

Subversion's “Secret Sauce” A Roadmap to Success

Greg Stein

Who Am I?

- Initial developer, from 2000
- Focused on the WebDAV networking layer
- Away for several years, but now working on rebuilding the “working copy” library
- Also: Apache, Python, WebDAV, Google Code

The Beginning

- Brian Behlendorf was the advocate
- Concept around December 1999
 - CollabNet hired Karl Fogel to begin work
- February 2000, Brian contacted Greg
- Kickoff meeting was held in April 2000
 - Ben Collins-Sussman was hired in April

- Coding began in June 2000

Milestones

- Self-hosting in August 2001
- 1.0 released in February 2004
- Additional releases
 - September 2004, May 2005, January 2006, September 2006, June 2008
- 1.6 scheduled for December 2008

Subversion Today

- Used by millions of developers
- Hundreds of thousands of public sites
- Many large Open Source projects
 - ASF, Gnome, KDE, FreeBSD, Python
- Open Source hosting platforms
 - Tigris, Google Code, SourceForge

Activity

- Regular releases
- Mailing lists: developers, users
- Roadmap

- Slowdown in activity reduces participation

Focus

- “Match CVS features”
- Easy to decide “in” versus “out”
- Aligned entire community

- Same kind of focus is no longer possible
- Feature-based focus instead
 - Merging, tree conflicts, working copy library

Community Wins

- Community first, code second
- Willing to ignore contributions
- No tolerance for flame wars

Please Contribute

- Attitude is open and welcoming
- License is flexible rather than demanding
 - People like contributing when they aren't forced
- Credit to a limited point

Community-Owned

- No code is “owned” by individuals
- Areas of expertise, but no boundaries

No Leaders

- Developer-driven coding
- No singular or topical leads
- Again: areas of expertise

People

- Great collection of developers
- Understanding of community
- Naturally select similar people
 - And gently push away problematic people

Future: Community

- “Competition”
 - The community does not view it that way
 - Focused on building a great tool
 - Share with other version control systems
 - Enable other developers

- Restore activity level

Future: Features

- Improved merging
- Conflict resolution
- Offline commits
- Repository improvements (speed, storage)
- Client improvements (speed, storage)

Future: Distributed?

- Keep central repository
- Learn from DVCS systems
 - Merge algorithms
 - Features
 - Technology
- DVCS has mindshare, not market share

Thank You!