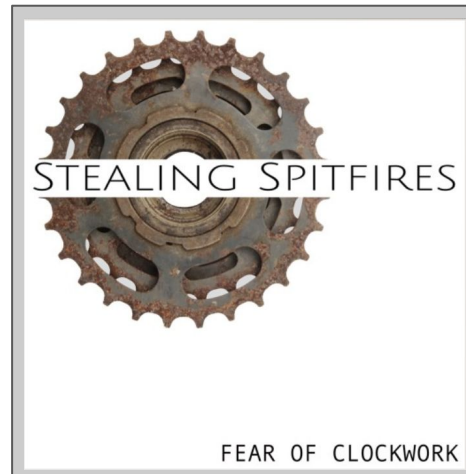# Failing fast and often in FOSS

Paul Sherwood 14 June 2018
@devcurmudgeon
www.devcurmudgeon.com

Intro: @devcurmudgeon

- Stealing Spitfires
- Shut Up And Shoot Me
- Software Commandments
- YBD: Yaml Build Deploy
- www.devcurmudgeon.com

- python/ruby/git/C and vi
- opinionated
- grumpy
- with trust issues
- insisting on honesty

Intro: Codethink

The Systems Software Experts

Codethink delivers critical technology services and solutions for international corporates, finance, medical, telecoms, aerospace and automotive.

We develop and maintain system-level software and infrastructure within three trusted practices:

- ENTERPRISE
- DEVICES
- AUTOMOTIVE

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Technologies
Trustable

Commandments
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So many "failures"

Canonical, Red Hat, Linaro, Intel, Renesas, Marvell, NVIDIA, Purpl, LTSI, Yocto, CIP, MeeGo, Tizen, Lima, Gerrit, GitLab, Baserock, Mustard, GENIVI, AGL, OFC, StoryBoard, Gem, NPM, Aboriginal
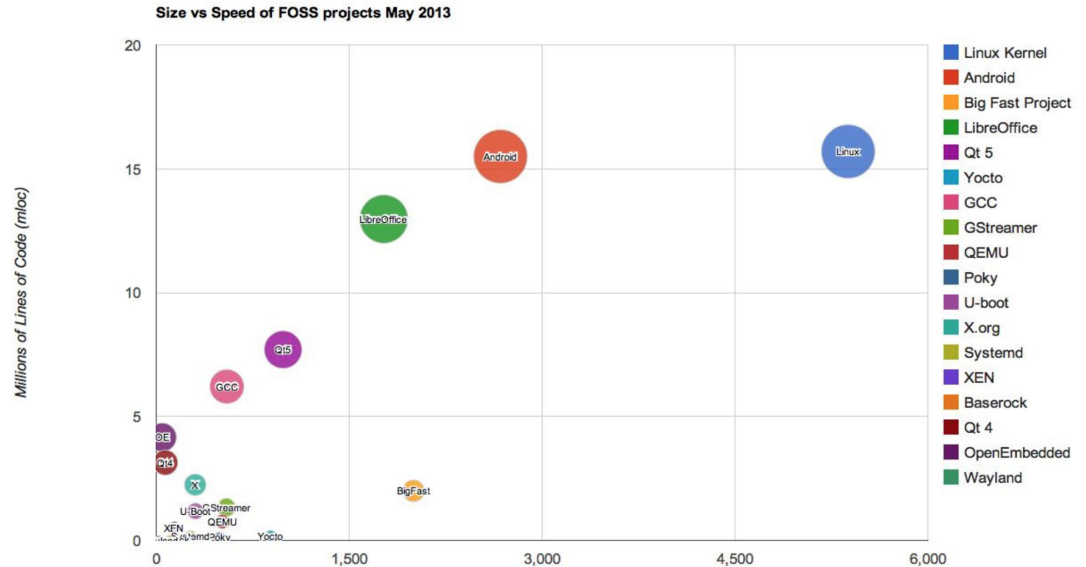
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… yet we've grown much stronger as a result

An example...

Linux is bigger, harder, faster...

GENIVI and AGL/LTSI

http://www.devcurmudgeon.com/images/mainline-lts-ltsi-genivi-20131025.pdf

...

"I see no value in us keeping uptodate with the machinations of GENIVI politics or the struggles with its software stack. None of our customers seems interested in us doing so. Although Codethink's automotive business has grown dramatically since we joined, the projects we are being asked to get involved tend not to mention GENIVI at all."

Some common threads...

You're not one of us...

- FOSS is not "a community"... it's thousands of overlapping communities
- Some communities are members-only clubs
- The problems/gaps visible from outside may be unfixable or even deliberate
- Our game, our rules

Don't you dare call my baby ugly!

- Upstream folks are often passionate and personally committed
- Upstream may instinctively dislike (or feel threatened by) your shiny new thing
- Engineering as a competitive sport

It's hard to collaborate in a snake pit...

- Everyone has an agenda
- Just because we call it "Open Source" doesn't mean everyone is nice…
- … or can be trusted
- Believing the marketing/hype is stupid in FOSS, just like everywhere else

If you build it they ~~will~~ *may not* come...

- Why didn't you just help to improve the current $project?
- A baby project shouldn't try to act like a grown-up one
- Engineers may not be the best advocates...
- ...or users
- ...or decision-makers

Some key lessons

- Understand the specific upstream
  - **key people**
  - organisation(s)
  - agendas
  - culture, rules and governance
- Appearances can be deceiving, even in the open
- Success always takes longer than you think

Some of the itches we are still scratching...

- Linux kernel
- GNOME
- Debian
- Freexian
- NetSurf
- Reproducible Builds
- GitLab
- FOSDEM

- BuildStream (https://gitlab.com/BuildStream/buildstream)
- Trustable Software Engineering (https://trustable.io)