Herding cats: Project management in communities

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Let’s talk about it

- Nice things: @FunnelFiasco
- Not-nice things: /dev/null
What is project management?
But first, a note on terms

YOU ARE TECHNICALLY CORRECT...

...THE BEST KIND OF CORRECT
What is project management?

- “The application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements” — Project Management Institute
What is project management?

- Working with project teams to balance constraints:
  - Time
  - Cost
  - Scope
  - Quality
“Everyone does project management, some just do it poorly.”

— Ben Cotton
Time
Managing Schedules

- Managing schedules doesn’t necessarily mean *setting* schedules
- Managing schedules does not mean being held responsible for execution
Managing Schedules

- Managing schedules is
  - Building the schedule
  - Communicating the schedule
  - Updating the schedule
  - Consulting on schedule-related decisions
Managing Schedules

• What if we don’t do schedule-based releases?
  – Then you’ll want to know how long work will take so you can coordinate other work
Cost
Cost is people

- Community projects don’t necessarily have dollar costs
- ...but people have time costs
- ...but you don’t have control over the people
- ...so your job is helping the people coordinate
Scope
Scope

- Wrangling changes
  - Go back in time and see my talk on Friday
  - Helping guide technical changes from proposal to approval
  - Follow up to make sure changes are still on track
Quality
Quality

- Coordinate go/no-go meetings
- Conduct blocker bug evaluation
  - Full disclosure: Fedora’s QA team does this in Fedora and they do it incredibly well
- Conduct prioritized bug evaluation
How?
How?

- Communicate
- Communicate
- Communicate
How?

- Sit in on meetings and read mailing lists
- Visibly communicate to the community
  - Blog posts
  - IRC office hours
  - Public issue trackers/kanban boards/etc
How is it different in community projects?
Like in companies

- People don’t like process and bureaucracy
- You might not have direct authority
- The job is all about communication and coordination
But in communities

- You can only lead by influence
- It takes more time to build credibility
- You have to show the community your value
The process is here to serve the community; the community is not here to serve the process.
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