

Getting Started in Open Source

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Google Inc.

February 21, 2009

Who Are We?

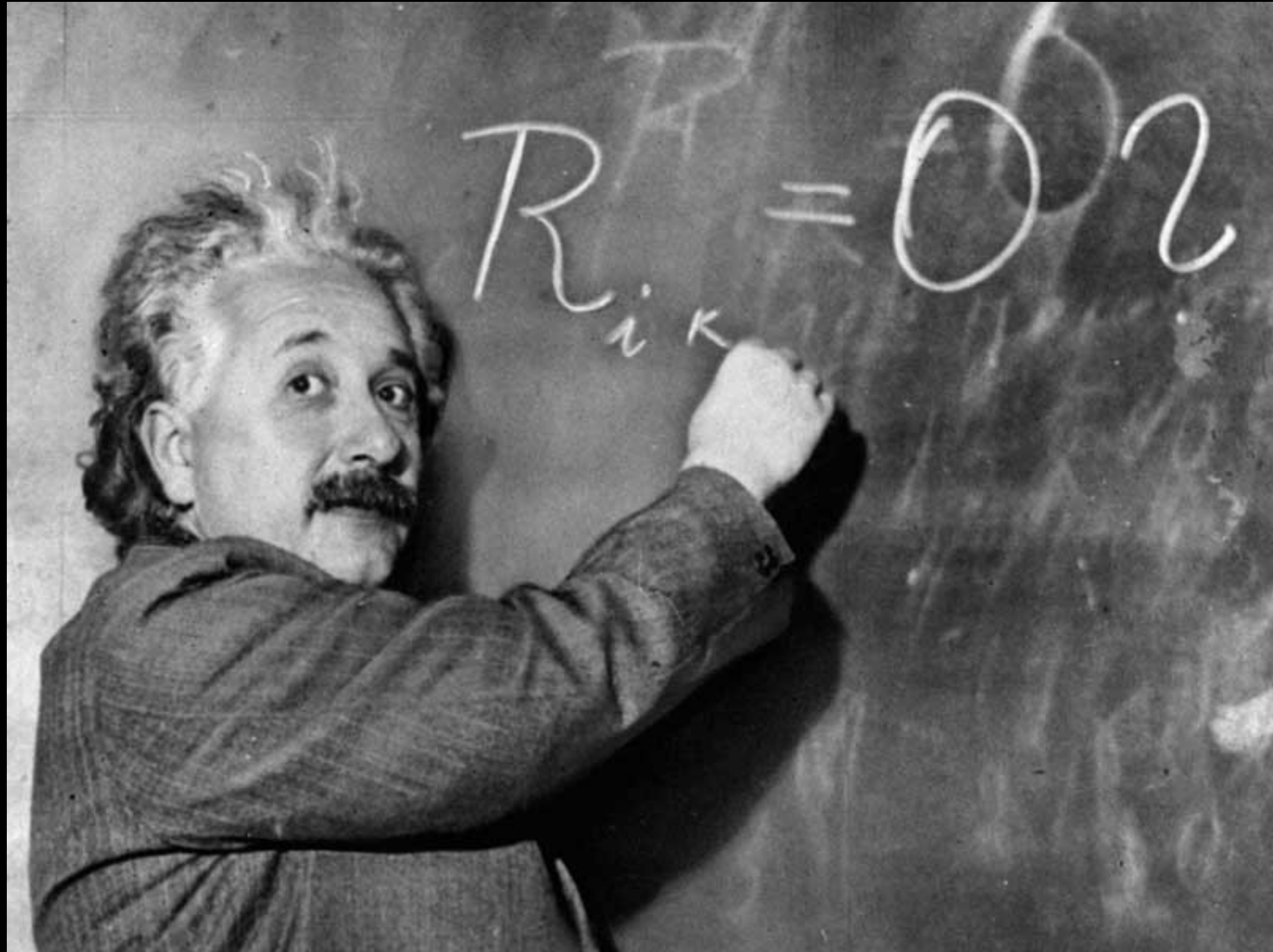
By the Way....

- These are our opinions
 - Not those of any past, present or future employer
- Based on our experiences
- Your experiences may vary

Why Us?

Why You?

- Gain new skills
- Learn without going (back) to school
- Professional networking / career opportunities
- Personal gratification
- Ethical considerations



Shown here actual size...

All That Glitters is Not Only Code

- Testing
- Localization
- Documentation
- Release Engineering
- User Interface Design / Usability
- User support

Have You Considered?

- Marketing
 - Contributed articles, how-to's, tutorials
 - Graphic design
 - Fan advocacy / art
 - Event organizing / staffing
 - Projects looking for end users - share your enthusiasm
- Fund raising
- Community management

Getting Started

- Find a need that matters to you
 - Technical challenge
 - Social considerations
- Find a community you are comfortable with
- Ask your friends!
- Limit your scope



035. THE TRÈS RICHES HEURES OF JEAN, DUKE OF BERRY
 c. 1410–16 / Paris / 294 x 210 mm / Folio 10 verso

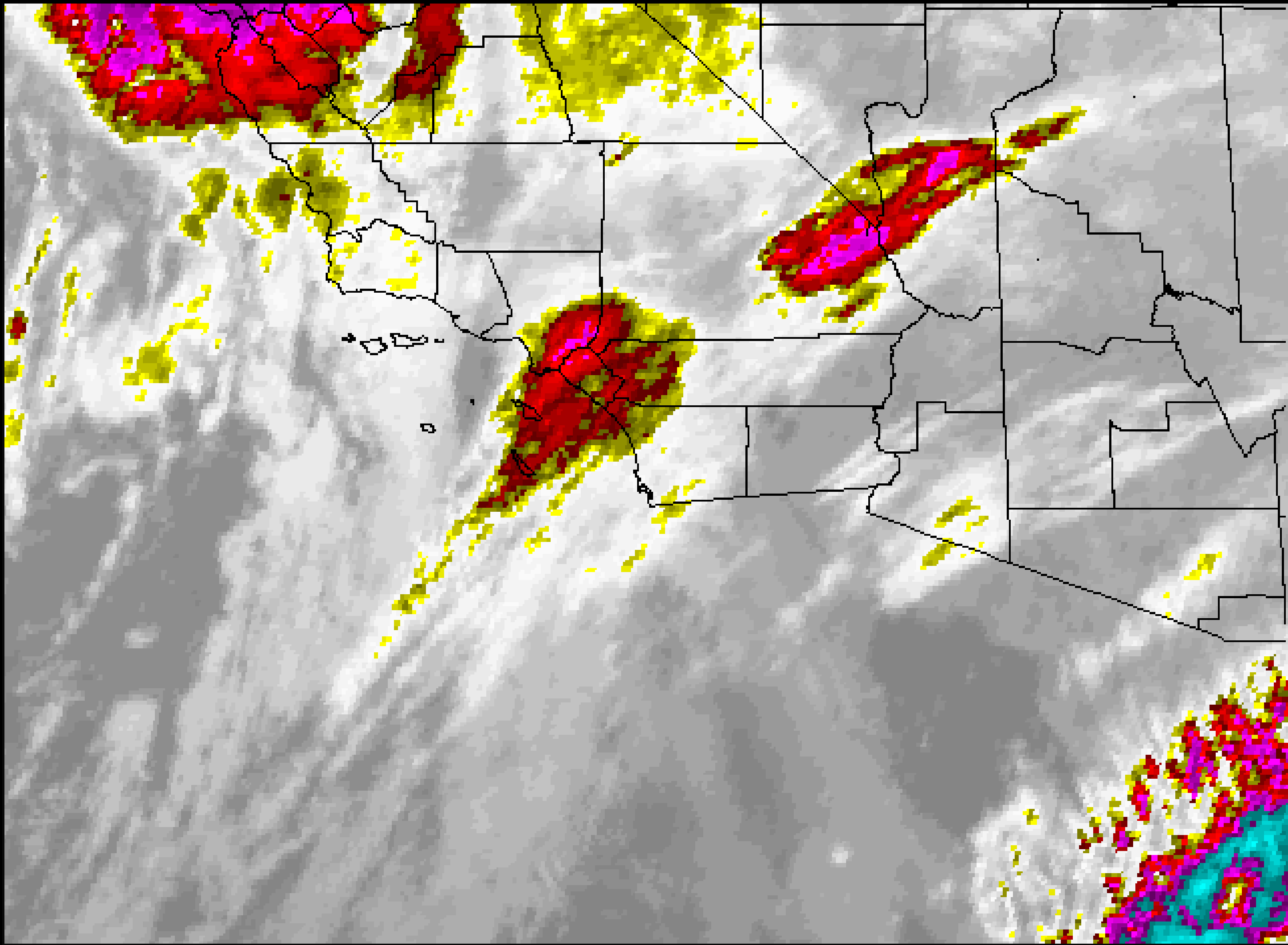
In this miniature by the Limbourgs representing the month of October, the Louvre, then the residence of the kings of France, stands on Paris' right bank, across the Seine from the farming scene in the heart of Paris in the foreground. The figures at the bottom plow the field and plant the seeds while in the middle distance a scarecrow archer and network

of strings protects a planted field from the birds. In the centuries since the Limbourgs painted this scene, the architecture of the Louvre, painted here in exquisite detail, has undergone an immense amount of renovation, remodeling, redesign, and reconstruction.

Review History

So you're not flamed while repeating it

- Review project website or wiki
- Read mailing list archives / forum topics
- Look / ask for newbie documentation
- Check out the source code
- Do other research



6 GOES-WEST 16 FEB 09 TIME=15:00UTC RES=2 KM NWS/WR-SSD

Observe the Present

- Join mailing lists, IRC channels, etc. and lurk
- Learn how people have gotten involved in the past
- Watch for calls for volunteers
- Decide if the community tone is right for you
- Find a place you would enjoy contributing

Create the Future

Diving Right In....

- File a bug report
 - Bonus points for submitting a patch
- Volunteer to help
 - Major bonus points for useful suggestions

Some Basics

Mailing List Etiquette

- Don't rehash old discussions
- Don't reply to **every** message in a thread
- Only reply to relevant text of a previous message
- When in doubt, don't top post
- "Me too" posts are a big no-no
- No filibustering

Communication Annoyances

Ways to make yourself look less credible in a remarkably short period of time

- Silly nicknames
- Multiple nicknames in different media
- Overusing CAPITAL LETTERS
- Using excessive punctuation!!!1!!1!one!
 - Using none at all
- ZOMGWTFBBQ!?!?!?

Things to Get Used to

- It's a very direct and blunt world
- Lots of people are watching
 - people **will** correct you

Gaining Credibility

A brief how-to

- Show you've done your research
- Pass on the knowledge you've learned visibly
- Adapt to existing structures

Other Things to Avoid

Cluelessness

- Failure to pick up on the “mood”
- Not understanding common goals of the community
- Asking RTFM questions

Hostility & Non-Cooperation

- Angrily demanding help
- Deliberately riling people
- Willing to complain, but not to fix
- Failing to accept criticism well



Don't Be Scared!



Summary

- Decide on a personal focus, then a project
- Study the past and present before diving in
- Be a good citizen of the project
- Enjoy yourself!

Resources

- Eric S. Raymond – *The Cathedral and the Bazaar, How to Ask Questions the Smart Way*
 - <http://www.catb.org/esr/writings/>
- Free Software Foundation – Free Software Definition
 - <http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-sw.html>
- Karl Fogel – *Producing Open Source Software*
 - available under open copyright & at no cost
 - <http://www.producingoss.com>

Q&A

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