Finding co-maintainers for your tools

Agenda:

- Presentation (15')
- Discussion (40')

It's happens all the time...

1. Get excited about something

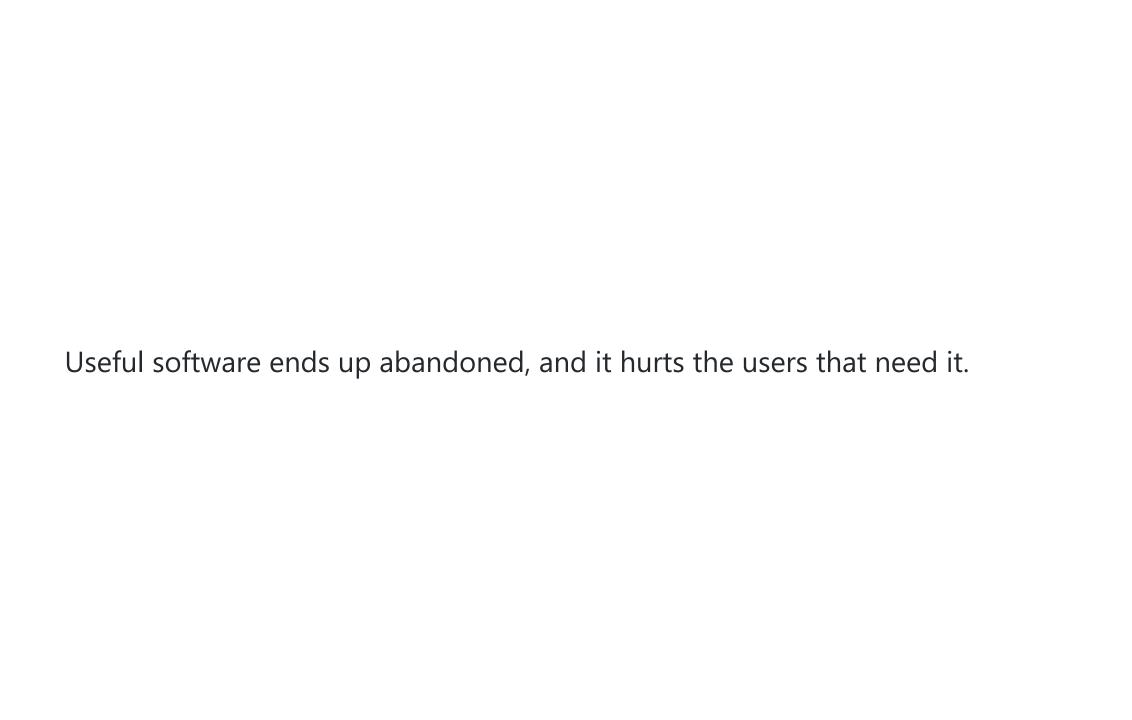2. Build some software for it!

3. People find it useful and rely on it

Success!

But time passes:

4. You get busy with life, work, or other projects

5. Things break or need improvements
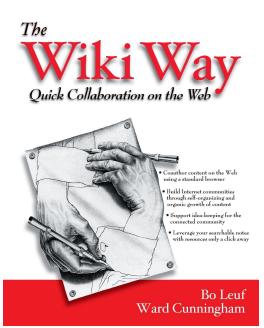
6. There is no-one to take care of things!

Maybe you are no longer interested

or you are busy, and no-one has knowledge to fix things.

Useful software ends up abandoned, and it hurts the users that need it.

If only there was a way

Maybe we can treat our tools and software,

a bit more like a wiki?

Collaborate with others!

Why have co-maintainers?

Collaboration 🤝

...like in the wikis!

Bug reports

Users report bugs and help understand issues

Bug fixes

Other devs can help fix open bugs and provide code review

Operations

In platforms like Wikimedia Cloud Services, you can share operations work like restarting, stopping, or deploying your software.

Documenting things

will help others work with you,

and others can help you document things too!

Answering questions!

When users, other devs, or sysadmins have questions,

co-maintainers can help answer questions and move things forward.

In general, your software will **live longer and be healthier**,

if you **work with others** and share ownership and responsibility.

How do I find co-maintainers?

❌ There is no silver bullet.

⏳ It takes time for interested people to show up, and for them to be involved but...

There are things we can do! 🖐️

Publish the code

- Pick a OSS license → https://opensource.org/licenses
- Publish the code → Gerrit, Gitlab, Github, etc.

Be around, talk to others

- Be around in community channels:
  - Mailing lists like cloud@wikimedia.org
  - Chat venues like #wikimedia-cloud
  - phabricator.wikimedia.org
  - On wikis where your software is used
- Talk to people, share your work

Get others involved

When a chance arises:

- Ask them to help you fix some docs
- Ask them to report a bug in your tracker of choice
- Ask them to fix a bug
- Share details about your projects

Write documentation

- What does your project do?

- What does the code do?

- How can you run it or test it?

- How do you deploy it?

This will make it easier for others to chime in,

and you will repeat yourself less.

Create opportunities

- Schedule sessions in hackathons 😉

- Ask explicitly for help or feedback

- *What other ways can we create opportunities for collaboration?*

Help others, get involved

If you help others when you have the opportunity,

you will build relationships and rapport,

and they will help you at some other time.

Discussion

http://etherpad.wikimedia.org/p/wmhack21-finding-comaintainers

Prompts:

- What is your name?
- Have you built any tools?
  - Do you have co-maintainers
- Do you maintain any tools?
  - How did you become a co-maintainer?
- What can we do as a community to encourage a culture where people collaborate on software the same way they do on the wikis

Links:

- *Developing_community_norms_for_critical_bots_and_tools - bd808*
- *File:Stealing some of Wikimedia's Principles to Democratize Programming: talk about applying the wiki principles to programming*