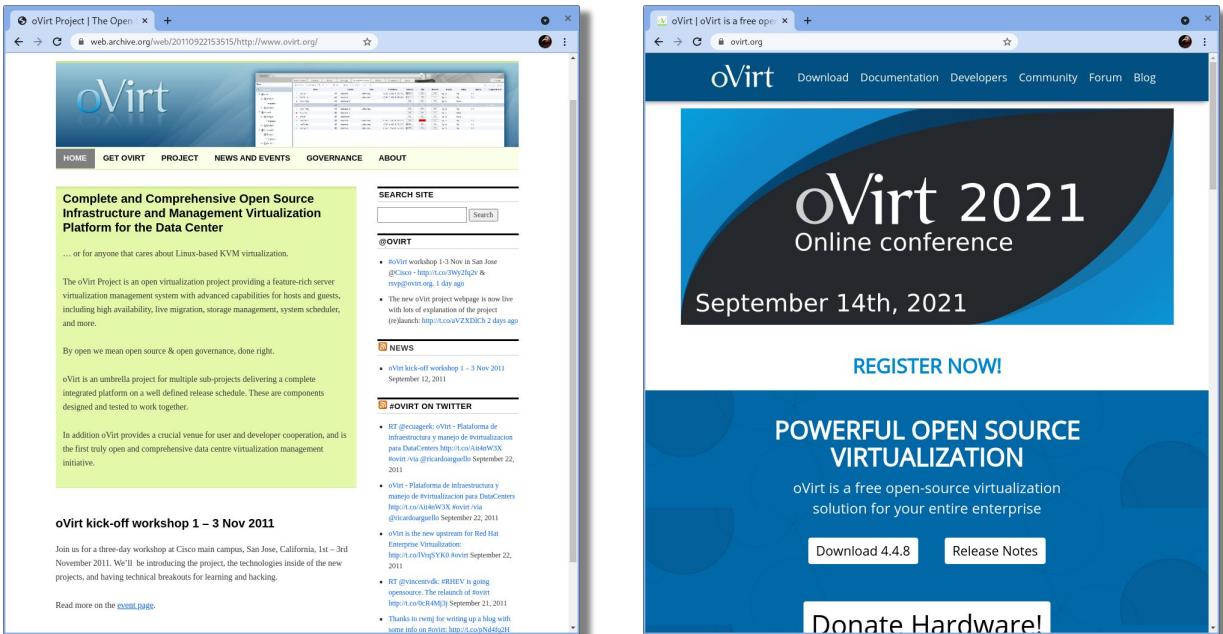


oVirt—Ten years of open source

Reflections from a Community Architect

Karsten Wade, Senior Community Architect
oVirt 2021 Online conference, 14 Sep 2021

Hi, I'm Karsten or you may know me as 'quaid', one of the community architects who worked on open sourcing this project, and I'd like to take you on a short journey through ten years of open source principles at work through my lens of working with the oVirt project.



Let's take a moment and look at the difference of ten years.

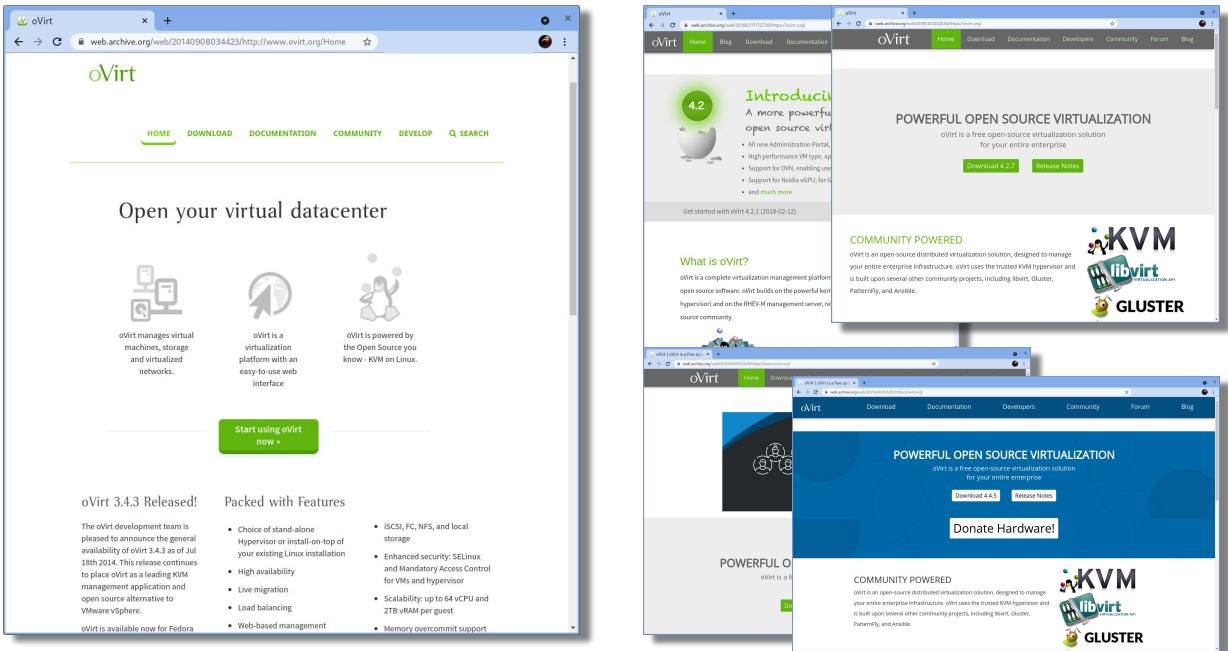
We've progressed a bit in how we present the project, in how we work to attract users.

Both of these pages represent best practices of the time.

In 2011, the focus was on news, lots of words, and active social media all above the fold. The Workshop is below the fold, not very prominent for such an important thing. The download button is small and on the menubar.

In 2021, other calls to actions are in the center. This conference here is top of the fold, a large Download area and an even larger (looking) Donate Hardware area are below.

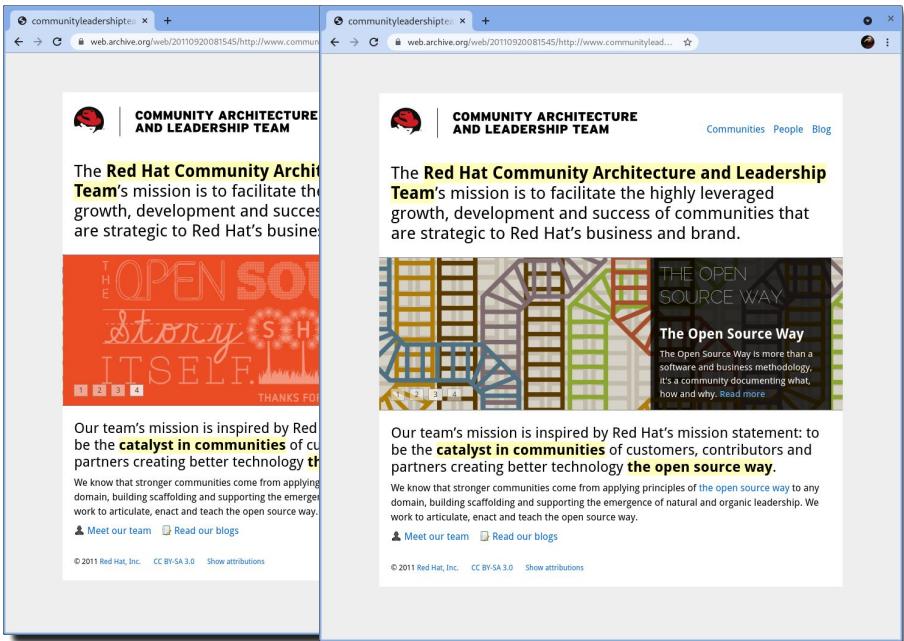
Oh, and we've returned to blue as the main color.



So yes, since we're looking, let's see what happened during the green years.

[Click through all five images]

Lots of movement around the calls to action in different locations. Always some way to download the latest code. Different tooling but similar look and feel. And the latest brings us back to blue.

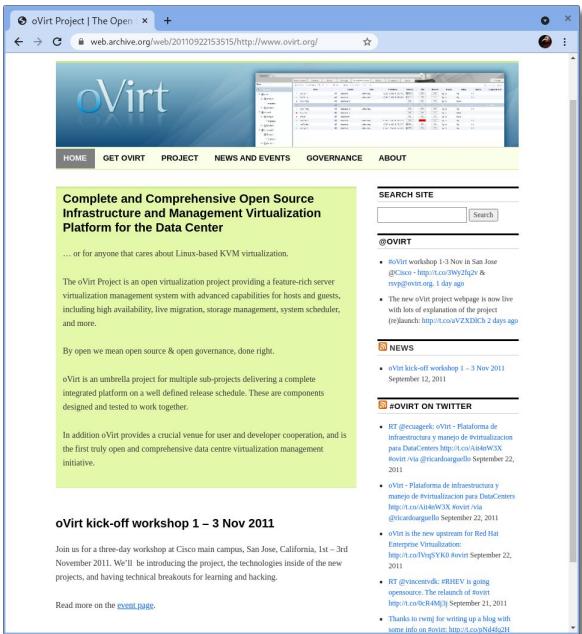


Now what was happening in 2011 that got me involved in this project?

I was working for this team, the Community Architecture and Leadership Team, and we had our roots in the Fedora Project, including myself. We also worked on other efforts like [CLICK] Teaching Open Source and [CLICK] OpenSource.com.

What I did for this team [CLICK] included leading the efforts to capture community management best practices as we knew them best, get them into a handbook, and work to get other people to read the book, use the book, and contribute to the book.

One day we were at a team multi-day offsite meeting, with a few extended team members including Robyn Bergeron, and we got a call from Carl Trieloff asking if we wanted to help with the open sourcing of oVirt.



Applying the principles

- Started with the workshop in Nov 2011, put together by Robyn and myself.
- Infrastructure of participation around the existing developers and leaders:
 - Mailing lists
 - Websites
 - Blogs
 - Version control
 - Etc.
- By the end of 2012 our involvement tapered off
- But we learned a lot about the use and evolution of the principles of the open source way

The oVirt project offered a full hands-on opportunity to apply the principles of the Open Source Way guidebook, to measure their success, and improve them. Or to learn how they had to adapt and change for different projects. But to really try them out again across an entire project, not just piecemeal or suggestions, was a great opportunity.

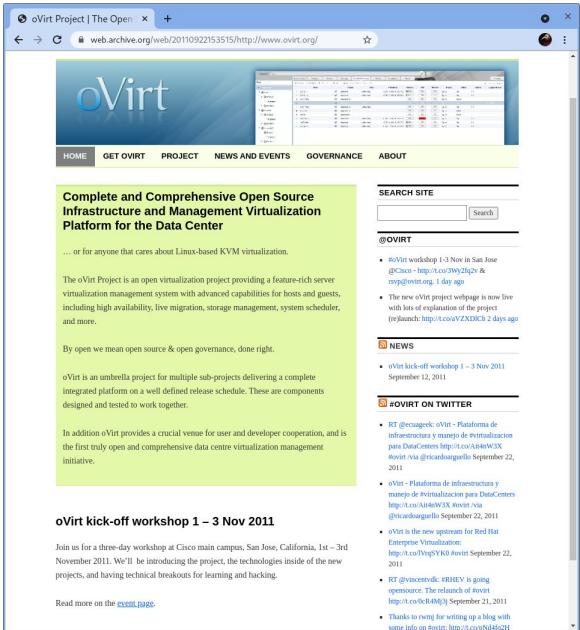
So I got started with Robyn Bergeron (of Fedora and Ansible fame), and we co-lead as Community Architects for the open sourcing of the codebase. This including providing infrastructure of participation such as version control, websites, mailing lists, blogs, news, and social media. This included finding speaking opportunities for other contributors, and

standing in front of audiences ourselves.

Robyn and I tapered off our involvement, myself through near the end of 2012. I continued to be involved with the infrastructure team for a few years after that, because it's hard when there are a few keys only you know how to turn.

Not-so fun fact: for the first three+ years of the project, we had several services running on a Linode instance, back when they only had Xen for VMs.

So that is a good segue into the few things I want to talk about today, around the principles of the open source way. How sometimes you have to make a decision that moves you forward, such as using an open source solution but not YOUR open source solution because of whatever details were true at that time and then became A Running System back before we had the idea those needn't be so fragile and hard to replace.



Three example principles

- Governance and self-direction
- Creating value from the codebase
- Your contribution, your CV

In these three areas I'm going to see how we approached things ten years ago, and compare that to where we are today for the oVirt project and for the evolution of the underlying principles along the jo

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL theopensourceway.org/the_open_source_way-guidebook-2.0.html#. The page title is "Project and Community Governance". The left sidebar contains a "Table of Contents" with many items under "The OPEN SOURCE WAY". The main content area starts with an "Introduction" section, followed by a detailed explanation of what governance means in an organizational context, mentioning regulatory matters and risk management. It also discusses the nature of open source projects as organizations with distributed power. Below this is a section titled "What is governance?", which defines it as rules or customs determining who gets to do what. It notes that governance is about people's rights and responsibilities. The page concludes with a section on "Roles" and a note that activity hinges on roles-related governance.

Governance principles

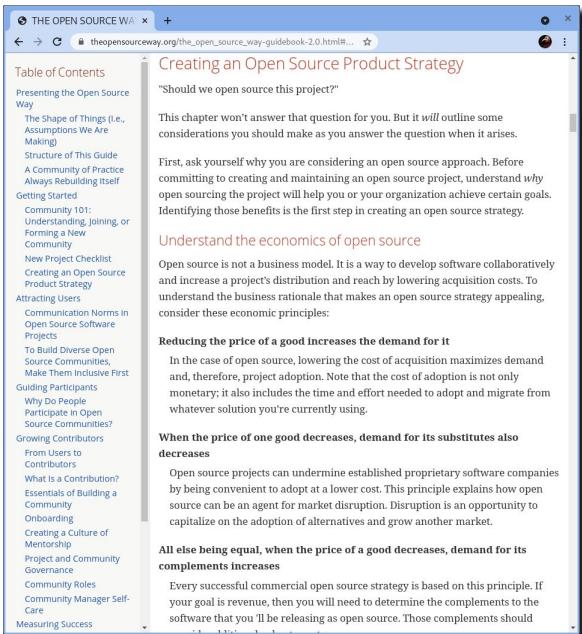
- We adopted recent models e.g. from OpenStack
- We applied the open source way principles
- Now more robust guidance for governance and similar principles

Topics:

- governance and self-directing a project
 - we used a new governance model similar to the recent OpenStack model
 - we applied the principles across the board, as we understood them
 - today we understand a lot more and have a lot of approaches [OSW page]
 - [CLICK principles 2]
 - we now recommend a high-degree of self-governance with well documented procedures, codes of conduct, and so forth.

https://www.theopensourceway.org/the_open_source

[way-guidebook-2.0.html#_project_and_community_governance](#)



Creating value

- Creating value in many ways: products, managed services, integrated solutions, research, etc.
- From the general idea then, now we have processes

Topics:

- always wanting to have other people able to make products too
 - It was always an important idea, this ability to create value out of the codebase in many ways—products, managed services, integrated solutions, research, and so on.
 - back then it was an idea that we were enabling this to happen, now we have processes and checklists [OSW page]

https://www.theopensourceway.org/the_open_source_way-guidebook-2.0.html#creating_an_open_source_product_strategy

The roles one takes in an open source community are defined around the ways a role participates, collaborates, and contributes to the community and the various community outputs. It is a common misconception that the only or most valuable way to contribute to an open source project is to write code. There is a saying, "All contributions are of equal value," that sums up the best approach to take.

One part of this is simply not trying to predict the future—you literally cannot know or predict which contribution or contributor is going to have lasting impact on the project. An accumulation of small contributions, for example, can easily have the same impact as a smaller number of large, splashy contributions. Someone might participate in a short user experience workshop and provide a valuable, lasting impact they are not even aware of beyond their brief interaction.

The most important part of why all contributions should have equal weight is that a community is made up of people, and the feelings and experiences of these people literally are community. The things each person brings to the community—their contributions—become a very personal currency in the project, a way of knowing who can be relied upon to do what.

As people grow in their skills over time in a welcoming and inclusive community, whatever the nature of their contributions are, they will have impact far beyond the reach of one person. They are better able to grow to their greatest potential by being allowed to stretch themselves into, then beyond, their roles. One way this "being allowed" manifests is by removing any level of judgement, difference of value, or even shame over different types of contributions.

So it's a way of recognizing that all people are of equal value in the world, and whatever they bring each day needs to be weighed as simply the best of a human being in that moment. This is a meaningful way of being inclusive, permitting people to be a 100% contributor regardless of however they are able to participate and behave on any given day.

Ways to Contribute

It's never too early to think of how you can make a contribution to a project or group you'd like to join. By doing so, you catapult the project further ahead in

Valuing all contributions

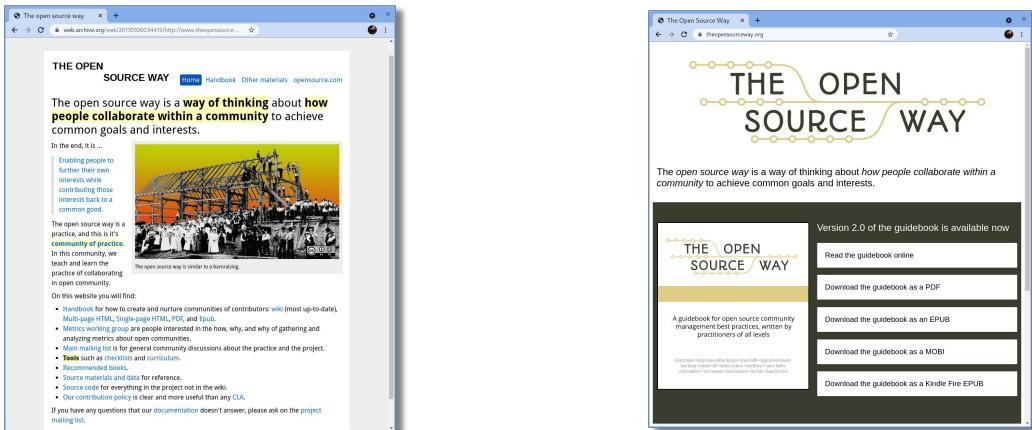
- oVirt clearly works to showcase and value contributions of all types
 - Docs, social media, design, UX, etc.
- It is useful to attract contributors around their career interests

Topics:

- oVirt is another project that really worked to showcase and value contributions of all kinds. This was another important tenet that we saw into place from the start, a key of turning users into contributors.
 - the documentation, social media activity, project design, all have showcased the range of areas of contribution [click, click]
 - As a current way of looking at this concept, we have some content here on how to attract contributors around their career interests and how to improve those in a project. [click]
 - with open source, more people than developers can carry their project as

- part of their CV

https://www.theopensourceway.org/the_open_source_way-guidebook-2.0.html#_community_roles

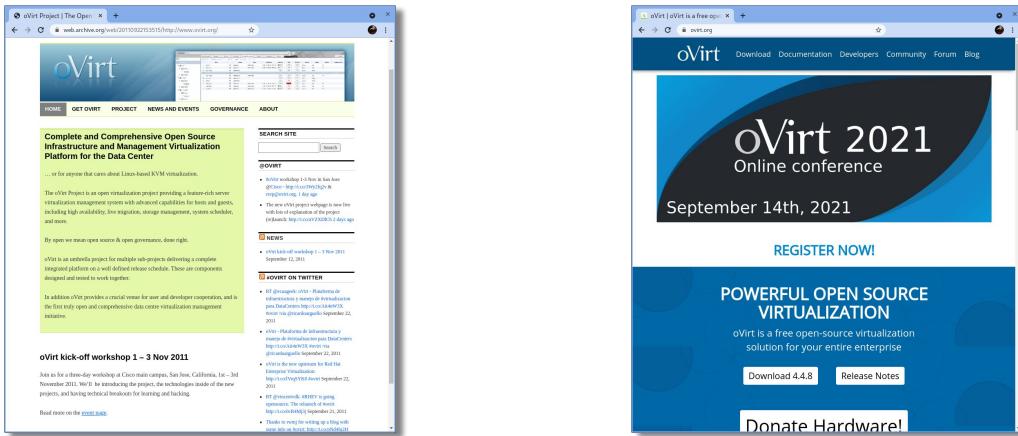


<https://theOpenSourceWay.org>

https://www.theopensourceway.org/presentations/oVirt-A_decade_of_open_source.pdf

[CC BY SA 4.0](#)

Ten years ago and today.



oVirt—Ten years of open source

Reflections from a Community Architect

<https://theopensourceway.org> ... @quaid

Thanks for walking down memory lane with me today.

If you want to read more about the Open Source Way, you can find the guidebook in all its formats at theopensourceway.org.

You can also find information on contributing, how the book is written (AsciiDoc and a git-based workflow), and more on that same website.

You can find me on twitter and other places as @quaid.