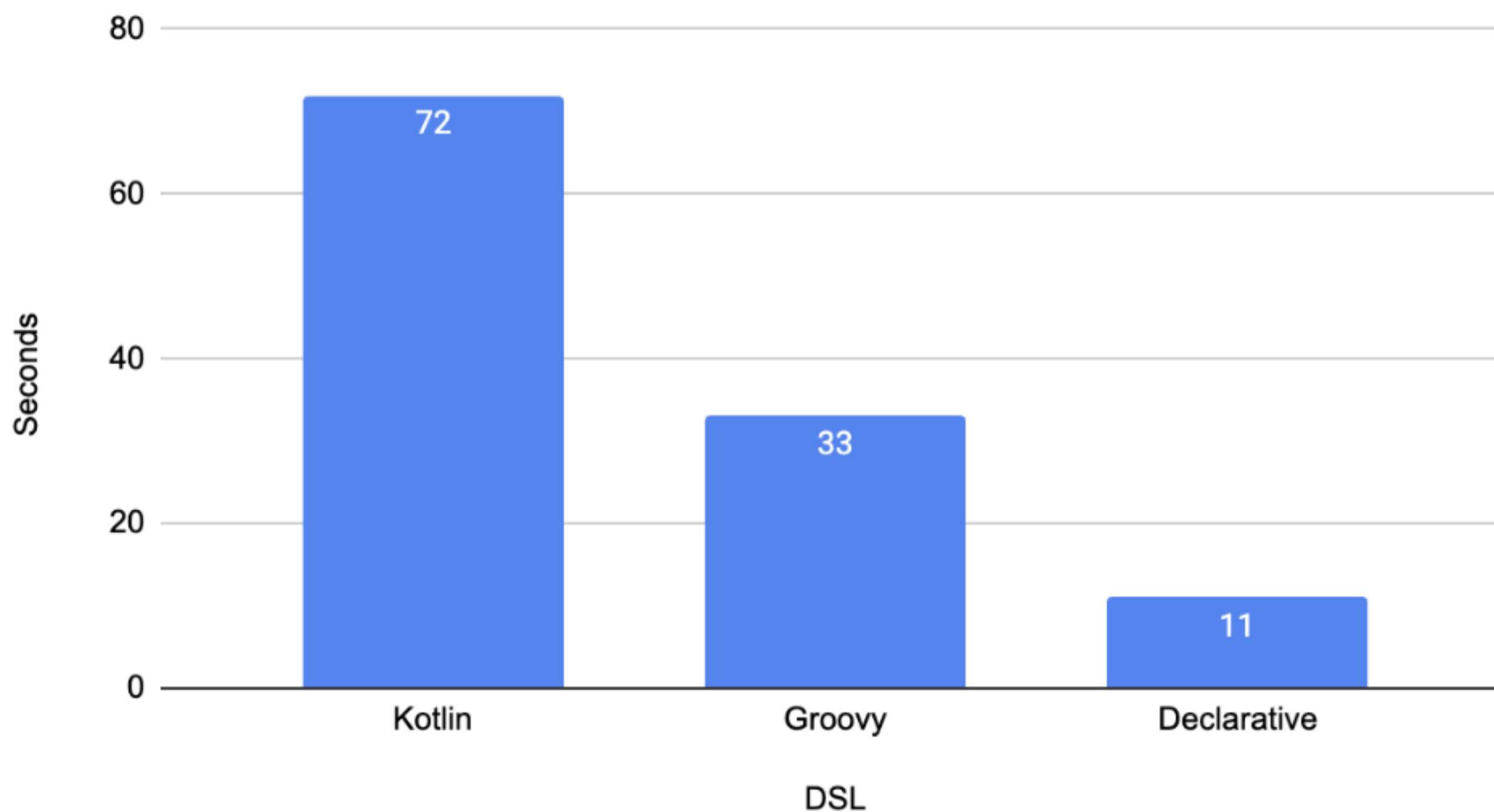


# Developer-first builds - Performance

`./gradlew assemble`



First use of a 500 projects build



# Current prototypes - Software definition

- Software types for Kotlin (KMP), JVM (Kotlin, Java) & Android
  - Software type is a high level model for the ecosystem
- Wraps around existing plugins
- Limited configurability just to explore/experiment
- No plugin application in project DCL files

# Current prototypes - Reusable conventions

- Reusable conventions support sharing common configuration
  - Properties
  - Dependencies
- Declared at the top-level settings DCL file

# Current prototypes - Software types - Demo

## settings.gradle.dcl

```
conventions {  
    kotlinJvmLibrary {  
        javaVersion = 21  
    }  
}
```

## build.gradle.dcl

```
kotlinJvmLibrary {  
    // javaVersion comes from convention  
  
    dependencies {  
        api(project(":core:common"))  
    }  
}
```



# Demo

# Questions

- Who has tried to automate changing the build definition?
- Who would like to clicky-click in a UI to understand a build and change it?



# What's next? □

A peak into the future

# What's next? - Mutations / Refactorings

- Gradle guided changes available from tooling and command-line
- Integrated with IDE workflow (preview/diff, undo)
- Provided out of the box by Gradle or registered by plugins

# What's next? - Mutations / Refactorings

## Examples

- Upgrade an external dependency
- Add Compose to this project
- Update Gradle from 9.0 → 9.1
- Refactor this project to use non-deprecated properties

# What's next? - Quick and resilient IDE sync

- Progressively provide more context instead of a monolithic sync step.
- Avoid slow recompilation of build scripts when build logic changes.  
Reparsing declarative files is fast.
- Errors in a declarative file don't need to be fatal to sync  
Best effort: know what "kind" of project it is at least.

# What's next? - Other IDEs

- We want all features to be available to most IDEs
- We're working with JetBrains and Google for their IDEs
- Our IDE team is exploring
  - LSP language server & BSP build server
  - plugins for both Eclipse/Buildship and Visual Studio Code
- LSP & BSP should allow to add support in many other IDEs

# What's next? - Defining new Software types

- Multiple conventions for the same software type
- Restricted configurability for a software type
- Entirely new software types/ecosystems



# What's next? - Multiple Software type conventions

For example, a build with two different KMP libraries.

`settings.gradle.kts`

```
softwareTypes {  
    legacyLibrary {  
        ...  
    }  
    nextGenerationLibrary {  
        compose {  
            ...  
        }  
    }  
}
```



# What's next? - Software type conventions

Some reusable conventions cross software type boundaries.

For example, Compose can be used by KMP or Android.

`settings.gradle.kts`

```
conventions {
    compose {
        kotlinCompilerExtensionVersion = "1.5.12"
    }
}
softwareTypes {
    kmpLibrary {
        compose = conventions.compose
    }
    androidLibrary {
        compose = conventions.compose
    }
}
```



# Where do we want to go?



# Where do we want to go?



*Elegant and extensible declarative build language that allows developers to describe any kind of software in a clear and understandable way.*

and more ...

- Pluggable mutations/refactorings
- Excellent IDE support

# Transition

- You can mix imperative and declarative in a build
- Gradle imperative DSLs don't go away
- Software-types will be usable from imperative DSLs
- We are exploring ways and tooling for incremental migration

# Roadmap - Highly speculative

- First EAP this summer
  - Demonstrating what we just talked about
  - Early feedback from the community
- 2024-H2
  - More EAPs towards the end of the year
  - More features
  - Addressing collected feedback
  - Further feedback from the community

# Call to action



# We need your help and feedback

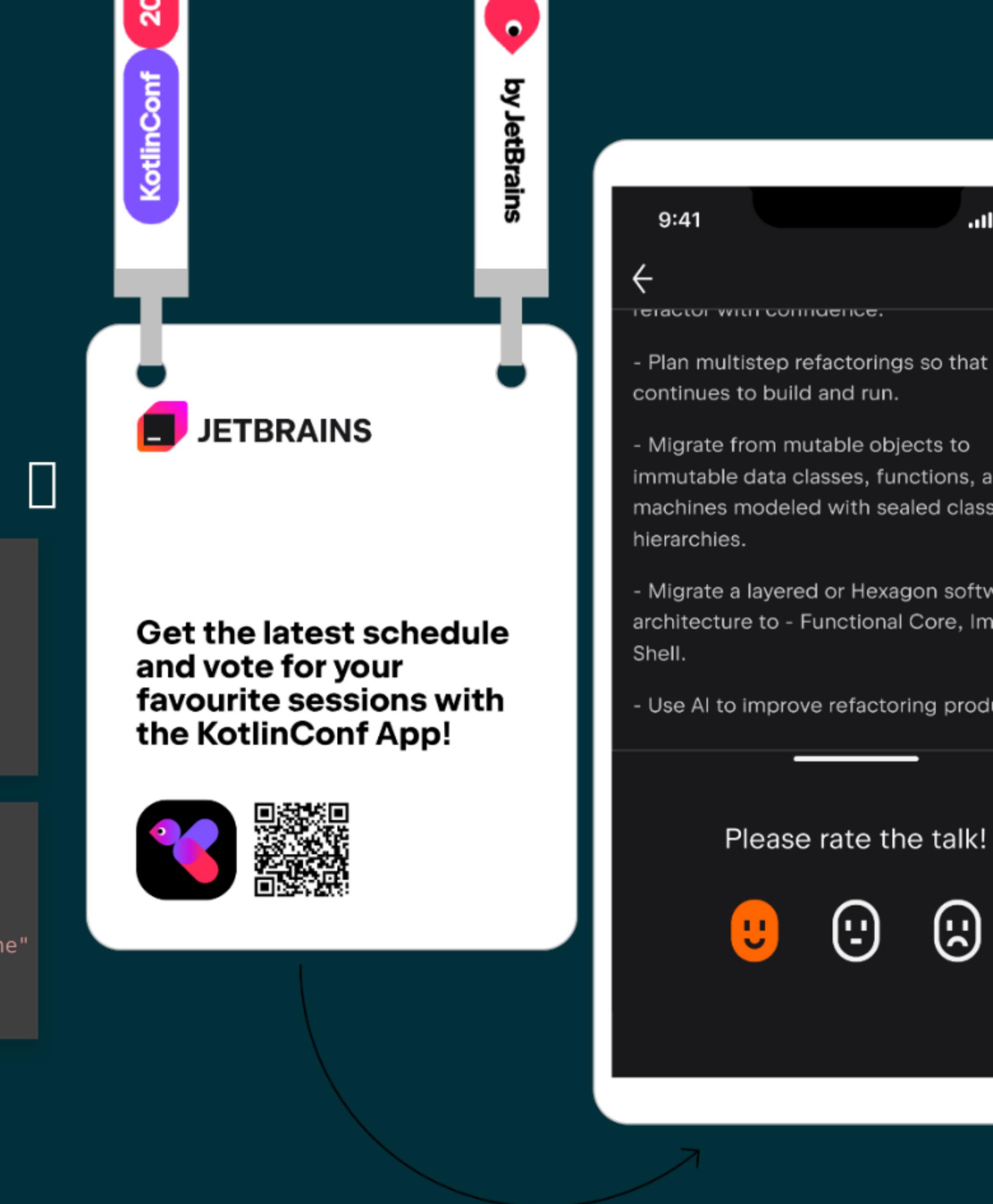


- Visit [declarative.gradle.org](https://declarative.gradle.org) site
- Explore [gradle/declarative-gradle](https://github.com/gradle/declarative-gradle) repository
- Join Gradle's [Community Slack](#)  
`#declarative-gradle`
- Share your thoughts and use cases with us

# Thank you!

Don't forget to vote!

Come talk with us at our booth



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    name = "Sterling Greene"  
    company = "Gradle"  
    joined = 2014  
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