

The Open Source Way: Creating and nurturing communities of contributors

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Who, what, when, where, how, and why

- Talking about *The Open Source Way*:
 - A community-written wiki &
 - A branded community handbook ...
 - About **implementing the open source way beyond technology**.
 - A book you can read, rebrand, redistribute, and help write ...
 - That **helps you use the open source way in your domain** of expertise.

First – it's a handbook

- A book that:
- ... describes a **principle** (what) +
- ... explains how to **implement** it (how) +
- ... and gives real world **examples** (why).



Second – it's created by those who know

- Written and lead by actual contributors and community experts:
 - Red Hat community leadership team
 - Fedora contributors
 - **Influenced by and speaking for thousands of open projects we've learned from over the years**



Third – it's lightweight

- Focus is on **spreading knowing with written knowledge** - this is how communities of practice scale what they know in to something useful for the community.
- Learn, derive, and **stand on the shoulders of giants**.
 - A complement to longer books, e.g. *Producing Open Source Software* (Fogel et al) and *Communities of Practice* (Wenger et al).



Fourth – it's incomplete on purpose

- Encourages participation – seeing there is **not too much but just enough work to be done**.
- Different source for examples – to help the book stretch **beyond “just software”**.



Upstream – TheOpenSourceWay.org/wiki

- The book follows the open source way. For example, “Why use MediaWiki?”
 - Ch. 4.8: “Choose open tools that can be extended”
 - Ch. 3.2.3: “Use lightweight, open collaboration tools – wikis, mailing lists ... and give out access.”
 - Achieves the goal of **lowering the barrier to participation**.



Why care?

- This is a book you can **add to and build on** for your community needs.
- It **teaches** what you are constantly saying over and over.
- If you want to **see the open source way practiced in any domain**, this handbook tells you how.
- If it doesn't have what you need, it's **open for collaboration**.
- Work **done in an open way** so that it can be built upon.
- Content that **serves your needs first**.

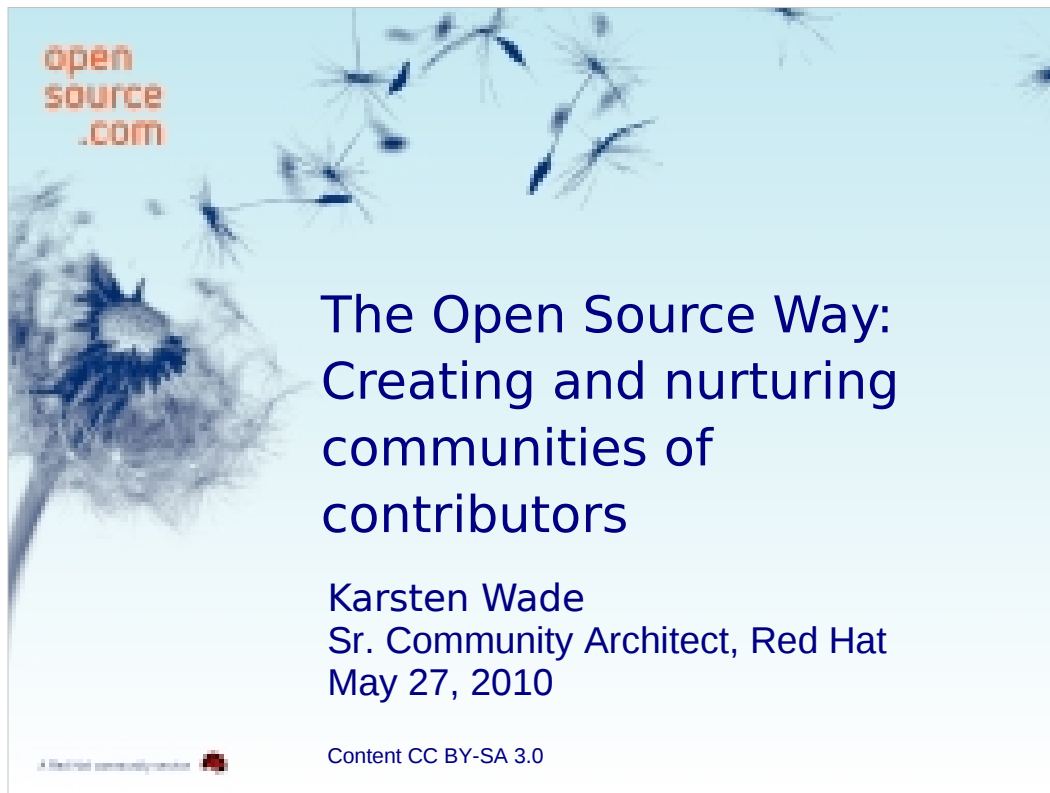
What next?

- Questions?
- Read: theopensourceway.org/book
- Write: theopensourceway.org/wiki

This presentation:

<http://quaid.fedorapeople.org/presentations/TOSW/>





(Introduce yourself.)

It's appropriate for us to finish today by talking about the handbook that works on wrapping up the open source way in to a guide you can use in many domains other than technology.

In talking about tosw, I want to mention it is hard, but it is worth it.

For example, for OYWF today we are using a closed service from a vendor instead of an open source solution. Red Hat is an enterprise, and sometimes it is hard to make the choice for open source when you can't spread thin enough to handle every battle. But you learn and improve. So, the next time that we run OYWF or similar works from OSDC, we'll make sure to come back to actual open solutions. From Ch.3.2.1.3, Use lightweight, open collaboration tools - wikis, mailing lists, IRC, version control, bug trackers - and give out access: *"The tools you start with here are not always going to be open source. Sometimes you are stuck accepting non-free and open source software solutions in pursuit of a goal you put higher. Be aware that if you choose a non-open solution, you incur additional risk for whatever opportunity you are trying to capture. Make sure that a move to fully open tools is part of your roadmap for the project. These are the parts you cannot compromise or eventually they will be the downfall of your openness and transparency."*

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This is a book that comes out of the process of teaching leaders in the open source way (tosw). The methods of tosw are more than just for software. For example, the open source way is used in the production of this book. It's written by a community under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike license so the content remains free for any use. Including rebranding, commercial use, the whole lot. That's why we make a distinction between TOSW and tosw. The book is written using the method, and no coding is involved. It is self-evident proof of the usefulness of the methodology. In particular, this book is about spreading the open source way beyond technology to other domains of expertise – business, law, government, education, design, engineering, and so forth.

First – it's a handbook

- A book that:
- ... describes a **principle** (what) +
- ... explains how to **implement** it (how) +
- ... and gives real world **examples** (why).

In being a handbook, it provides a specific way of presenting each point in a way that makes it immediately understandable and useful.

The principle is the topic of each section.

The implementation is how to go about using the principle in your efforts.

The example shows why the principle matters or works, with the proof rooted in something that really happened.

Second – it's created by those who know

- Written and lead by actual contributors and community experts:
 - Red Hat community leadership team
 - Fedora contributors
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The book represents distilled community leadership knowledge. It was conceived and initially written by the community leadership team at Red Hat, who steward the ongoing work as free and open content.

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There are many good books that give in-depth understanding of why you want to follow tosw. An example of this is *Producing Open Source Software*. Since this handbook is a distillation, it can stand on the shoulders of the other works without having to be as long. The power of *The Reference* works here. Community leadership is a community of practice, and one important aspect of a CoP is that it takes the knowledge in the heads of practitioners and turns it in to knowing via writing it down.

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This book is not complete for many reasons. Tosw teaches us to release early and often for better long term results. We also create room for other people to put in ideas that are not just derived from free and open source software projects.

- The book follows the open source way. For example, “Why use MediaWiki?”
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Since this is free and open content designed to be remixed for multiple uses, it is essentially an upstream. This concept is from FOSS, where you think of a project in the way you think of the water you get from up the stream. It's worth a trip up there to see how things work. You may want to check in more often, or even station a person to be up there regularly ... if the water is important enough to you.

This handbook is put together using tosw, and in particular by following the precepts within TOSW. For example, we chose MediaWiki because it is an open, extensible tool that is lightweight and many people are familiar with it. For creating a low barrier to entry, using MediaWiki is a great way.

I often point to Wikipedia as the standard for lowered barriers. In fact, I often suggest to K12 teachers how they can use it to teach the open source way.

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In the end, this is the primary reason to write this book. This is the original itch the Red Hat community team wanted to scratch. Do work in an open way so that it can be built upon. Do it so that it resolves your own needs first.

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