

Patchwork Prague

Patchwork Prague

Heya! Thanks everyone for coming out. I literally flew into Prague about four hours ago from San Francisco, so I apologize if I'm a little groggy and any of the words I say don't make any sense.

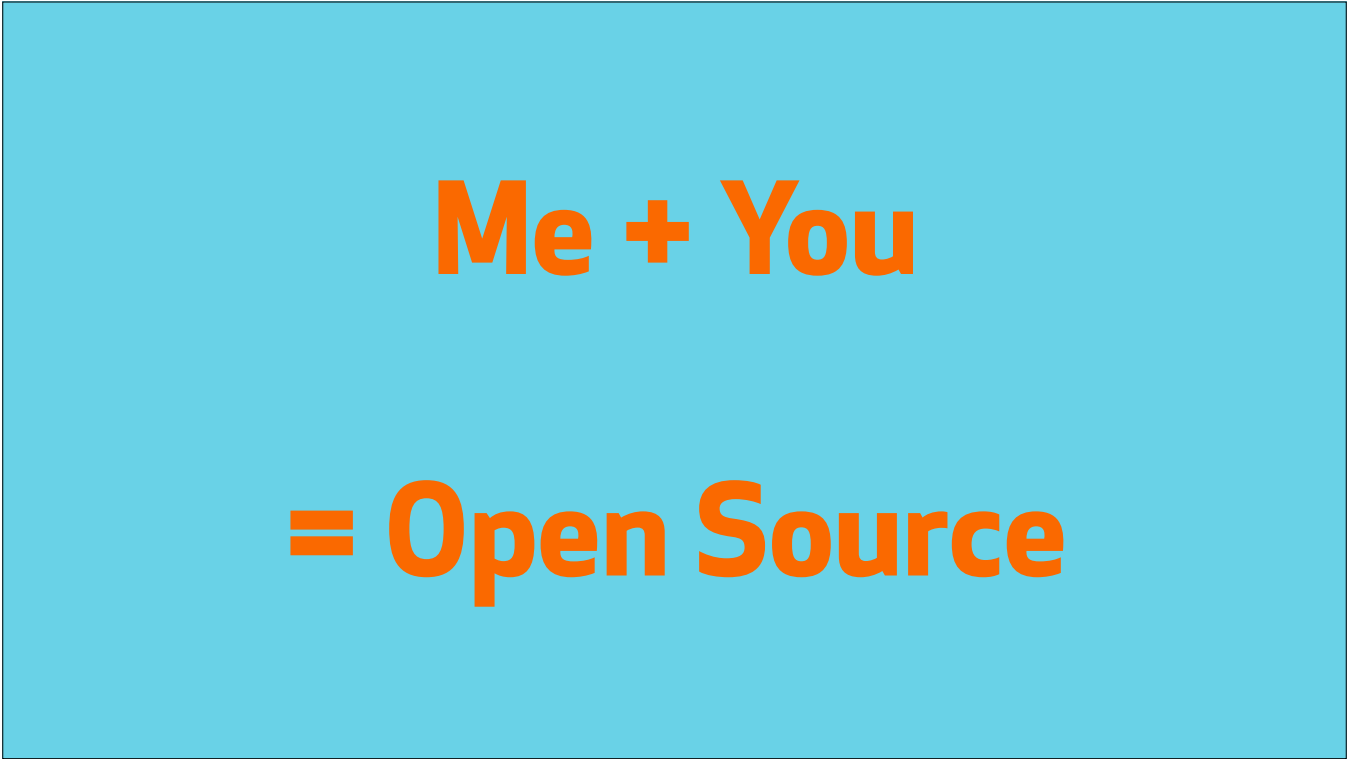
Garen Torikian

@gjtorikian

My name is Garen Torikian, or @gjtorikian everywhere on the Internet. Part of the luck of having a weird name is that you get to have any username on the Internet that you want.

So if you're here, you probably have a good idea of what Patchwork is, and what we're going to do tonight. The goal of Patchwork is to help you become a little more familiar with using Git, GitHub, and contributing to open source software. Tonight we're going to have a couple of mentors walk around and help you get more involved in open-source software.

Maybe you've heard about it before, but what exactly is open source software? Why's it important?



Me + You
= Open Source

In my opinion, at its core, open source is just about people working together to build something.

It's about me and you getting together like this or on the Internet and we make something amazing with our computers.

**Me + You
+ MANY STRANGERS
= Open Source**

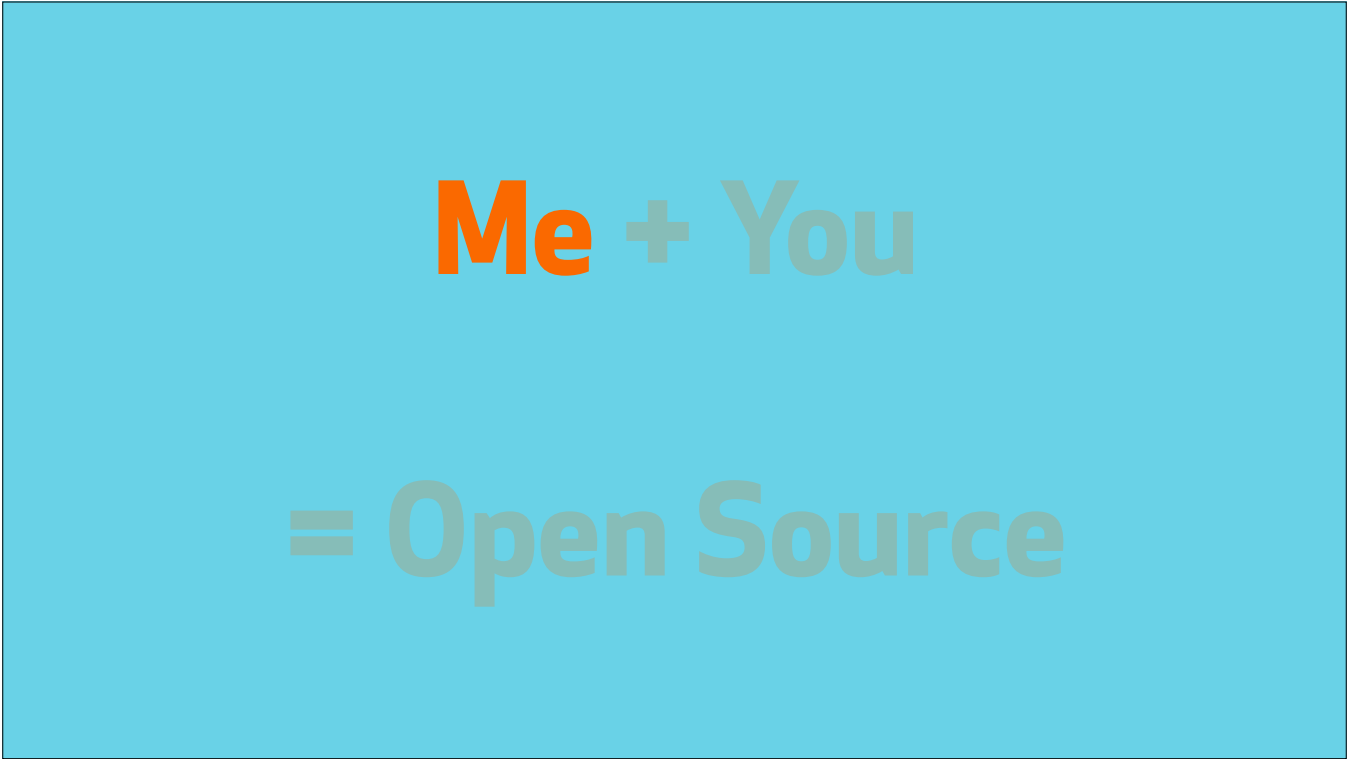
Uh, of course, working on open source means that you're surrounded by strangers.

Open source is filled with a bunch of other people. Like, millions of other people, and sometimes they get in the way.

Me + You
+ MANY STRANGERS
= Open Source

But for right now, let's forget about all those people. We're all friends here, right? Let's keep it simple.

Let's just focus on the me and you making amazing stuff part.



Me + You
= Open Source

At these Patchwork events, they always have someone from GitHub talk about how and why they got into open source, so you all get to listen to me.



It was free!

I was lucky enough to have a computer growing up, because my dad was an engineer. Unfortunately, for most of the 1990s, my dad also didn't have a job. He was unemployed. There are large periods of time growing up where my family made specific budgets about what we were and weren't going to buy. And as you might imagine, spending money on software was something we just didn't do.

I mean, if you're old enough to remember, the 90s were also when the Internet started taking off. And my dad could see that the Internet was an amazing thing. So we had a computer, and we had access to the Internet, but we didn't have much software. Back then, for the most part, you still, you know, went to the store and bought software in boxes. But that wasn't something we really did.

The Internet escalated the open source software movement that started in the 80s. Suddenly, people from all over the world could write goofy little programs, and those goofy little programs could be used by nearly anyone. With open source software, I could find any program you needed. I should also add that open source, at this time, in my head, essentially meant "free computer games." For my dad it meant, like, making spreadsheets and writing letters with the computer. But I would get online, get into chat rooms, and try to find programs to download that we could use without spending money on.



Here's an example of a program I'd use back then. This fantastic, pixelated screenshot is from a program called RPGMaker. You could use it to program role playing games. You can sit there and create characters and write the dialogue and build monsters and worlds. I'd sit there in front of the computer for hours click-click-clicking with the mouse to set down tiles. Then I'd wait several more hours--because again, this was the 1990s--for my game to upload to the internet, so that all my weird internet friends could play my game.

I didn't think this was open source programming. In fact, I'd never considered it. It was just me making a game that I thought other people might like to play too.

**It was
rewarding!**

Building things with computers is just some that I kept after. I just kept doing it, mostly because it was fun. After



**It was
rewarding!**

Building things with computers is just some that I kept after. I just kept doing it, mostly because it was fun. After that I just started making websites for myself. I had a Pokemon website. It was fantastic. I had websites on Japanese anime. Those were fantastic too. I didn't really have an end goal.



I think my first biggest website was done for my friend, who was a photographer. At least, he had the URL for the site printed on business cards, which was pretty high profile for me.



The thing with the Internet is, that you can always view the source code, the bits of text that make a website. And again, while I didn't consider this as "open source software," it completely is. The entire Internet is made up of open source software.

You can see here, in this case, that I didn't even bother to hide the fact that I took this template from some other website. I'm pretty sure I had no idea what I was doing. I just saw a design I liked and I took it.



You can also see here a very young and far less scruffy version of me, back when I was making films and writing books and being a well-dressed punk.

ABOUT THE SLINGSHOT COLLECTIVE

Slingshot is a quarterly, independent, radical, newspaper published in the East Bay since 1988 by the Slingshot Collective. We also publish the annual Slingshot Organizer radical calendar planner. We are an all volunteer, non-profit, tax exempt project of the Long Haul.



Borrow whatever you want. We did.

But a really transformative moment in my open source life came when I started working for a magazine called Slingshot. Slingshot is this left-wing newspaper run by a collective of radicals. They needed a website, and I volunteered to build one for them.

It felt really good to be able to put that anti-copyright logo in there. It's still exists on their website! And at the time, I didn't think much about it. I just thought it was badass enough to put on there.

But more importantly, even though I had been making websites for a few years, no one at the magazine knew anything about them. I really felt like I was helping people, you know? I was able to apply my skills to a purpose and make a positive change to the world. That, to me, is the essence of open source--sharing some piece of knowledge with the wider world.

Me + **You**
= Open Source

Okay, so now let's talk about you. Now, we've only just met. I don't know you very well. Or at all. I'm going to take a wild guess about the sort of person you are.



**You're
curious!**

I'm going to assume you're curious. I'm going to assume that you are willing to dive into problems and explore them, even if you don't know the answer.

And, by the way, you don't have to know the answer, at all, ever. Your only interest is in understanding the problem, in asking the question.



You're passionate!

I'm also going to assume you're passionate. About something, anything. Whether it's making games or selling clothes or you love your city or you just want to help people. Because you see a problem in this world, and you're also determined to solve the problem, too!

You might not know how to solve problem, and that's okay, too. No one does. In any endeavor, in any hobby or sport or skill in the world, everyone starts at the beginning. And we're all making this up as we go along.

Don't know code?

And I'm also going to assume you don't know code.

And that, above all else, is totally fine.



No problem!

I think, these days, with so much information on the Internet about the “right” way to do things, and so much emphasis on being able to code, there’s this misconception that if you don’t know how to program, you can’t possibly get involved in open source software.

That’s just not true!

- **Document it!**
- **Design it!**
- **Test it!**
- **Translate it!**
- **Blog about it!**
- ***Use it!***

There are *plenty* of things you can do to help open source software. You can document it! You can make designs for it! You can test it out! You can write translations! You can talk about it! Heck, you can *use it*, and give feedback to the developer!

Being able to program is just one tiny part about open source software. It's definitely not the most important part. All of it is. Each piece of the cycle is vital.

Find a problem you care about.

(and then fix it!)

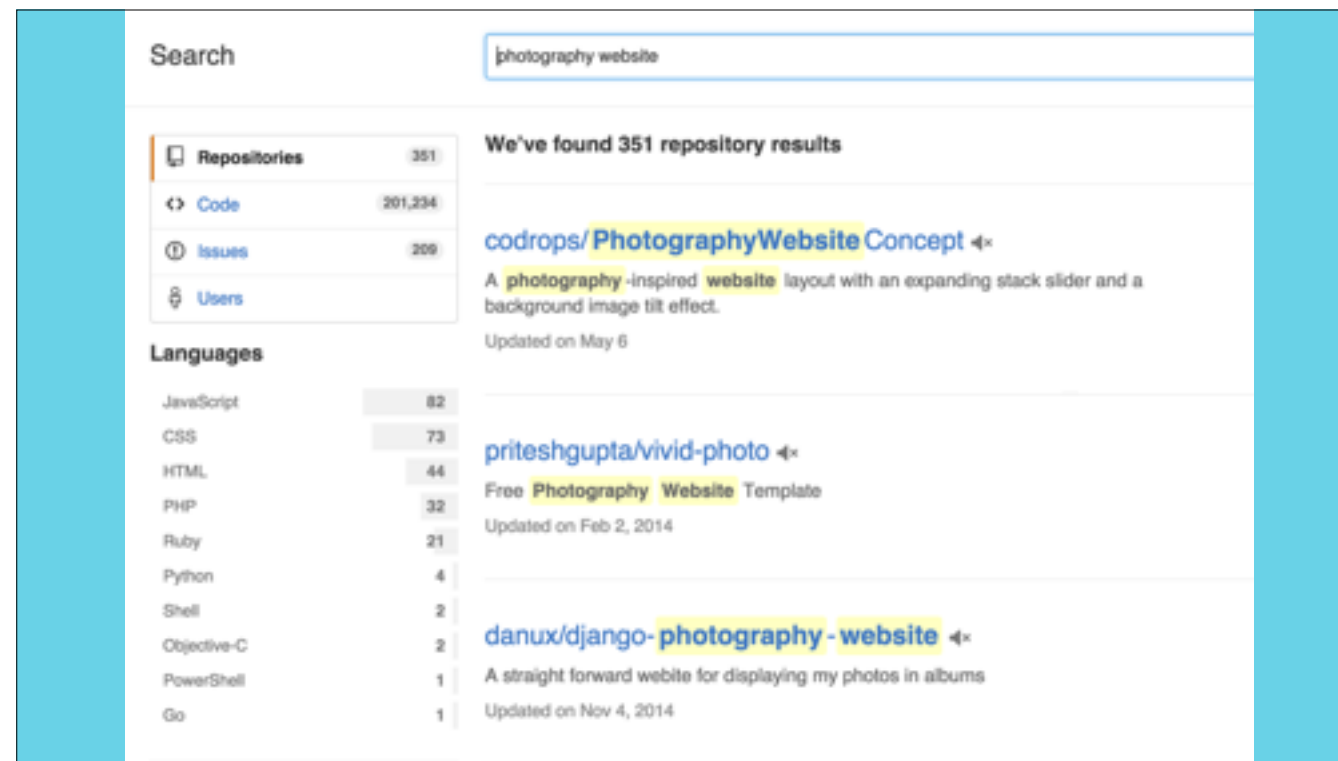
If you're interested in getting involved in open source, the easiest way to turn your passion and curiosity into something productive is to find something you care about fixing. Maybe you want to change the language of some software from English to your native tongue. Maybe you want to change the software so that it's easier for blind people to use. Maybe you want to simplify something for your city or your community. And it doesn't matter if you do the change "the right way." It really doesn't. Your first hundred times you're going to be terrible, just like my first Pokemon website was terrible. But eventually you'll figure out your strengths and what's worth continuing.

Me + You
= Open Source

Right, so this is the part of the talk where I go off on a bit of a rant to finish up what open source software means to me.

Making the world a tiny bit better.

The world we live in is harsher now than it was in the 90s. Open source software is, I sincerely believe, vital to human freedom. It's The Right Thing to Do. When you work on an open source project, when you make a public contribution, you contribute a little bit of positive energy back into the world.



As a quick example, if I jump onto GitHub right now, there are hundreds of thousands of examples of photography templates. There are people who put their open source projects up, not because they think it's the greatest or because they want fame, but because they wanted to help people. Open source is sort of like an investment in the future, to give someone else a helping hand.

The screenshot shows a GitHub search interface with the query 'photography website'. On the left, there are filters for 'Repositories' (351), 'Code' (201,234), 'Issues' (209), and 'Users'. Below these are 'Languages' with a bar chart showing counts for JavaScript (82), CSS (73), HTML (44), PHP (32), Ruby (21), Python (4), Shell (2), Objective-C (2), PowerShell (1), and Go (1). The main results area shows 'We've found 351 repository results'. The first result is 'codrops/PhotographyWebsite Concept', described as a 'photography-inspired website layout with an expanding stack slider and a background image tilt effect', updated on May 6. The second result is 'priteshgupta/vivid-photo', a 'Free Photography Website Template' updated on Feb 2, 2014. The third result is 'danux/django-photography-website', described as 'A straight forward website for displaying my photos in albums', updated on Nov 4, 2014.

Filter	Count
Repositories	351
Code	201,234
Issues	209
Users	

Language	Count
JavaScript	82
CSS	73
HTML	44
PHP	32
Ruby	21
Python	4
Shell	2
Objective-C	2
PowerShell	1
Go	1

Search Results:

We've found 351 repository results

- codrops/PhotographyWebsite Concept**
A photography-inspired website layout with an expanding stack slider and a background image tilt effect.
Updated on May 6
- priteshgupta/vivid-photo**
Free Photography Website Template
Updated on Feb 2, 2014
- danux/django-photography-website**
A straight forward website for displaying my photos in albums
Updated on Nov 4, 2014

As a quick example, if I jump onto GitHub right now, there are hundreds of thousands of examples of photography templates. There are people who put their open source projects up, not because they think it's the greatest or because they want fame, but because they want to help people.

Open source is sort of like an investment in the future, to give someone else a helping hand. When I helped Slingshot, the radical newspaper, and I made my code open source, I'm also potentially able to help people in Conpenhagen, in Kansas, in Antarctica. Doesn't matter where, so long as someone can find it.

Me + You
= Open Source

So that's almost everything you need to know about open source, except...

**Me + You
+ MANY STRANGERS
= Open Source**

I'd be omitting a huge chunk of the story if I didn't mention that open source, for better or worse, means dealing with a bunch of strangers.

This can be a negative thing. People can be rude, especially on the Internet.

But it's worth it, I think, for the good bits.

Palestine

ammarr commented 16 days ago

@gitorikian, FYI, I just released a new version (0.3.0) with the Unicode Block support. Thanks again.

Norway

paaljoachim commented 2 days ago

You are correct I am on a Norwegian keyboard. Thanks for all your help! I used the wrong tick...:) I was using "" and should have used the ""

France

gitorikian@gmail.com [reporter] 2015-06-02 06:38:58 UTC

Created [attachment 384408](#) ([details](#)) ([review](#))

Remove erroneous debug info

Emmanuel Pacaud [laseem developer] 2015-06-03 20:12:26 UTC

Applied to master. Thanks.

Germany

Merged gitorikian merged 5 commits into gitorikian:master from nwellnhof:pull_request on

Conversation 3 Commits 3 Files changed 3

nwellnhof commented on Jun 16

See the commits for comments.

For me, I'm incredibly grateful for the variety of people I get to interact with on a daily basis. For a guy from a small-ish town in the States, I get to literally talk to and help people around the world. It's crazy! It's amazing!



For you, the Patchwork program you're about to embark on has also been taken by hundreds of people just like you, around the world. Beginners, maybe, and also people that are curious and passionate, and want to make the world a better place.

Thanks!
@gjtorikian

Thanks! And good luck!