How to Participate at the Apache Software Foundation

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Leading the Wave
of Open Source

Apache is about Community

Who?

Anyone

What?

Ask a question
Answer a question
Report problems
Test
Document
Help with web sites
Fix bugs and code

How?

Mail Lists
ApacheCon
Hackathons

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How do you figure it out?

- Why are decisions made on mail lists?
    - Can you (please) delete my post?
- How can I contribute if I'm not a committer?
- Should I file an ICLA or CCLA? Or both?
- When do you need a software grant?
- Who (really) controls an Apache project?

Presentation Goals

– Two Main Themes

  • "Reality" *vs.* "Rule" *vs.* "Style"

    – ... and some fuzzy lines

  • How Mail Lists Work

– Intended Audience

  • New participants

"Reality" *vs.* "Rule" *vs.* "Style"

Sample Realities

– ASF is fluid: there are few hard and fast rules

– Documentation might be incomplete or obsolete

  • Projects depend on volunteers

– Some lines are fuzzy (more coming on this)

– ASF project lists get archived world-wide (more about this later)

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"Reality" *vs.* "Rule" *vs.* "Style"

Sample Rules

– A Project Management Committee (PMC) provides oversight for a project. [1]

– Participation is individual, not corporate. [1]

– Project decisions happen on-list. [1]

– Three +1 votes are required for a release. [2]

[1] http://www.apache.org/foundation/how-it-works.html

[2] http://www.apache.org/foundation/voting.html

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"Reality" *vs.* "Rule" *vs.* "Style"

Sample Styles

- Some projects have IRC channels, other projects don't allow IRC.

- Some projects elect committers in public, others do so in private.

- Many projects have a 3 day mininum for votes, others might have a 7 day minimum.

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"Reality" *vs.* "Rule" *vs.* "Style"

Sample fuzzy line #1

"The ASF desires that all contributors of ideas, code, or documentation to the Apache projects complete, sign, and submit (via postal mail, fax, or email) an Individual Contributor License Agreement (CLA)."
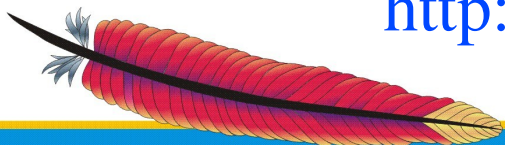
http://www.apache.org/licenses

"Reality" *vs.* "Rule" *vs.* "Style"

Sample fuzzy line #1 (continued)

But!

Any post to a mail list or issue tracking system (Jira) is a "contribution" unless it is clearly marked "Not a Contribution."

http://www.apache.org/licenses/LICENSE-2.0

"Reality" *vs.* "Rule" *vs.* "Style"

Sample fuzzy line #1(continued)

- ICLA: Explicitly contributes individual work.
  - A PMC may ask a "high volume" contributor to file an ICLA. Consider it a compliment.
  - An ICLA is required to become a committer.
- CCLA: Lets an employer say who they authorize to contribute to Apache (under his or her own ICLA) for work that was created on company time. (For *you*, not Apache.)
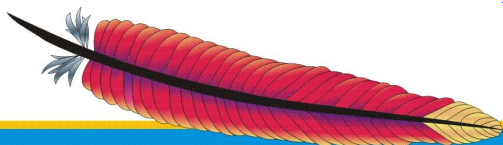
"Reality" *vs.* "Rule" *vs.* "Style"

Sample fuzzy line #2

"Any code that was developed outside of the ASF SVN repository and our public mailing lists must be processed [*via* the Incubator's IP Clearance process], even if the external developer is already an ASF committer."
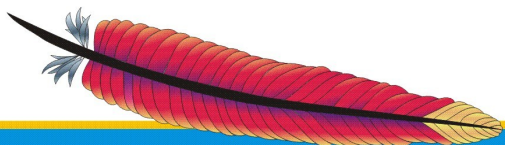
http://incubator.apache.org/ip-clearance/

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"Reality" *vs.* "Rule" *vs.* "Style"

Sample fuzzy line #2 (continued)

- ICLA covers work *inside* an Apache Project

- A Software Grant contributes work developed *outside* Apache

- The PMC decides if a software grant is required or not for borderline cases
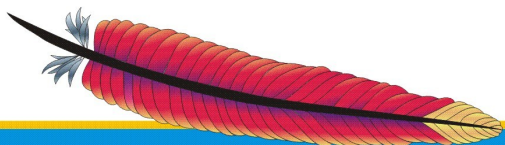
A last note about "Style"

Funny cartoon goes here, but you'll have to attend live to see it

Mail Lists

"Everything -- but everything-- inside the Apache world occurs or is reflected in email. As some people say, 'If it isn't in my email, it didn't happen.' Decisions only get made on public Apache mail lists -- not anywhere off list, such as IRC, IM, or private emails."
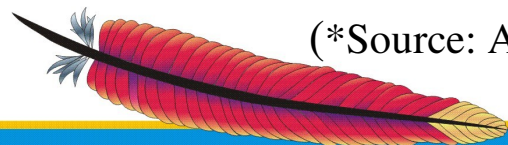
http://incubator.apache.org/guides/committer.html

Why Mail Lists?

Sample Project committers & contributors: Brazil, India, Japan, Norway, Switzerland, U.S.

Sample project users*

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Christmas Island, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cuba, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, Micronesia, Netherlands, Niue, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, U.S.

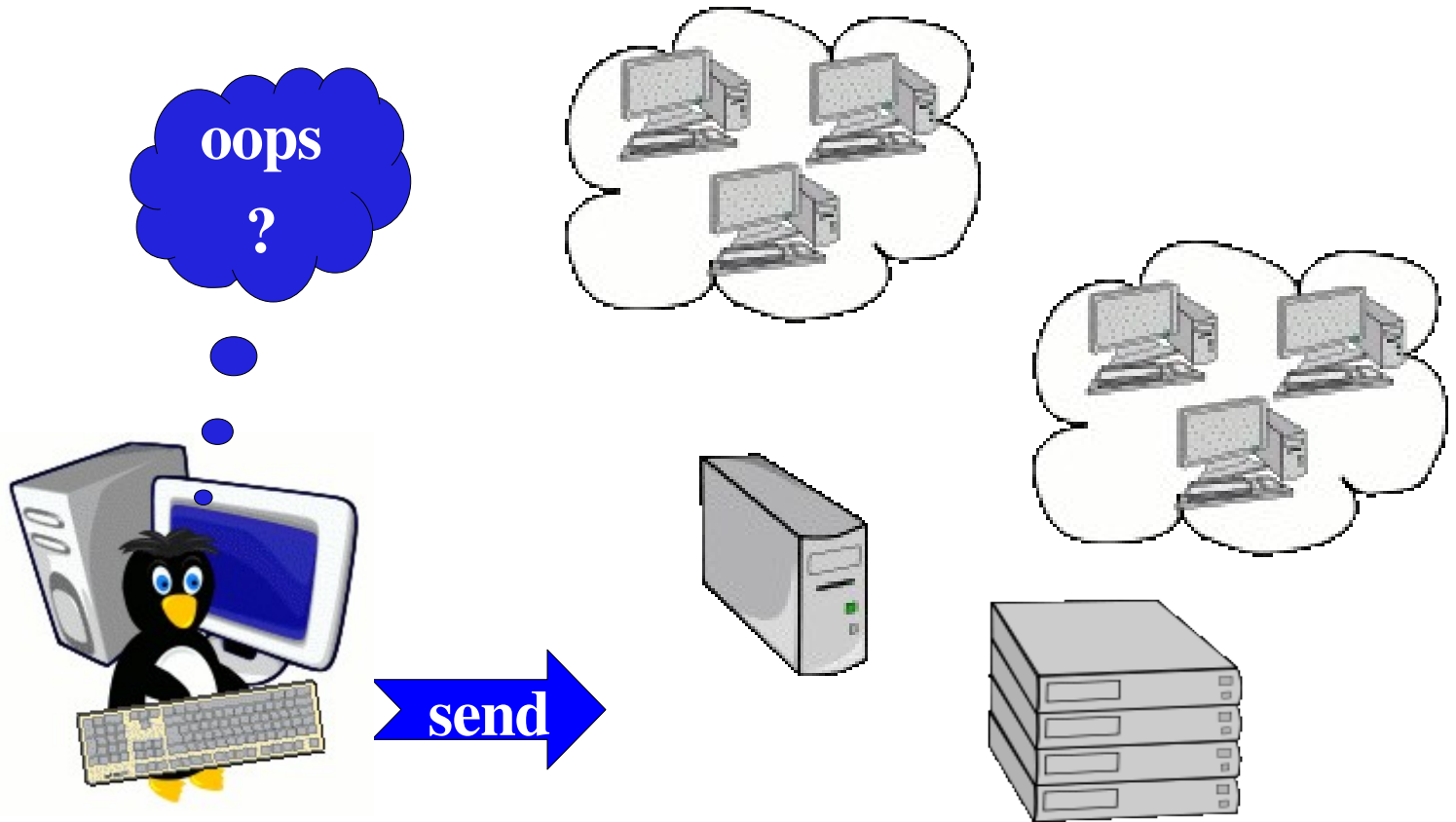(*Source: Apache Derby mail list archives.)

How Lists Work

- Most projects have a mail list page

- To subscribe:
  - Send mail to list-subscribe@apache.org
  - Respond to the email acknowledgment
  - More information: list-info@apache.org

- All dev and user lists are publicly archived

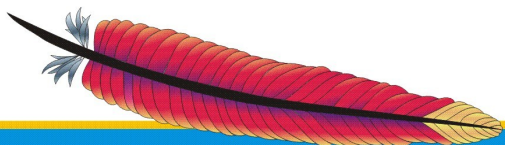 http://mail-archives.apache.org/mod_mbox/

Lists Get Archived World-Wide

Removing posts

- Infrequently a post might be removed:

  http://www.apache.org/foundation/public-archives.html

- But the ASF can't do anything about world-wide archives
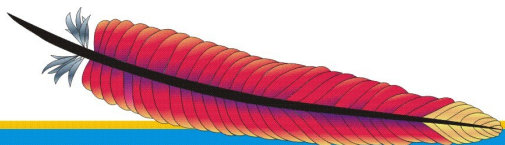
- Think twice before hitting "Send"!

Tips

Consider the email id you use

- If you post from your employer's email ....
  - Is it alright with your employer?
  - Keep Apache participation "individual"
- If you post from personal email ...
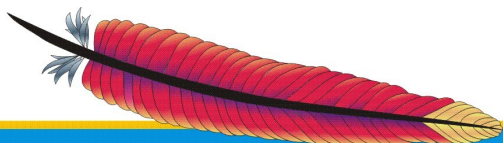 - Remove address, phone *etc.* unless you really want to broadcast it world-wide

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Tips

Don't post confidential or proprietary information to public lists.
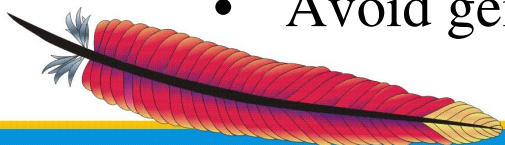
Tips

It's a Bad Sign if posts automatically have:

- "DISCLAIMER: This message is intended for the addressee only, as it contains information that is privileged, private and confidential. If you are not the intended recipient of this msessage, you are notified that any distribution, use or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify the sender immediately."

Tips

- Pay attention to whom you set "To"
- "I don't like publicly archived mail lists"
  - Post from an anonymous account
  - Don't include personal information
- Everyone has a bad day – be forgiving

More Tips

http://www.apache.org/dev/contrib-email-tips.html

Asking Questions

- Post to the right list
- Be patient
- Don't be put off by curt replies

Who to Ask

- Keep discussions on-list
- Address the list
  - Many might know.

Courtesy

- Be constructive
- No personal attacks
- Avoid gender-specific terms

Topics

- Use good subjects
- Try to be clear and concise
- Start new threads for new topics

ApacheCon

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More Sessions

- Henri Yandell

"How to make Friends and Influence Projects" (nuts and bolts on how to contribute if you're not a committer; for example, how to create a patch...)

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Resources

- http://www.apache.org

- http://incubator.apache.org

- http://mail-archives.apache.org/mod_mbox/

- http://www.apache.org/dev/contrib-email-tips.html

ApacheCon

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