Person1: From your point of view, uh, what is sustainability in terms of software?

Person2: Um, so ... So it would be basically supporting um, supporting and involving a piece of software ... Um ... So um ... I've come to believe that the only way to do that is to [inaudible 00:01:37] community or [inaudible 00:01:39] a piece of software. Um, whether that community is composed of volunteers or people that are actually paying for your product, uh, it doesn't matter. But basically you do need to have a community, or at least you have to have a very dedicated individual that's prepared to actually develop the software for whatever reason he or she is actually doing that for. So ... So ... So assign that one person, but basically if, if there's one person then you have um, this ... You know, if that person suddenly disappears the software would probably rot away. If you've got multiple people supporting that software then, then you're spreading more, potentially you can um, develop it um ... More, more ... You haven't got to worry, you have got more effort so you can develop it more uh ... The issues can then actually be then you got coordinating people ... I mean the nature of the problem changes, and if you're paying for a product then that's also got it's own, uh, different issues. But it's basically building a community and having 1 or 2 dedicated individuals that prepare to coordinate the effort.

Person1: I see. Um ... What are the attributes or features of the software that led you to believe that it is sustainable?

Person2: Uh ... Uh ... Uh ... Uh, what software? I mean I don't know any software that's sustainable.

Person1: I mean ...

Person2: [crosstalk 00:02:58] software have a got shelf life at some level right.

Person1: Um ... Any, any software that you believe is sustainable?

Person2: Um ...

Person1: Which attributes or features do they have? The software itself?

Person2: The software itself?

Person1: Yeah.

Person2: It's going to be satisfying some need ... Or then uh ... A community, the community is trying to address, right. So, so ... So, um, if you are a computational scientist for instance, then you need a piece of software that would be able to model systems in your domain. If you are um, developing a grid for, for, for visualising stuff so you can [inaudible 00:03:40] again you got to provide the features other people will be attracted to your product for support [inaudible 00:03:45] somewhere and provide help uh, if possible. So, so, basically satisfying the need for the community trying to address, which is uh ... Uh, it's a vague question, it has a vague answer.

Person1: That's all right. Regarding the software that you've developed, was sustainability a consideration?

Person2: Uh ... Usually is, but it's not a prime motivator, so because we're product-based, I mean some project-based, what will happen is we'll have a project that has a lifetime. So basically you're on a project that's got, uh, from a couple of months to a couple of years, uh, worth of um, pay for effort. After that, usually it's up to either the people we're developing the software for to maintain that software, or, or in the past a new software that we have actually developed, um, has [inaudible 00:04:43] on um, repository, an open repository. But I don't think we built a community enough to be sustainable, so basically it's kind of atrophying, uh, it's not really being developed. And that that would quietly disappear, and that happens, people won't bother over that, unless somebody ... Sometimes you can actually get a piece of software that, that, that dies, but then some new people come along and take over and continue developing it.

Person1: Uh huh

Person2: But ... But uh, I ... I think generally because we were funded to do a project for a couple of months to a couple of years and you know, thus sustainability is a nice effort, it's not a prime motivator, it's to, to, to meet the requirements of whoever's actually funding the project.

Person1: I see.

Person2: And if you can provide them with sustainability, um, a tool that will help sustain the software, then all the better. But it doesn't always work that way.

Person1: I see. [Clears throat]. Have you worked on any projects that were not sustainable?

Person2: [Sighs] I think most of them are probably not sustainable, I mean it all depends on, on where the funding comes from, where the interest comes from. So if you're helping a an existing developer that was trying to develop a piece of software, um, then they would continue developing that software usually

Person1: Uh huh

Person2: Okay. If that's something that's being funded, say, by the European community or, or by a, an, another research council in the UK, generally when the funding stops, um, that, the development of that piece of software will stop as well with it.

Person1: Uh huh

Person2: Um, so hence ... Hence, yeah ... So I would say because of the nature of the work that we actually do, I think most of the stuff does not, uh, live a long time. So, so I would say most of it is probably not sustainable in that sense. In the sense that we tried to make it sustainable, you know, using repositories, try to make it open if possible then, then, then potentially it has the the capability of being sustainable, but not necessarily, it will not necessarily happen.

Person1: Hmm. Were there any consequences of it not being sustainable?

Person2: Not, not ... Not for us, because I mean, again, by the nature of the work we do, um, we basically are hired to work on a project for a number uh period of time, and after that actually happens, um, um, we move on to another project.

Person1: Hmm.

Person2: So I mean, it's something that's sad, right? I mean you spend a lot of effort and time developing a piece of software, making it work well and then suddenly it, it, it doesn't, does not, doesn't have a lot of uptake or, or people have just moved on. So, so yeah.

Person1: Yeah. I see. Well ...