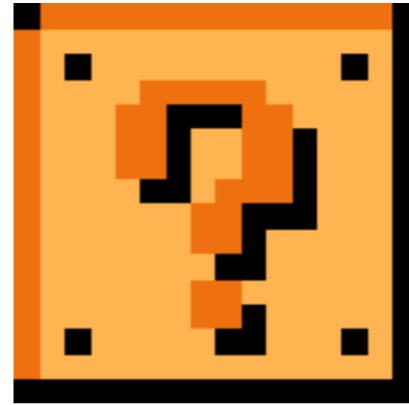


# Women in Open Source

Angela Byron  
October 13, 2007



So, who the heck am I?

The **boring** stuff.

A woman...

Contrary to what my haircut might indicate.

...involved in **open**  
**source**...







## Ubuntu 7.10 Coming Soon



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### Scrapblog

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Details

Buzzword Picnik Scrapblog flautr - photoeditr

Built by: Powered by:

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millennium campaign

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN TO END POVERTY BY 2015

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EIGHT GOALS LATEST NEWS YOUR VOICE TAKE ACTION

**WHY ME?**  
Every voice counts! Join the growing global movement asking governments to honor their MDG commitments.

**WHY NOW?**  
Millions still live in extreme poverty yet the world has enough money, resources and technology to end poverty forever.

**WHAT'S DIFFERENT?**  
The Millennium Development Goals are a unique opportunity to end poverty with achievable, timebound and locally defined targets.

**WE ARE THE FIRST GENERATION THAT CAN END POVERTY.**

END HUNGER UNIVERSAL EDUCATION GENDER EQUITY CHILD HEALTH MATERNAL HEALTH COMBAT HIV/AIDS ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

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**Standing Up to Impact Change**  
OCT 12  
Millennium Campaign Asia Deputy Director Minar Pimple spoke to OneWorld South Asia (OWSA) on how the Stand Up campaign in South Asia is making a difference by showing...

**FEATURED CAMPAIGN**

**Break the Record of Broken Promises**  
Last year, 23.5 million people stood up against poverty. They stood up to remind...

**YOUR VOICE**

**Shakira**  
Columbian music sensation Shakira is one of many who have raised their voices in support of the Millennium Development Goals and ending poverty by 2015.

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rsell. Combine your photos, videos, #media scrapbooks. Start with a our photos, add shapes, pages, #lish your Scrapblog to share it

...a developer/writer/  
tester/evangelist/  
contributor





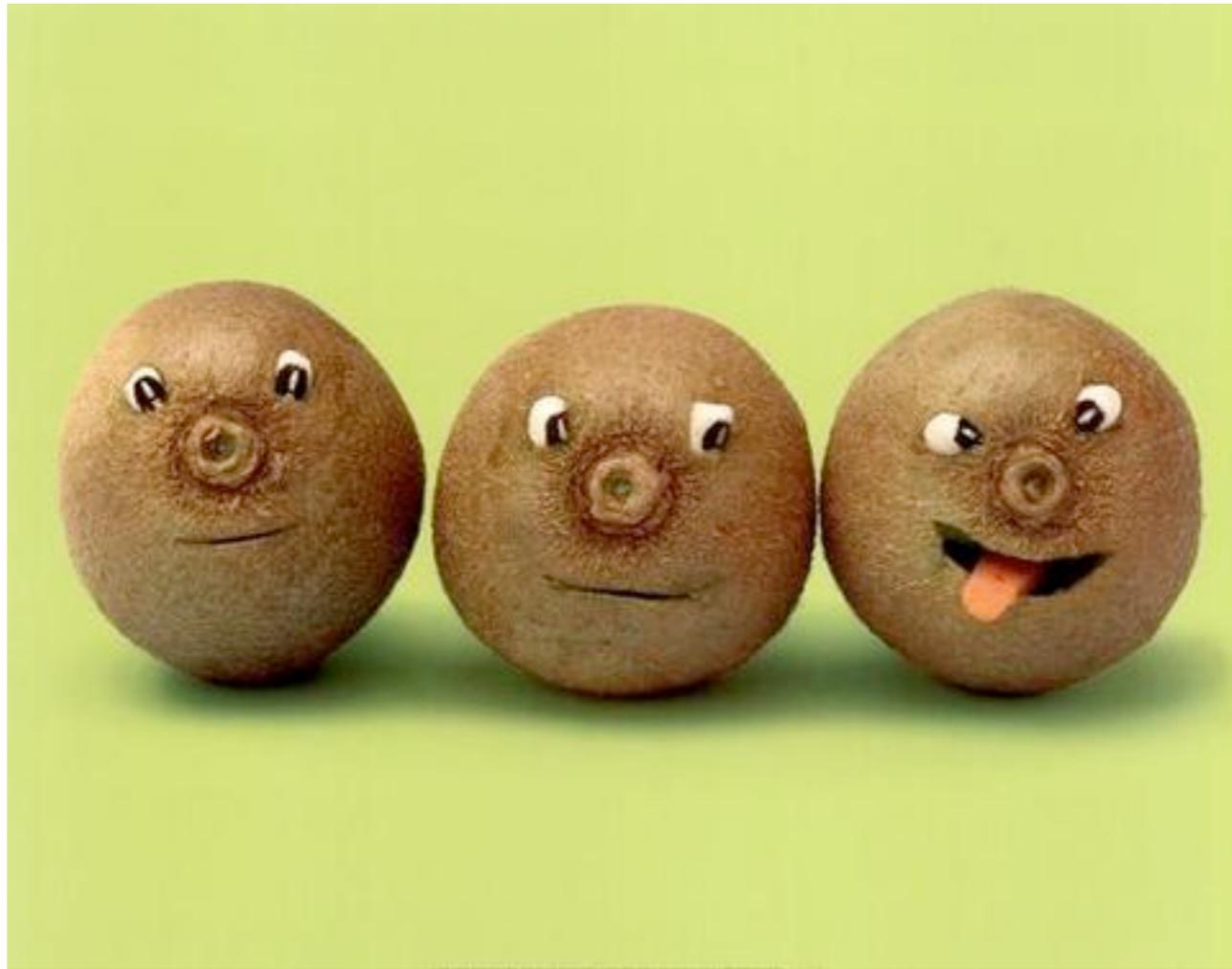
...and a *huge* **geek.**

I pick out paint colours by hex value. ;)

But **not**...

...able to speak on behalf of all women.

So, **why** are we here?



This topic is a bit **silly**,  
isn't it?

A quote...

# A quote...

*“Hackerdom is still predominantly male. However, the percentage of women is clearly higher than the low-single-digit range typical for technical professions, and female hackers are generally respected and dealt with as equals...”*

# A quote...

*“Hackerdom is still predominantly male. However, the percentage of women is clearly higher than the low-single-digit range typical for technical professions, and female hackers are generally respected and dealt with as equals...”*

- Eric S. Raymond  
*The Jargon File*

# A quote...

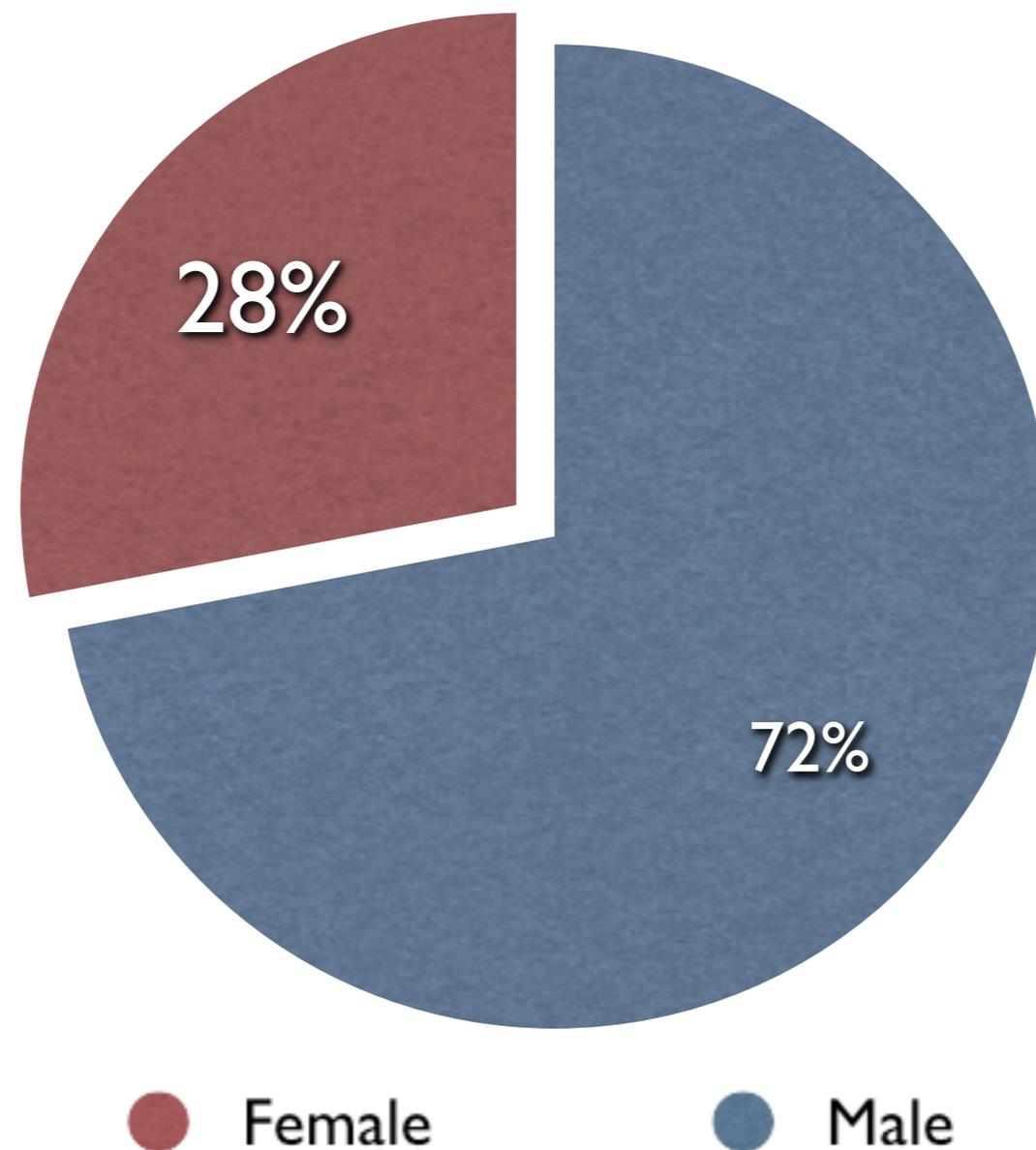
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- Eric S. Raymond  
*The Jargon File*

Let's compare some  
numbers.

# Obligatory pie chart #1

Gender in **proprietary** software



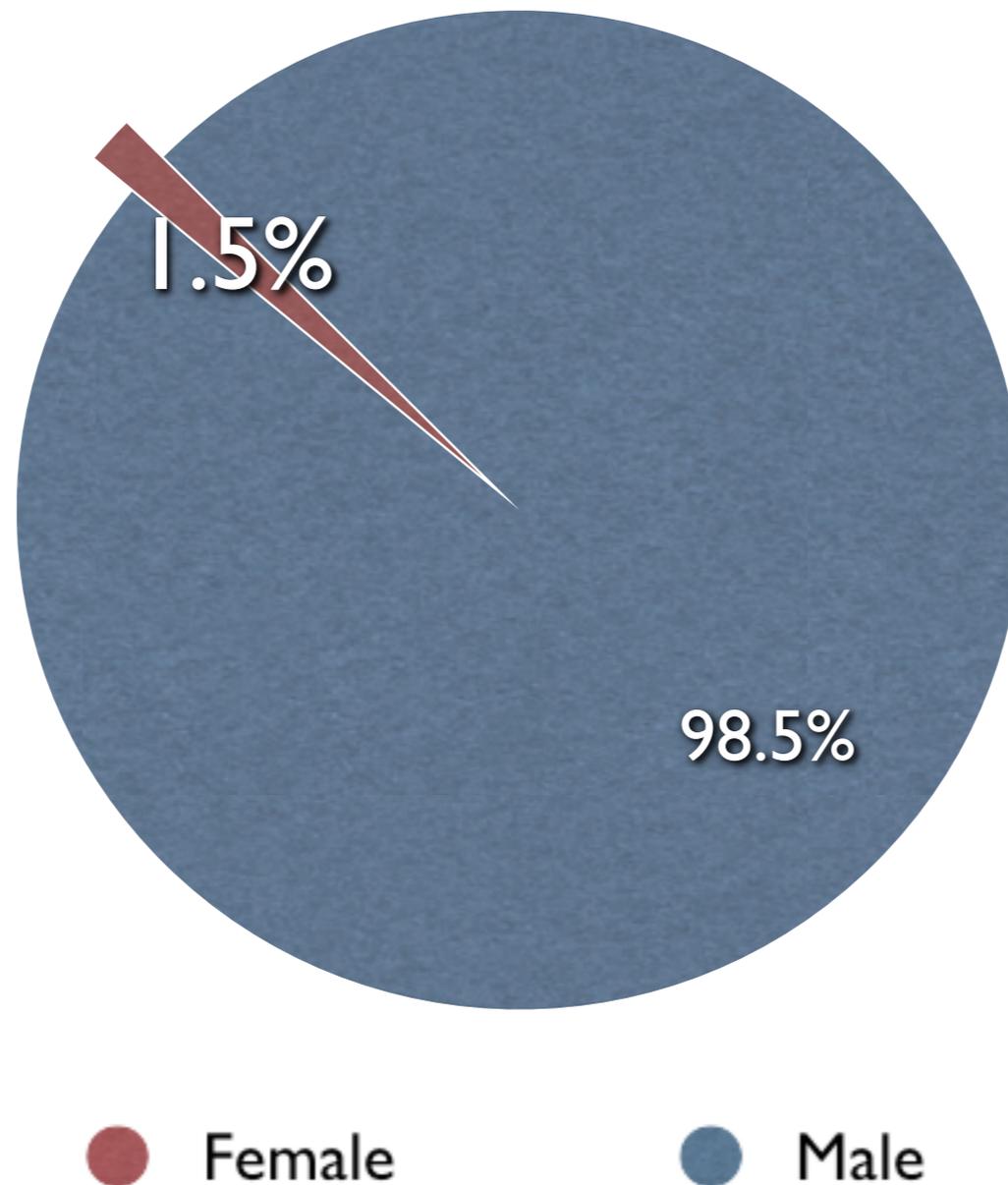


*Proprietary software. Feh.*



Open source is  
about *freedom*.

# Gender in Open Source Software



**WTF?**



So, why should you  
care?

**Diversity** makes open  
source more powerful.



Driving away women  
means driving away  
**contributors.**

Both women *and* men.



Frankly, we **kick ass.** ;)

So why *aren't* there  
more women in open  
source?

**Social reasons**

Women are discouraged  
from technology...

**...in childhood.**



**...in childhood.**



**...in childhood.**



...in childhood.



**...in popular media.**



**...in popular media.**



**...in popular media.**



...in popular media.



**...in social expectations.**



**...in social expectations.**



**...in social expectations.**



...in social expectations.



# Women have **access** to computers later

	Male	Female
Age of first computer use	12	14.5
Age of first computer possession	15	19

Lack of confidence.





**So, that explains  
it, right?**

So, that explains  
it, right?

Except...

...not.

These are true of **all** women getting into IT.



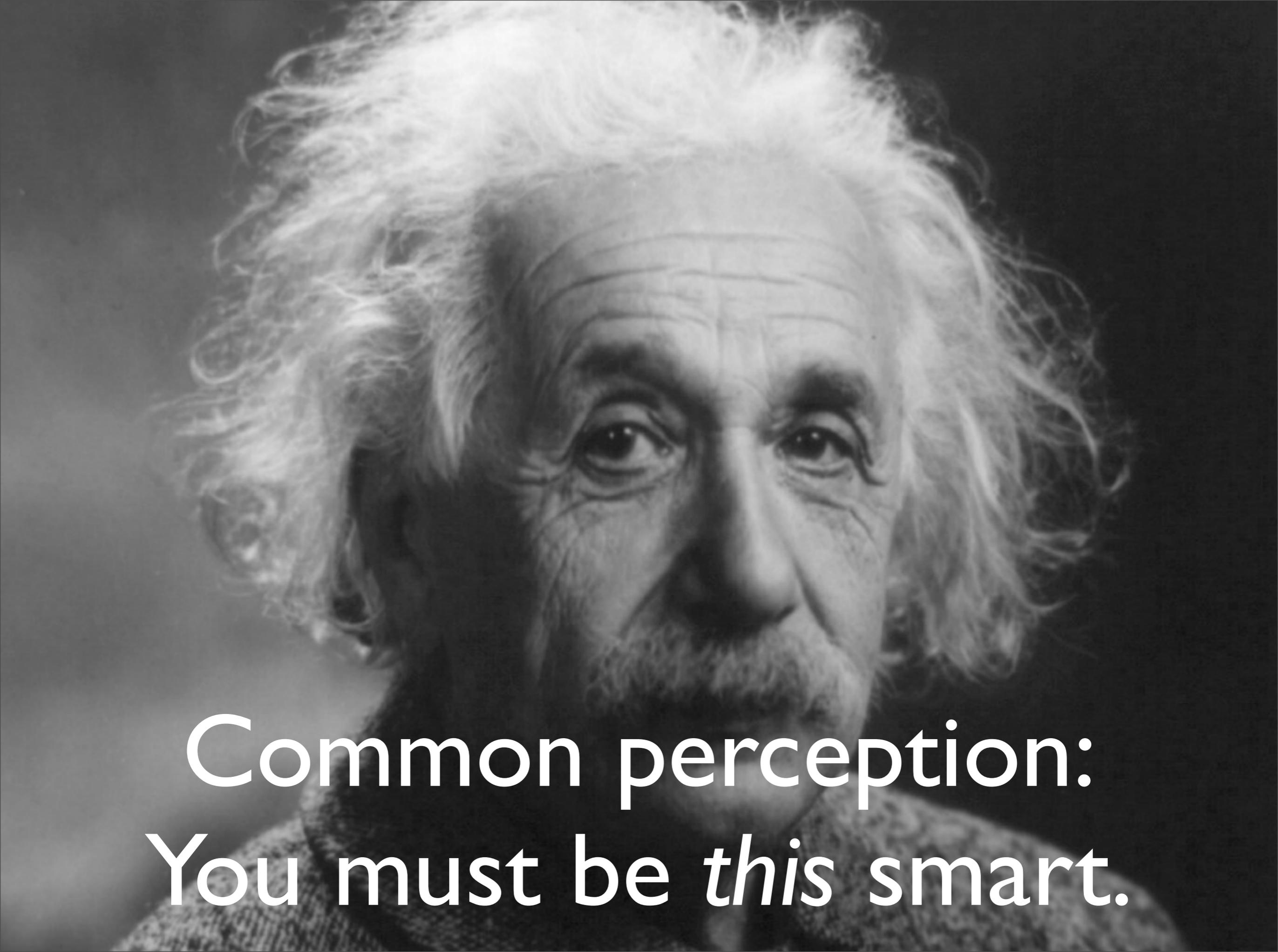
Time to look into  
the mirror.



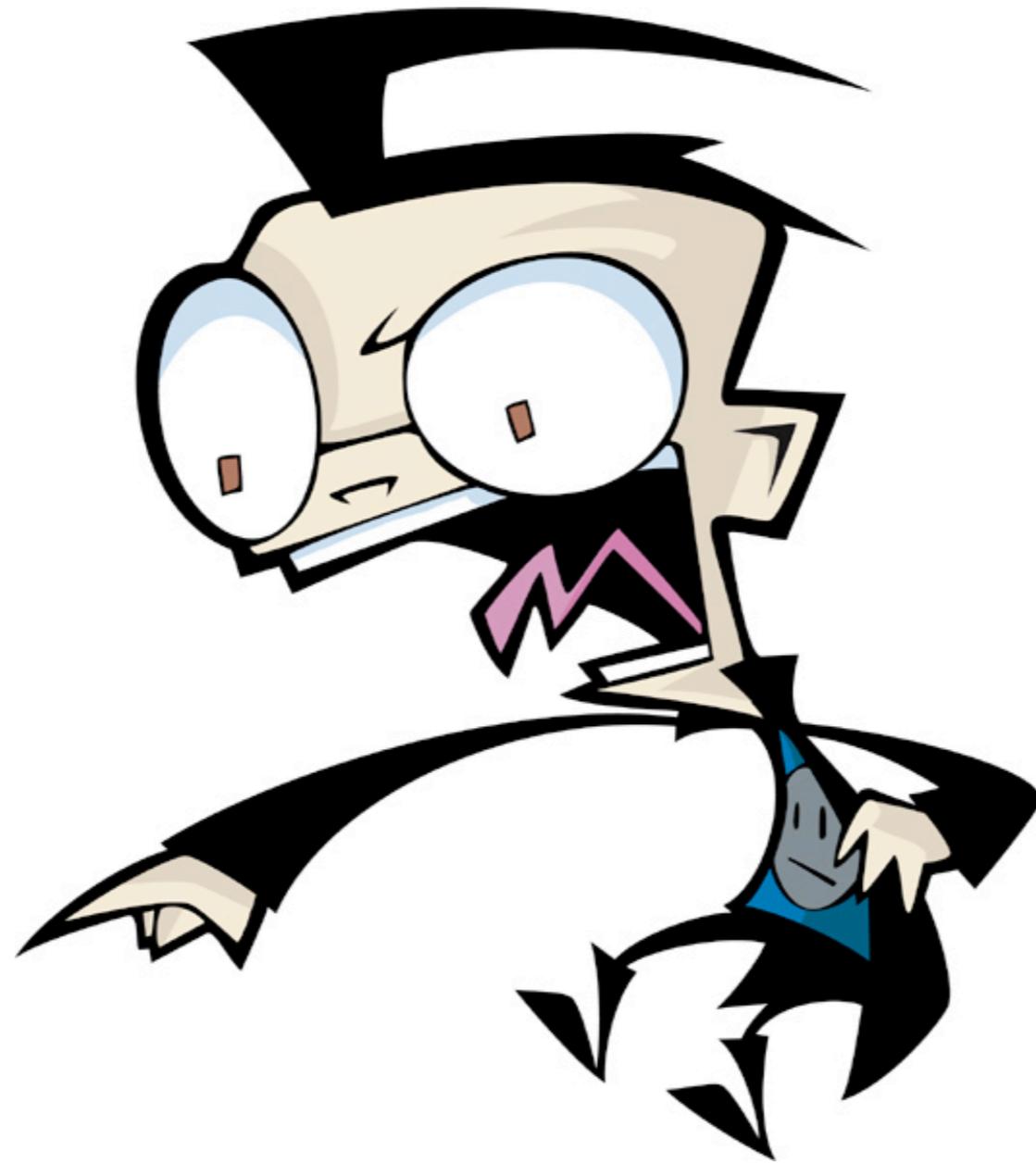
**Anonymity**

# Competitive nature of open source





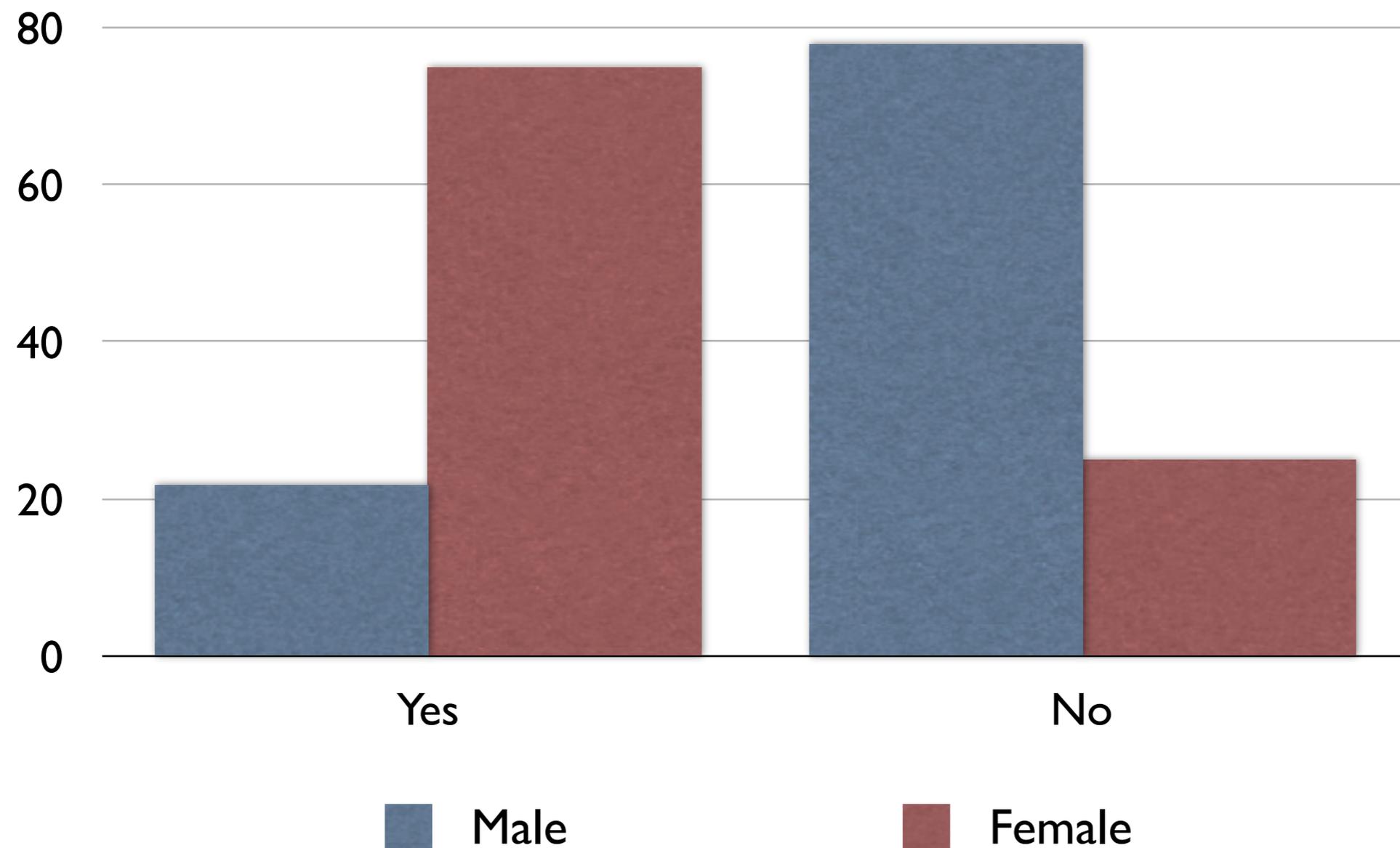
Common perception:  
You must be *this* smart.



**OMG! A GIRL! I! I**

The big blind spot...

# Have you ever observed discriminatory behaviour against women in open source?



# Some examples

# Some examples

- “Jokes”

# Some examples

- “Jokes”
- Dates/marriage proposals.

# Some examples

- “Jokes”
- Dates/marriage proposals.
- Doubting our intelligence/expertise.

# Some examples

- “Jokes”
- Dates/marriage proposals.
- Doubting our intelligence/expertise.
- Insults specific to females (that time of the month...)

# Horror stories



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Our servers  
won't go down  
on you either.**

We've all known disappointment. And few things are more disappointing than undependable, expensive servers that don't satisfy your needs. To avoid the heartbreak of lost expectations, QSOL provides dependable, server solutions for virtually any popular operating system at a price that will blow your mind not your budget.

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# Death threats

# Death threats

“i hope someone slits your  
throat...”

# Death threats

“i hope someone slits your  
throat...”

“...beat this b\*tch with a  
bat...”

So, what can  
people already involved  
in open source do to  
**encourage** women?

Be sensitive to  
discrimination.

And take **action** when it happens.

Value **all** contributions,  
not just code.

Documentation, testing, and user support are often  
“gateways” for super-hackers of the future.

Just say “NO” to RTFM.

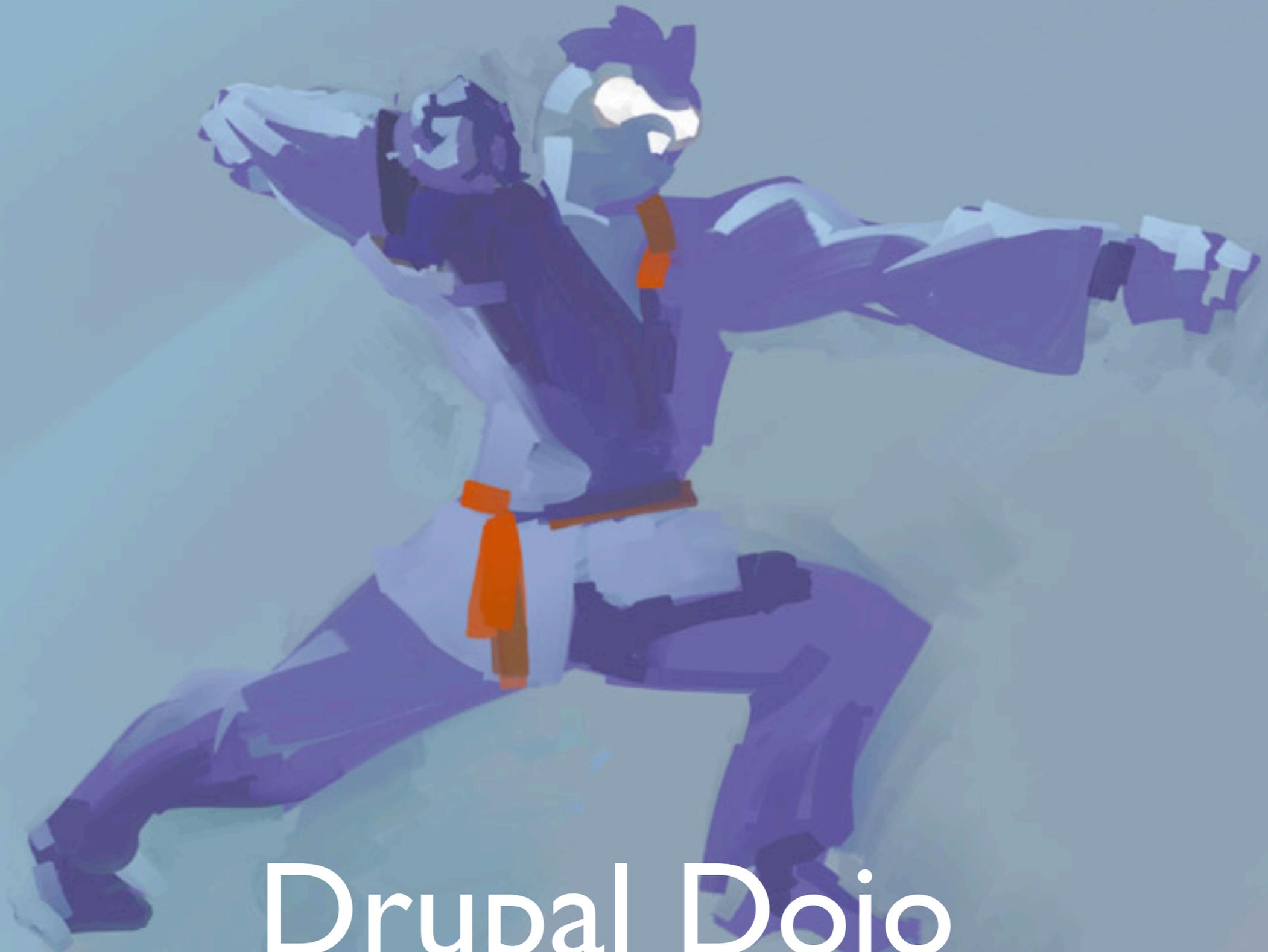
Take an extra 30 seconds to point the way.

Help people who want  
to help you.

Better documentation  
Mentorship program

GOOGLE™

Summer of Code



# Drupal Dojo

So, how can **women** get  
involved in open  
source?

Um. Do we still  
**want** to?



# Yes!

Warning: I'm about to get mushy. ;)

Open source is...



**...fun!**



**...a constant source of  
new knowledge and  
experience.**



**...fundamentally  
rewarding.**



**...an excellent  
career move.**

So, how do women **get**  
**started** in open source?

Pick a project that  
interests you!

Or **start** one of your own. :)

# Find all avenues of information.

IRC, mailing lists, forums, documentation, wikis...



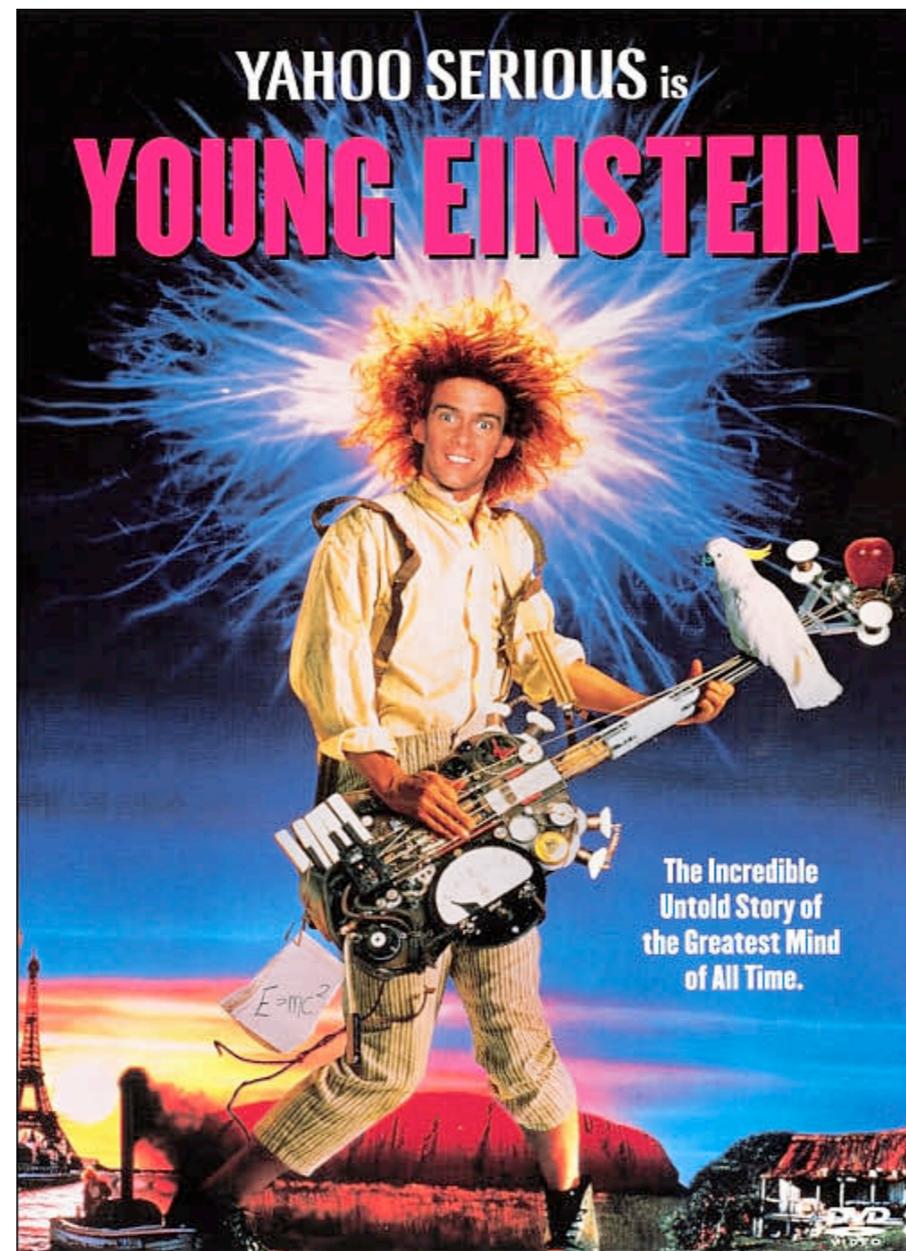
# Lurk first.

**Evaluate** the community. Is it a good fit?

Contribute as early and  
often as possible.

Open source is a **meritocracy**.

Don't let the  
“intimidation factor”  
get you down...



# Remember!

**Everyone** was a n00b at some point.



Don't tolerate **BS.**



What to do when faced  
with a **chauvinistic pig**?





- Choose your battles



- Choose your battles
- Sarcasm can be effective



- Choose your battles
- Sarcasm can be effective
- Object, speak out, then report



- Choose your battles
- Sarcasm can be effective
- Object, speak out, then report
  - Men, you should be doing this too!

**Seek out** other  
women involved in  
open source.

*We are out there. :)*

**Seek out** other  
women involved in  
open source.

*We are out there. :)*



Be a **role model** to  
other women.

**Most importantly...**

# Don't give up on open source!

If a project isn't fun anymore, there are plenty of others who'd love to have you on board.

# Conclusion

- Women are massively under-represented in open source. **That's bad.**
- But we can *all* take steps to change it. **That's good!**
- Open source is **truly rewarding**, and women can and should take the plunge.

# Discussion