Open Source Program Office

Overcoming Imposter Syndrome to Become a Conference Speaker

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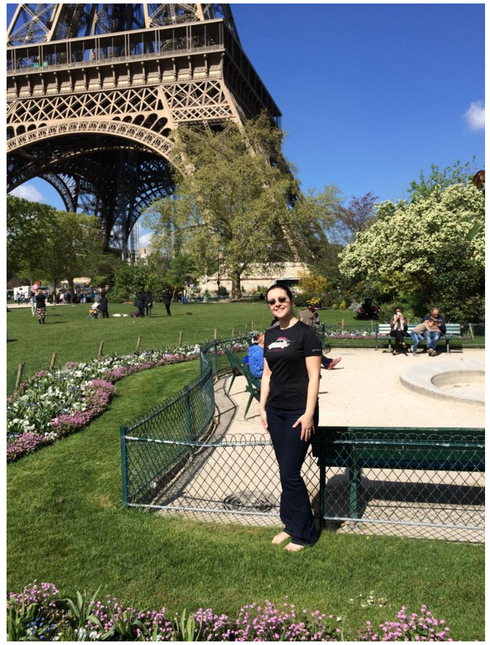
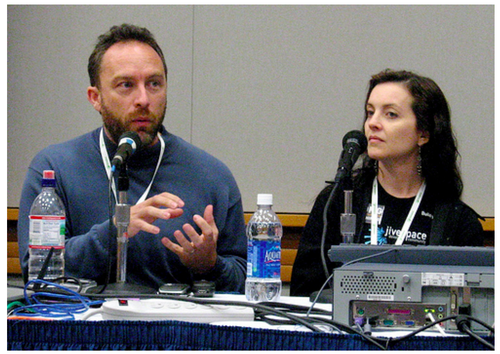
whoami





Photos by Mom, Josh Bancroft, Don Park

- Geek, traveler, reader
- 20+ yr tech career focused on community & open source (Intel, Puppet, Scale Factory, …)
- OpenUK Board, CHAOSS Board and Maintainer, TODO Group Steering
- Kubernetes contributor & CNCF Contributor Strategy SIG
- PhD from the University of Greenwich focus on Linux kernel collaboration

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My Journey

1995 - 2005
Internal Presentations

OSCON
OPEN SOURCE CONVENTION

2006 - 2007
Panels & Lightning talks

100+ Conference Talks
Many Program Selection Committees

KubeCon | CloudNativeCon | Ignite

THE LINUX FOUNDATION OPEN SOURCE SUMMIT

OPEN SOURCE STRATEGY FORUM 2018

LINUXCON

SCaLE

Monki Gras

THINGS OPEN 2020

DEVOPSDAYS

TEXAS LINUX FEST 2014 AUSTIN, TX

OPEN SOURCE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

flossUK free and open technology

DEVRELCON LONDON 2015

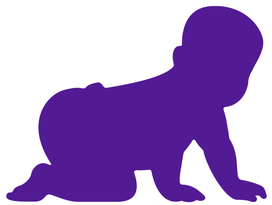
FOSDEM

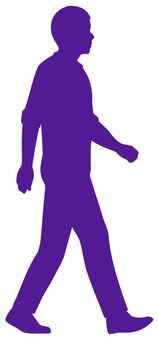
open source lisbon

2020 BACKSTAGE FOSS

barcamp

Config Management Camp





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Agenda

Benefits to You and Your Employer

Topic and Conference Selection

Writing Titles and Abstracts

Bio and Other Supporting Info

Insights into the Talk Selection Process

Tips for Writing and Preparing

Resources and Final Thoughts

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Benefits for You

Attend for free

Access to other Speakers

Advance your career

Image by The Linux Foundation CC BY

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Benefits for Your Employer

Showcase our talent,

technologies,

and expertise

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Approval Process

Talk to your manager for approval before submitting a proposal

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Topic and Conference Selection

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Pick a Topic

What do you know that people with less experience could benefit from learning?

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No Pitches

Conference talks are not advertising opportunities.

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Topics should be …

Unique, important,

innovative, relevant,

and focused

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Calls for Proposals (CFPs)

Requires advance planning

to submit proposals

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Pick a Conference

Select a conference

that fits your topic

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Starter Events

Meetups, local, and regional events

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Writing Titles and Abstracts

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Abstract

Clear, descriptive, and

detailed, but also concise

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My Abstract Formula

Paragraph about why the topic is important and relevant to the conference.

The session will cover:

- Several
- Main
- Points

The audience will walk away with …

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Talk Titles

Short and clear

Matches your content

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Bio and Other Supporting Material

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Bio

Your expertise is an important part of the selection process

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Supporting Material

Your best examples of past presentations, blog posts, or videos

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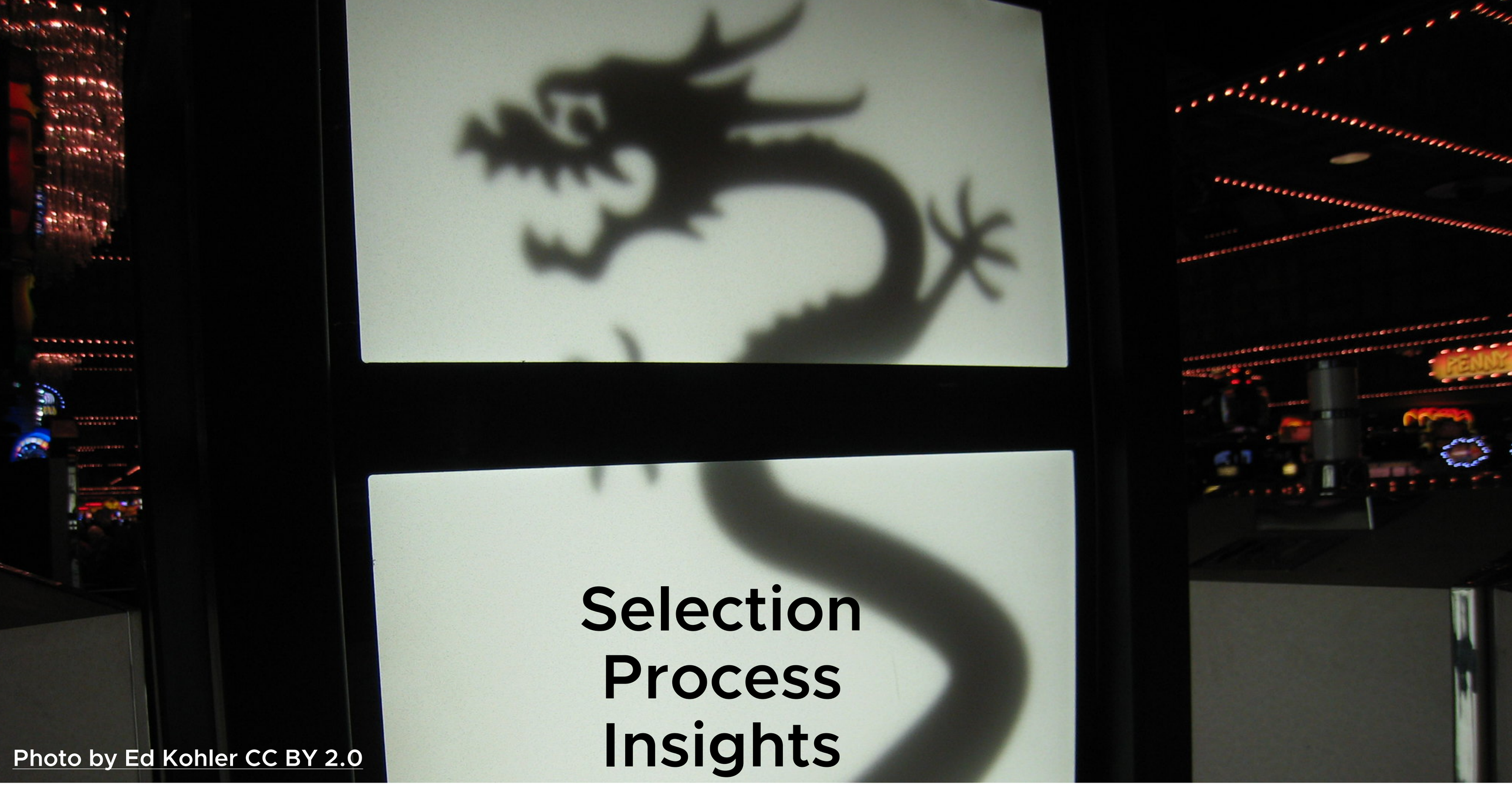

Selection Process Insights

Photo by Ed Kohler CC BY 2.0

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Not Enough Detail

Be clear about your content

and don’t pitch a big reveal

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Poorly written

Proofread and

get feedback

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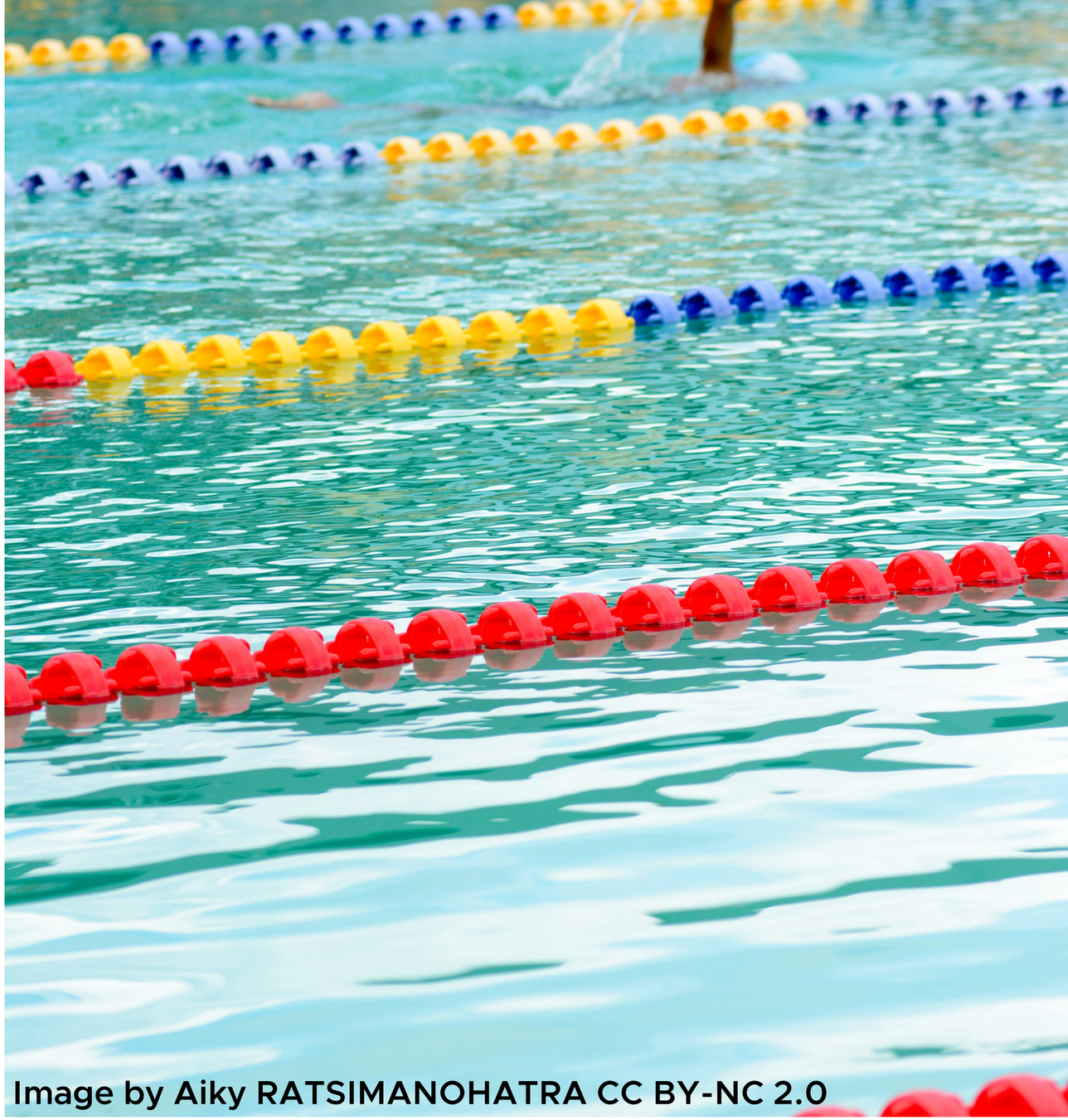
Don’t get discouraged

You’re competing against other great proposals



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Tips for Writing and Preparing

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Start Early

Don’t wait until the

last minute to write your talk

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Get Organized

Start with an outline

and have speaker notes

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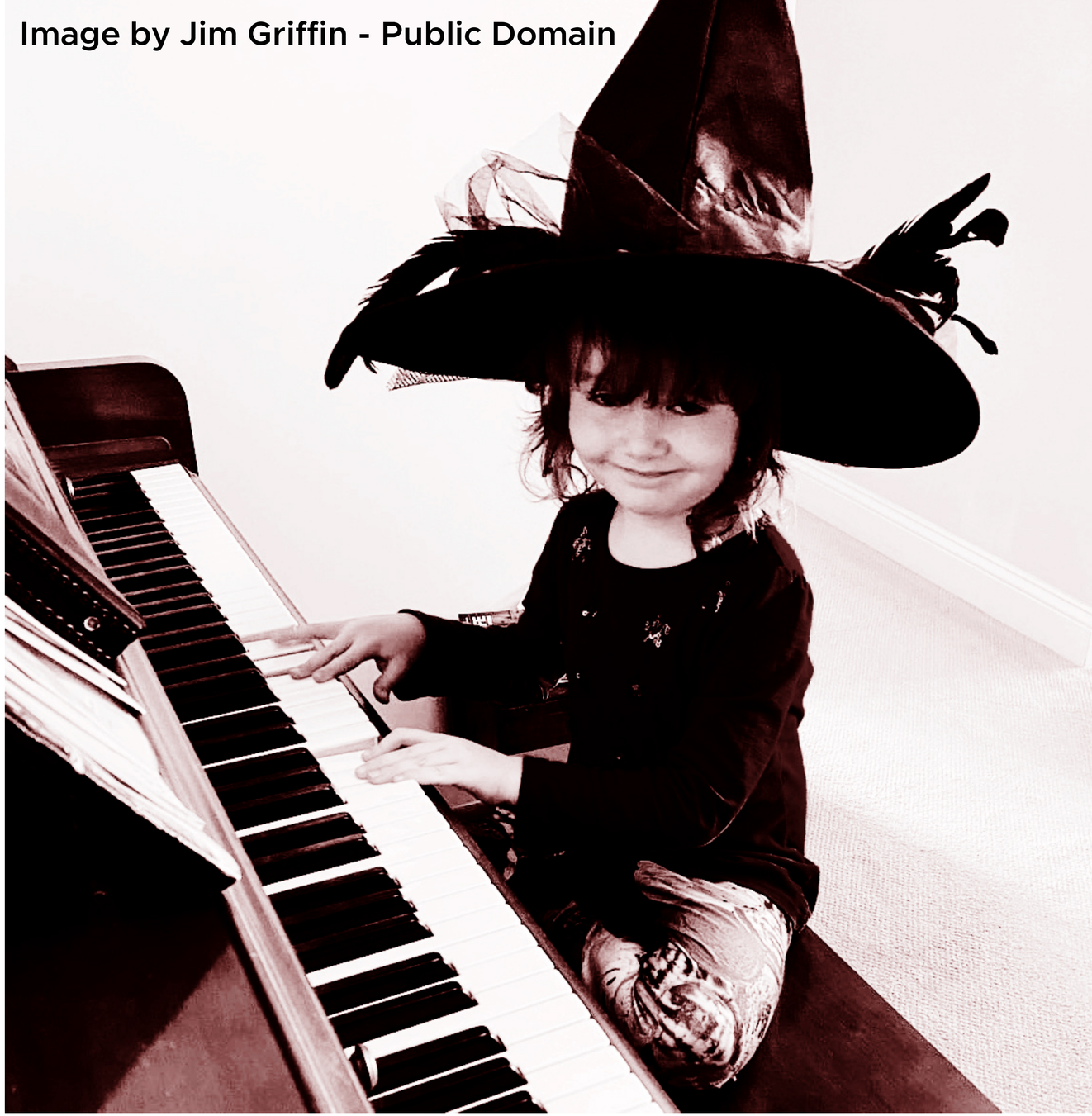
Preparation

Practice, practice, practice

Speak slowly and have pauses



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Promote Your Talk

Your social media,

internal channels,

marketing.

fastwonderblog.com/speaking

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Internal Resources

PR training

for questions,

courses on speaking,

and your colleagues

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Helpful Articles

My 2 part blog post series on this topic: Benefits and Barriers and Steps to Success

VMware OSS Blog: Crafting the Perfect Proposal

Dzone: Becoming a Conference Speaker

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Final Thoughts

Don’t let anything get in the way of sharing what you know. Others can learn from your experience.

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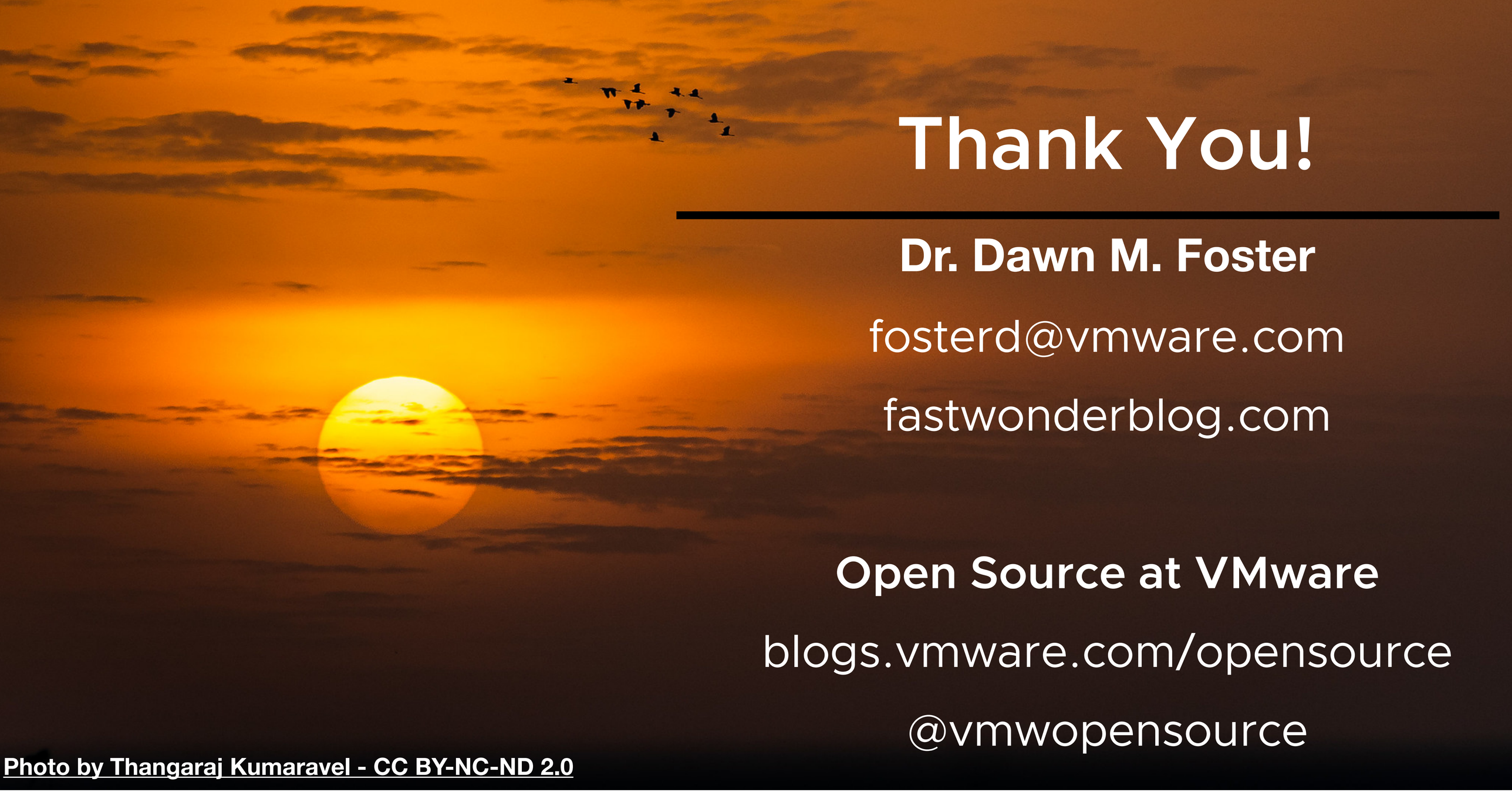

Thank You!

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Open Source at VMware

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