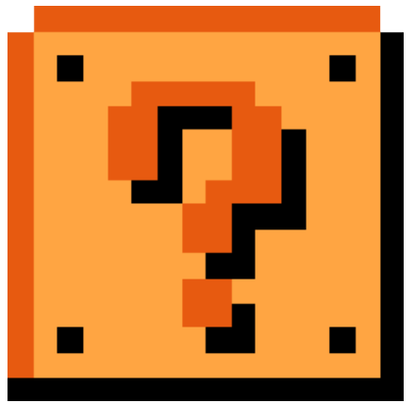
Women in Open Source

Angela @webchick Byron

June 11, 2009

Open Web Vancouver



So, who the heck am I?

The boring stuff.

A woman...

Contrary to what my haircut might indicate.

...involved in open source...

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FLOSS WEEKLY
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June 6th, 2009
FLOSS Weekly 72: OpenSim
Hosts: Randal Schwartz, Jono Bacon, and Leo Laporte
OpenSimulator, the free and open source 3D application server program used to create virtual environments.
Guest: Justin Clark-Casey.
Justin Clark-Casey is a core developer on the OpenSimulator.org project. A long time FLOSS user, OpenSimulator is his first project to which he has dedicated large contributions. He has been working as a core developer on the project for over a year and a half.
He is also a lead developer for Black Dress Technology, a startup that uses OpenSim technology as part of a solution for product and fashion design.
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Roz becomes a guinea pig in a science experiment.
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RECOVERY SPENDING IN 2009 VERSUS 2012
In Fiscal Year 2009, almost two-thirds of Recovery Act funding to states and localities will be in the health field; by FY 2012, the major portion of funding will shift to long-term economic growth opportunities in transportation, energy, and community development.
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Composition of State and Local Recovery Act Funding
FISCAL YEAR 2009
FISCAL YEAR 2012
64%
18%
8%
6%
3%
1%
30%
17%
16%
19%
17%
1%
Health
Education and Training
Transportation
Income Security
Community Development
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Source: U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)
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Wednesday, June 3, 2009
U.S. Department of Labor announces more than $100 million in Recovery Act funds to
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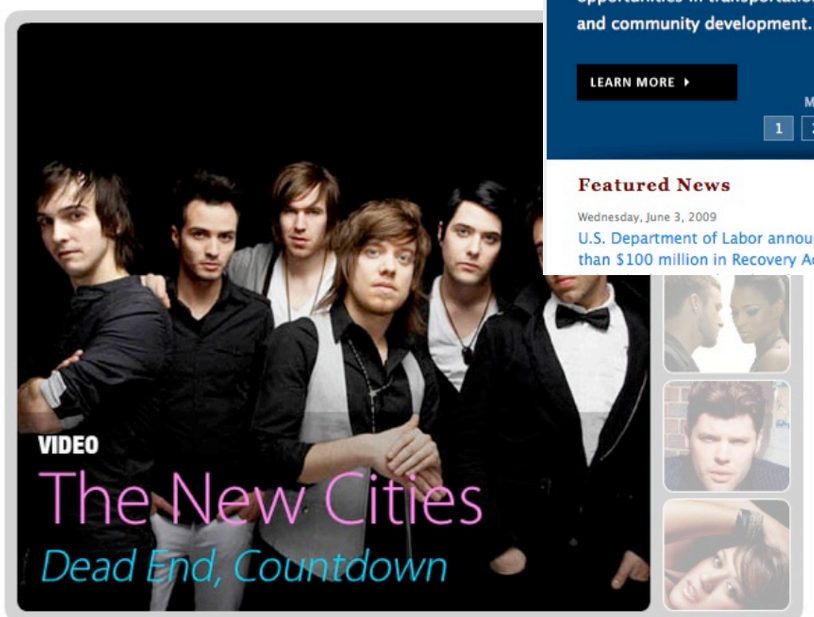
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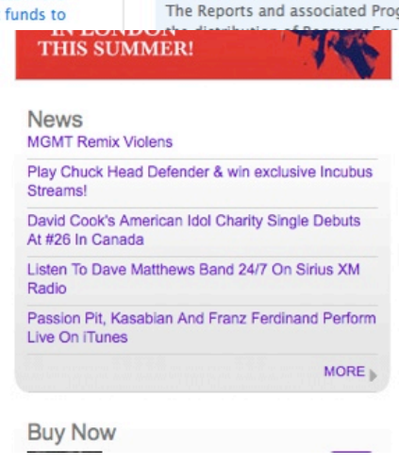
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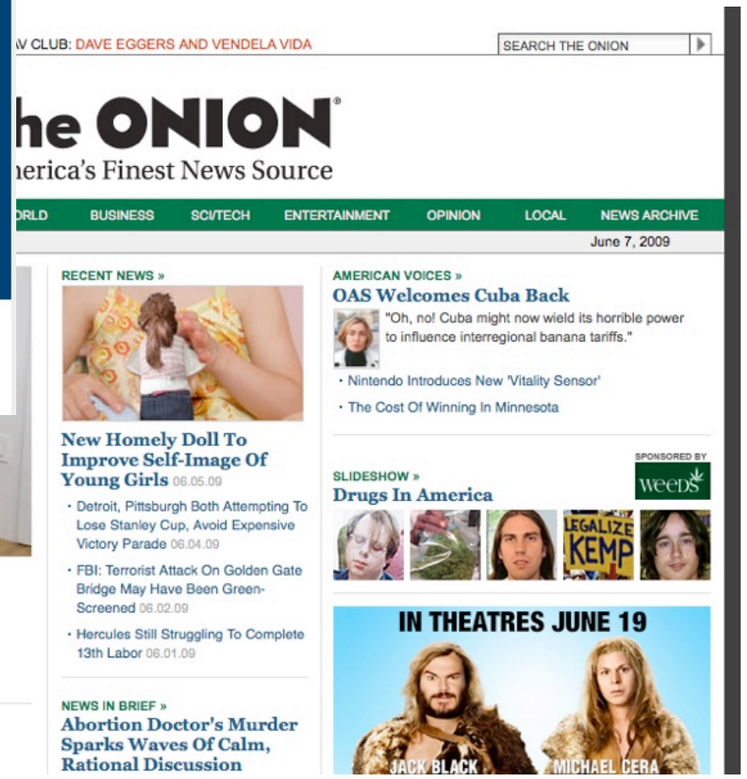
Pathetic Man Thinking About Maybe Taking Some Sort Of Class Of Some Kind 06.06.09
DUNDEE, IL—"In college I used to do things all the time. Maybe it'd be like that again. You never know until you try," said Pathetic Man, Eric Mayhew. MORE»
CNN VIDEO »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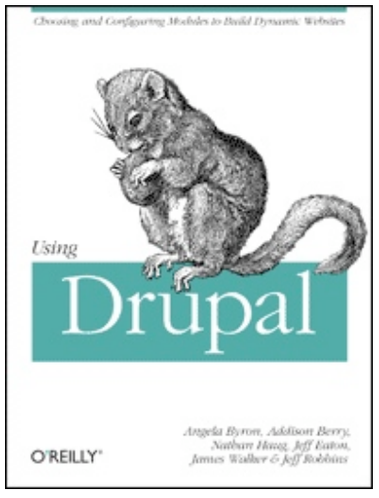
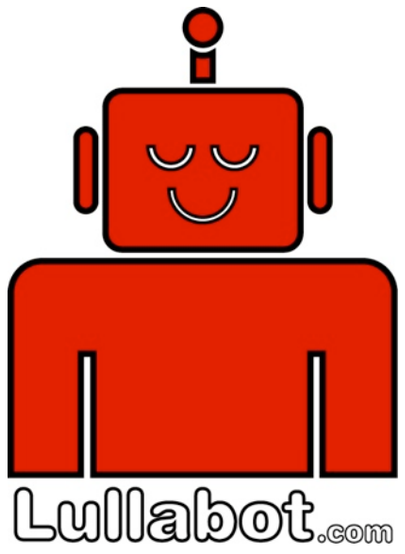
MICHAEL CERA

...*really* involved...

- Started with Drupal in 2005 as Google Summer of Code student; graduated to GSoC mentor and program admin for Drupal
- One of four Drupal core committers
- Drupal-obsessed: Developer, tester, technical writer, evangelist, community manager, and general cat herder
- Drupal Association board member
- *Using Drupal* co-author
- "Day job" is Drupal consulting and education with Lullabot





http://www.flickr.com/photos/nivlek_est/

...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?
http://www.flickr.com/photos/jaxxon/

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..."

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"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..."

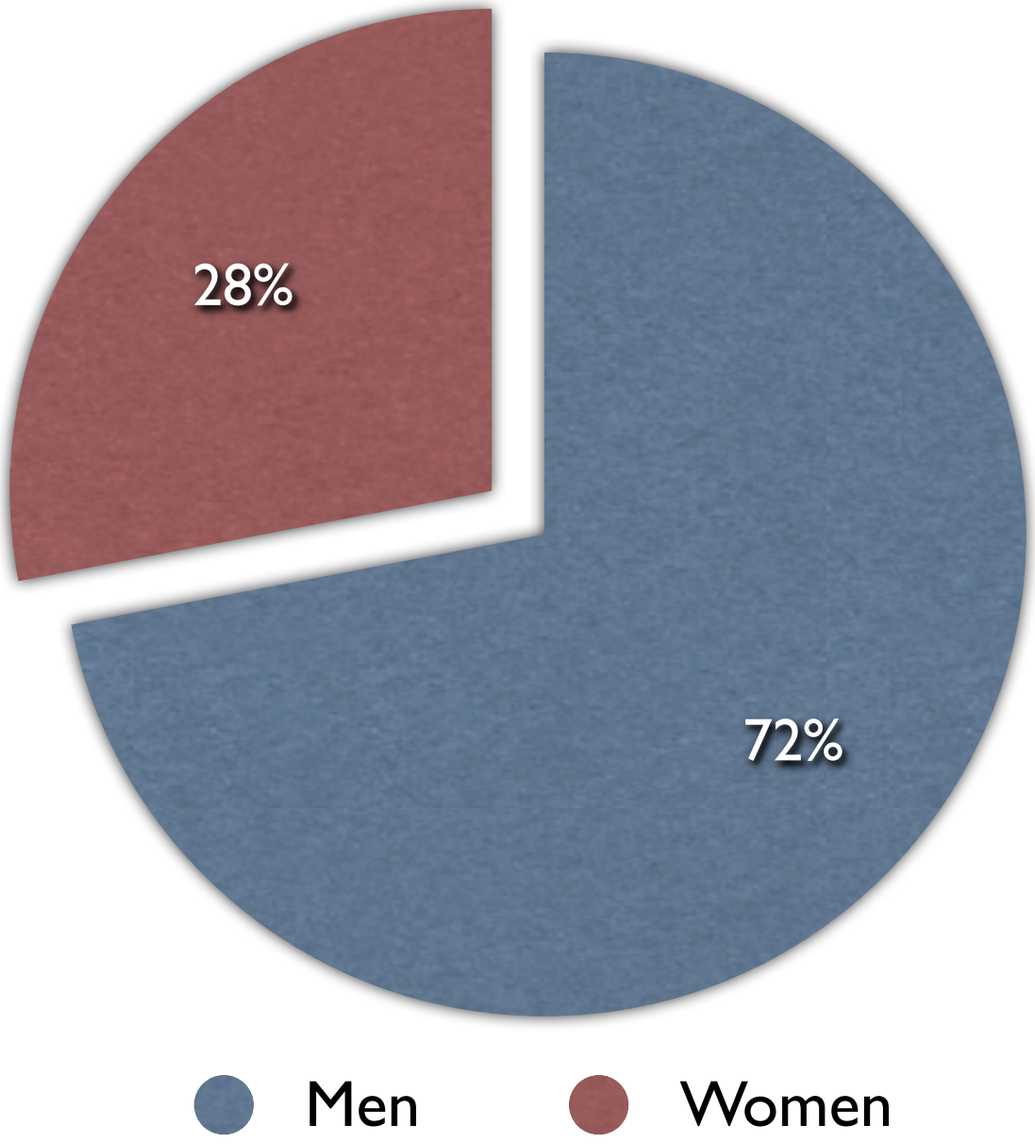
- Eric S. Raymond
The Jargon File

(Source: The Jargon File, version 4.4.7)

Let's compare some numbers.

Obligatory pie chart #1

Gender in proprietary software



(Source: FLOSSPOLS, 2004-2006, Ghosh et al)

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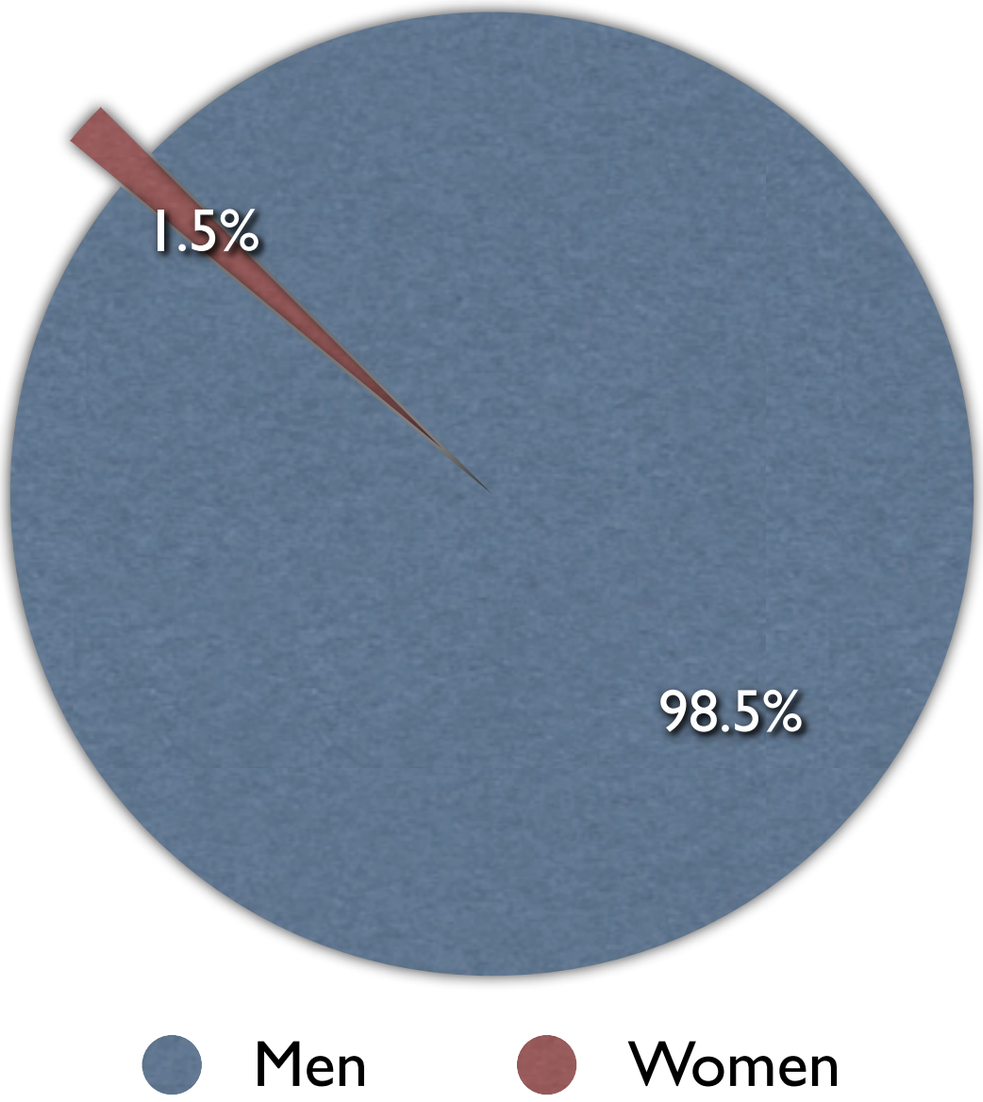
Proprietary software. Feh.

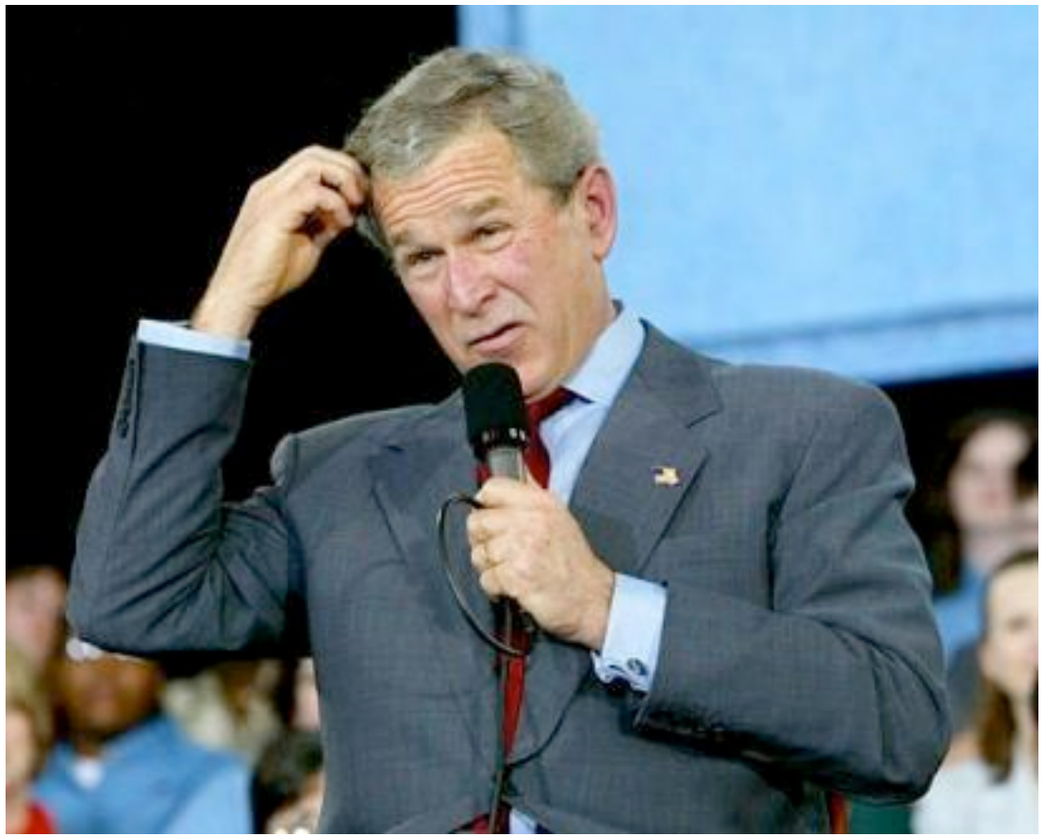
http://www.flickr.com/photos/articnomad/

Open source is about *freedom*.

Gender in Open Source Software



(Source: FLOSSPOLS, 2004-2006, Ghosh et al)



WTF?

Why is this disparity important to address?

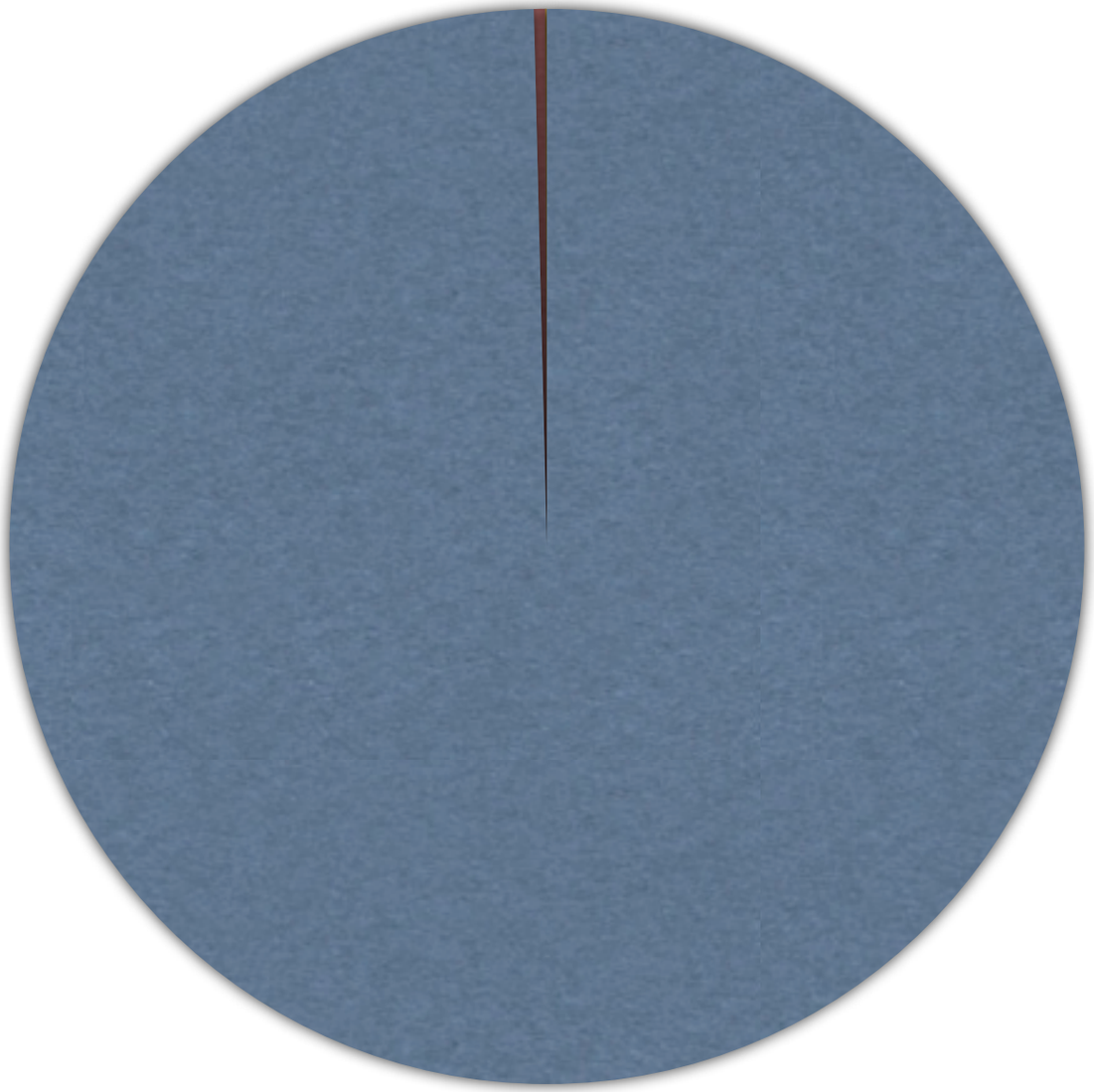
World Domination

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth

Driving away women means driving away contributors.

Both women *and* men.

And, frankly, we can't afford to lose them



Sample statistics from Drupal project*

- Downloaded software (99.63%)
- Registered an account (0.32%)
- Did something with it (0.05%)

* Actual percentage is *much* lower; I had to do unholy things to numbers to get even a sliver of pie to show up.

We kick ass!

Penny Leach
Moodle

Selena Deckelmann
PostgreSQL

EmmaJane Hogbin
Ubuntu, Drupal

Leslie Hawthorn
Google

Mitchell Baker
Mozilla

Addison Berry
Drupal

Allison Randal
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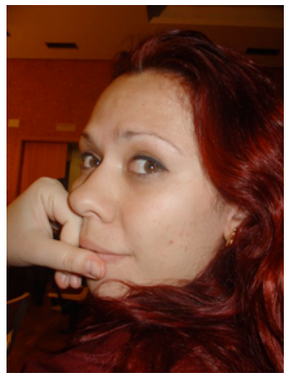
Dru Lavigne
*BSD

Liza Kindred
Drupal



Sulamita Garcia
Linux

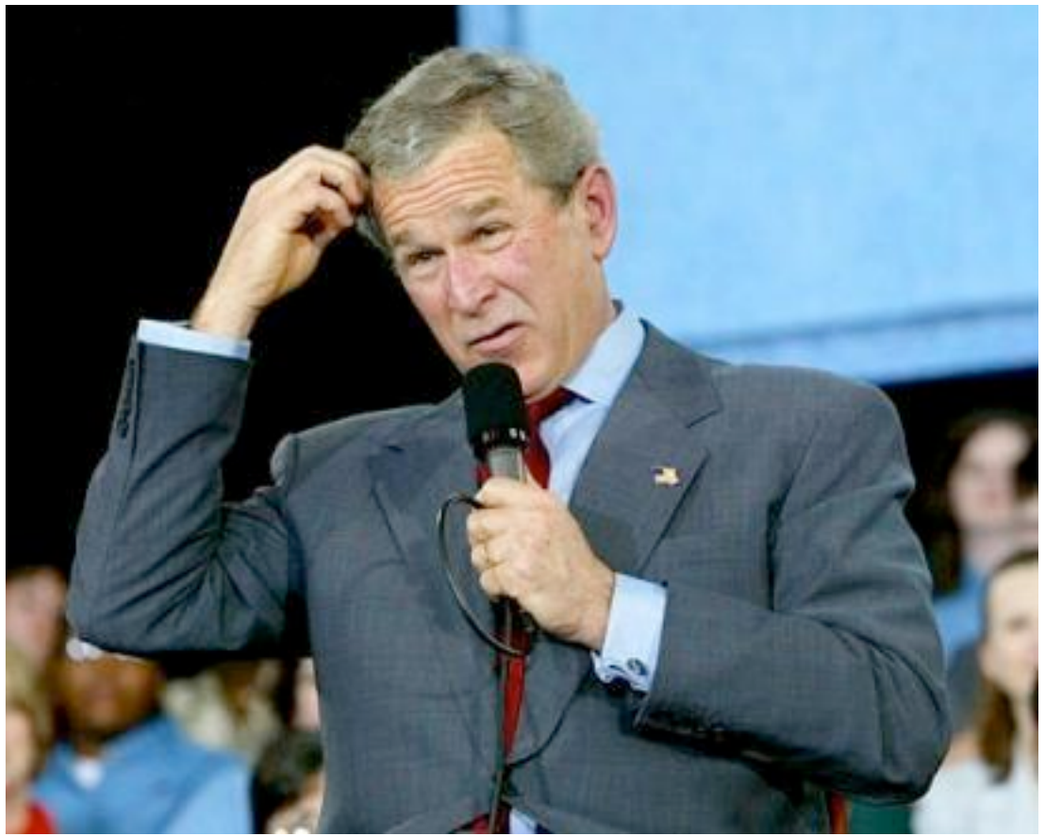
Jacinta Richardson
Perl

Danese Cooper
OSI

Valerie Aurora
RedHat

More at http://ada.pint.org.uk/ and
http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/

Stormy Peters
GNOME



WTF?

Social Reasons

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- Women have access to computers later in life
- Many women suffer from lack of confidence
- Entering a male-dominated industry

Open Source-specific reasons

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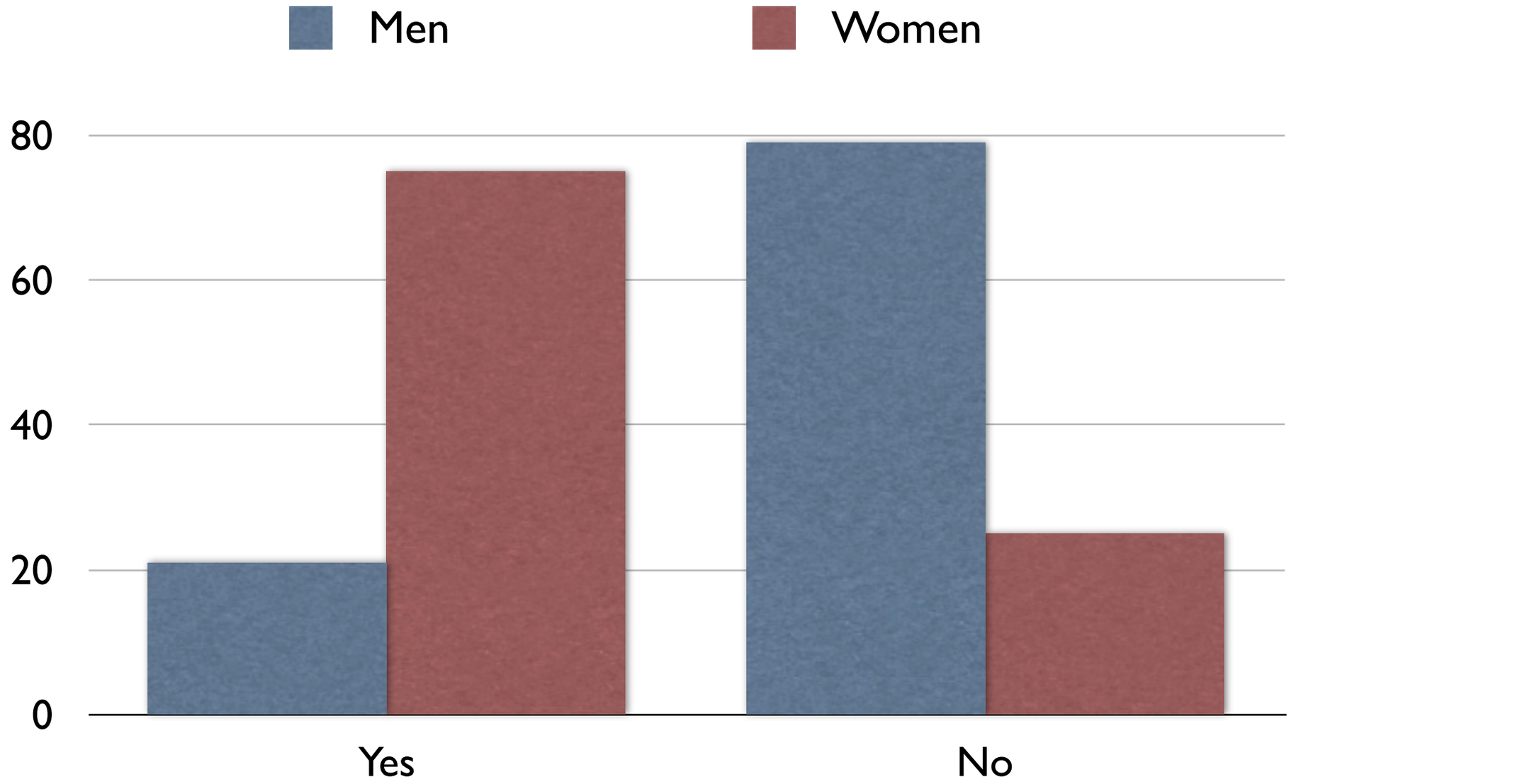
- Anonymity can create safe haven for abuse
- Open source can be combative
- Common perception: you must be Einstein to contribute to open source
- OMG! A GURL!1!1

The big blind spot

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



(Source: FLOSSPOLS, 2004-2006, Ghosh et al)

Things that drive women away

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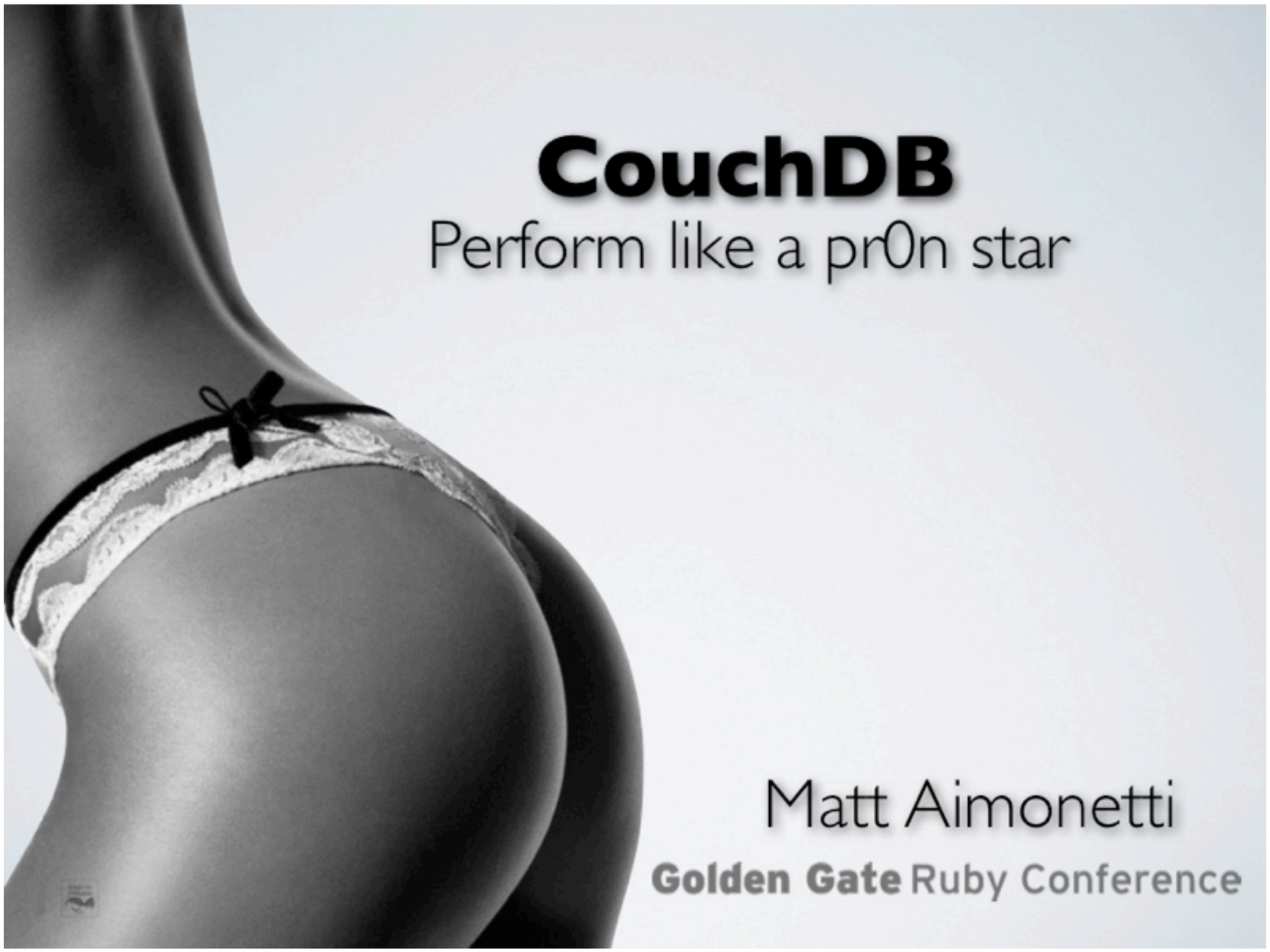
- "Jokes"
- Dates/marriage proposals
- Doubting women's intelligence/expertise
- Insults specific to women (that time of the month...)

Horror Stories

#epicfail



Summary: http://martinfowler.com/bliki/SmutOnRails.html

Death threats

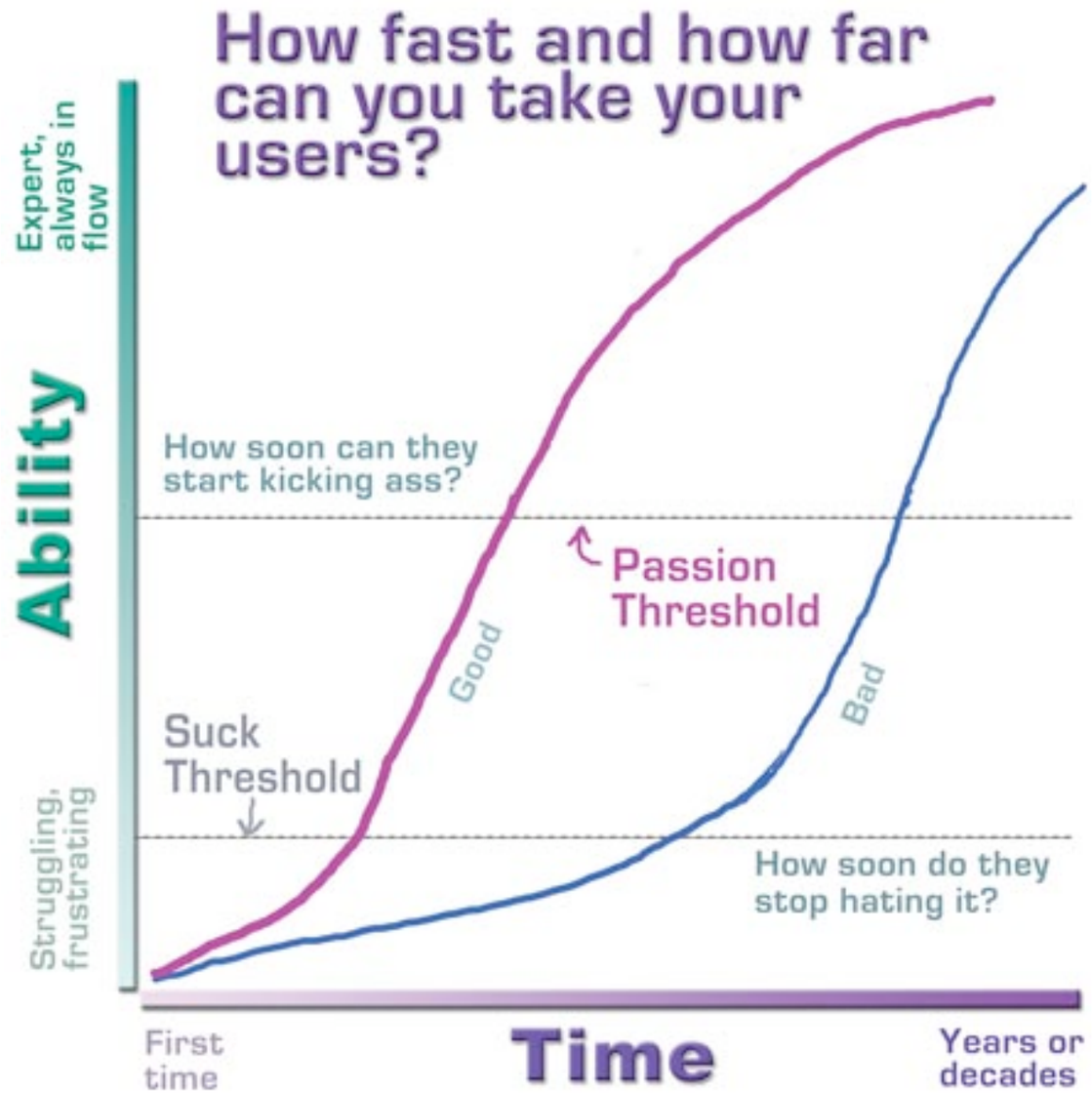
http://headrush.typepad.com/

Death threats

PASSIONATE

Creating passionate users

http://headrush.typepad.com/



Death threats

PASSIONATE

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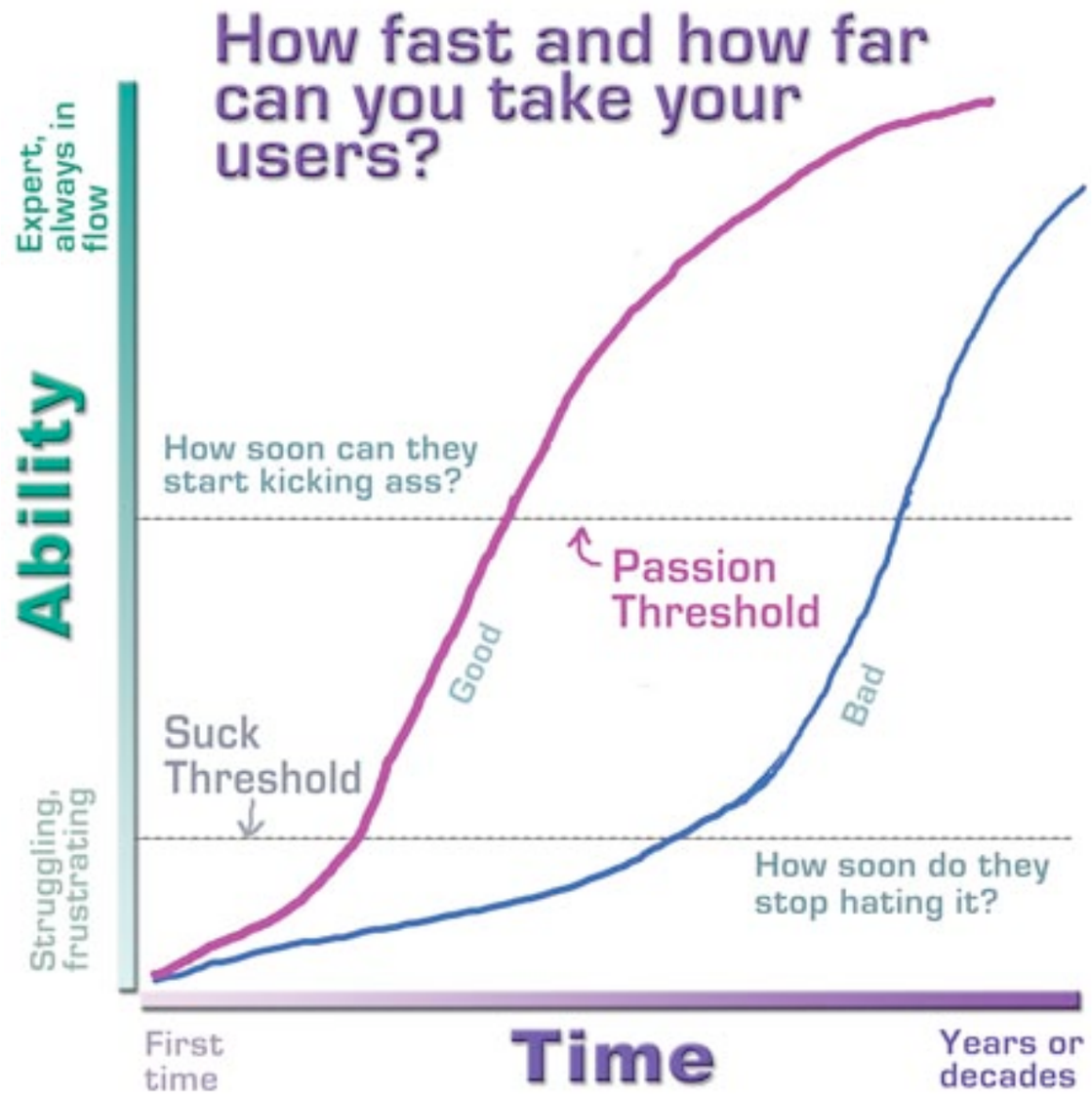
http://headrush.typepad.com/



"f*ck off you boring slut... i hope someone slits your throat and cums down your gob"

Death threats

PASSIONATE

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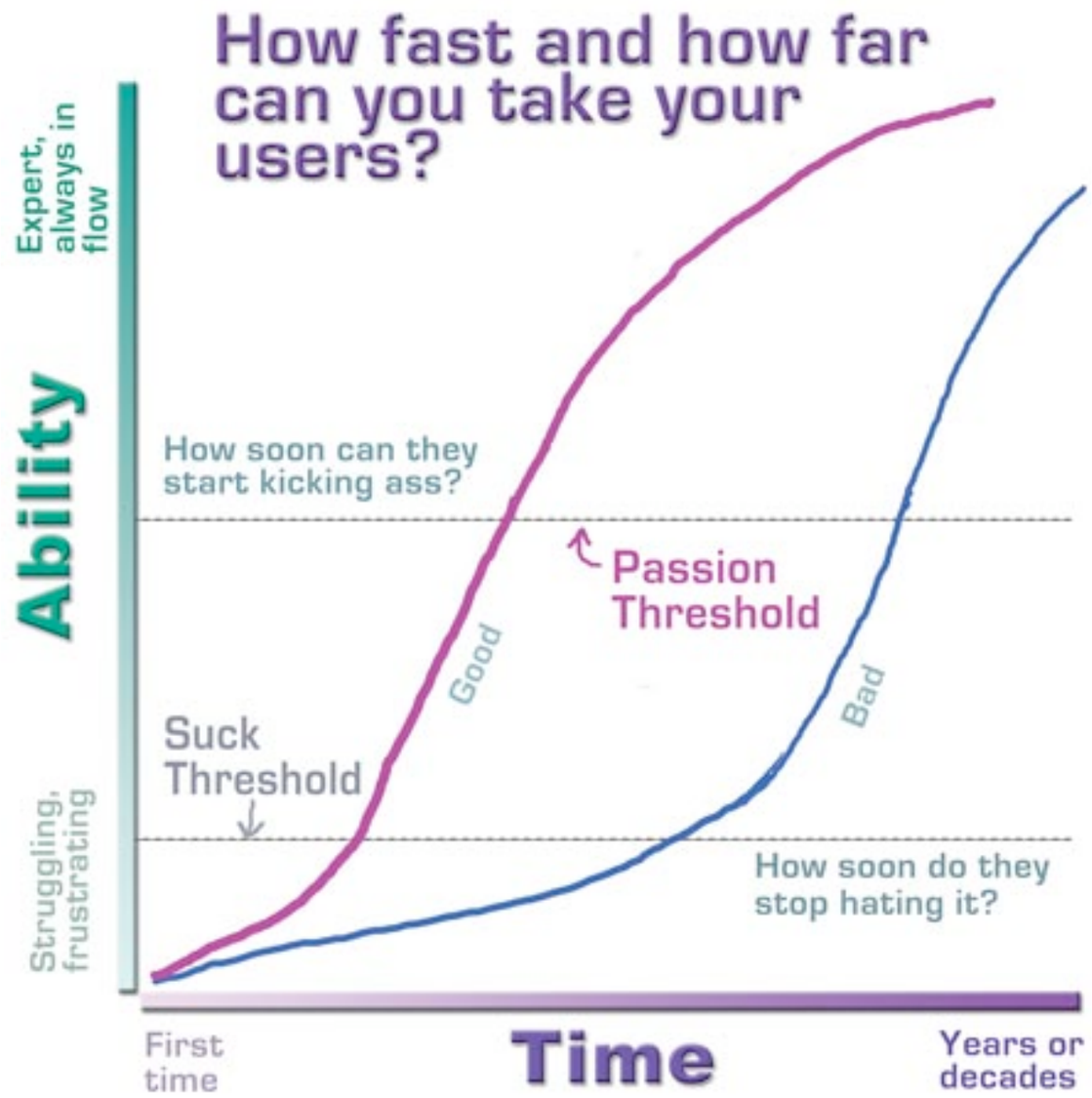


"f*ck off you boring slut... i hope someone slits your throat and cums down your gob"

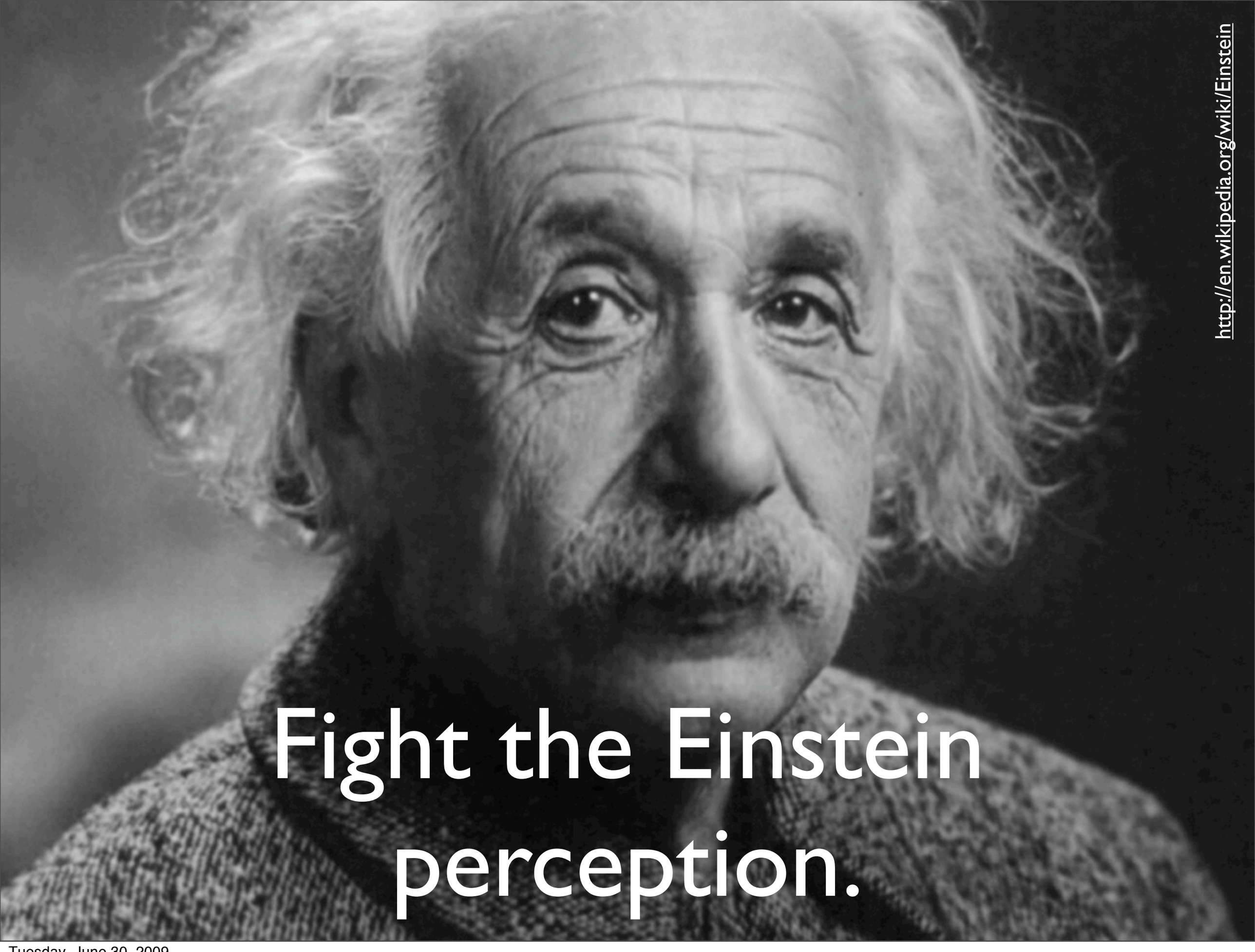
"the only thing Kathy has to offer me is that noose in her neck size."

What can people involved in open source do to help encourage women?

Be sensitive to discrimination.

And take action when it happens.

Ask women to participate.



Fight the Einstein perception.

Tools of the trade

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- Value all contributions, not just code
- Create list of "low-hanging fruit" tasks
- Foster friendly and encouraging environment
- Make sure your "how to contribute" steps are well-documented
- Mentorship programs

If you *are* a woman in open source...

http://www.flickr.com/photos/lynnszwalkiewicz/

...be out and proud!

http://geekspeakr.com/

Ok, ladies! Your turn.
Let's talk about you can get involved!

Um, do we still *want* to?

http://www.flickr.com/photos/blah_oh_well/

Yes!

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

Open Source is...

http://buytaert.net/album/drupalcon-sunnyvale-2007/laughter

...fun!

http://www.flickr.com/photos/jamesjordan

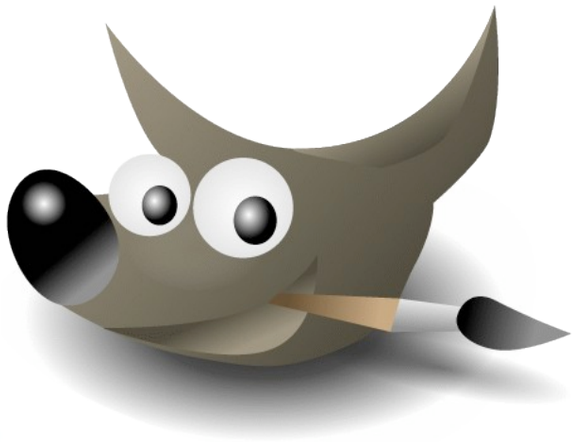
...inspiring and educational.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth
...fundamentally
rewarding.

...an excellent career move.

Ok, so how do you get started?

Find a project that interests you



Or start one of your own. :)

Find out what resources are available

- Documentation
- Mailing lists
- Forums
- Working groups
- IRC channels
- “Planet”

Lurk first.

Evaluate the community.

Don’t tolerate BS.

Seek out other women in open source

http://www.linuxchix.org/

http://www.linuxchix.org/other-groups-women-free-software.html

Contribute as early and often as possible.

The sooner you establish yourself as one of the 0.05%, the easier (and more fun!) time you'll have.

Myth busters

What is a contributor?

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code_monkey

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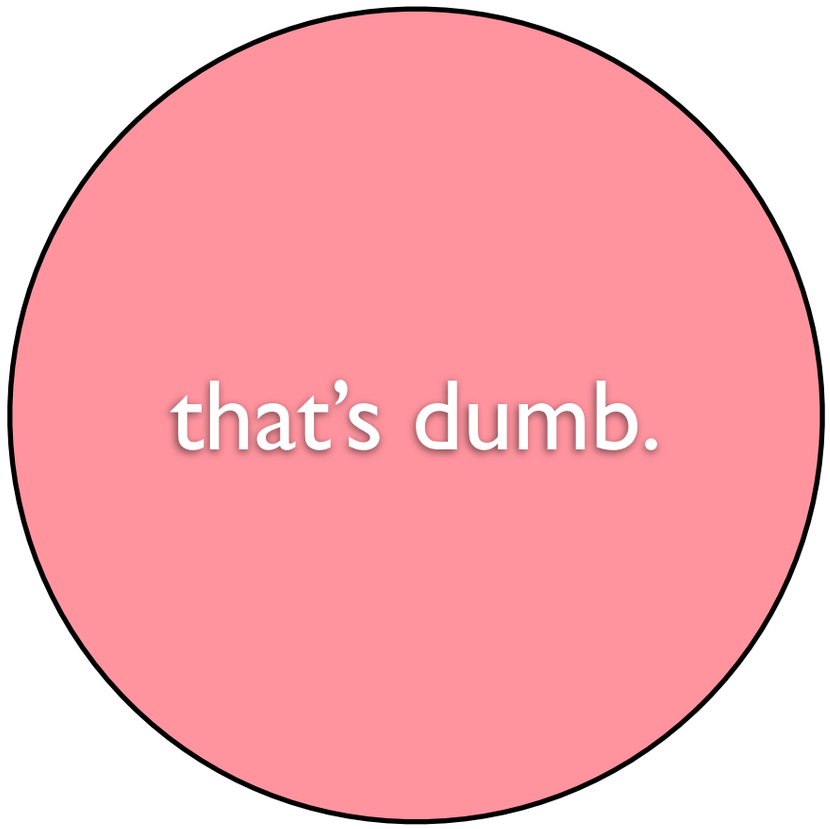

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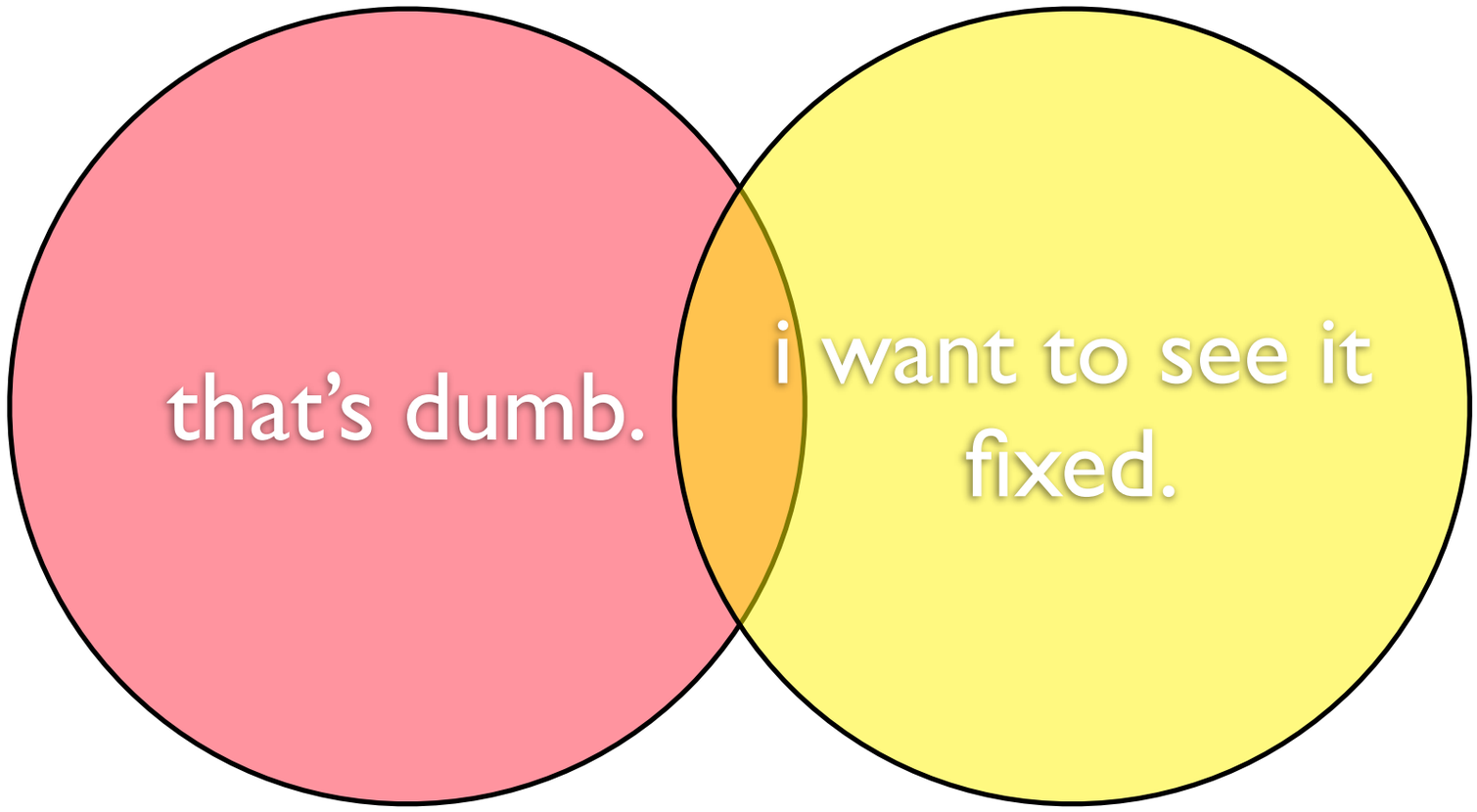

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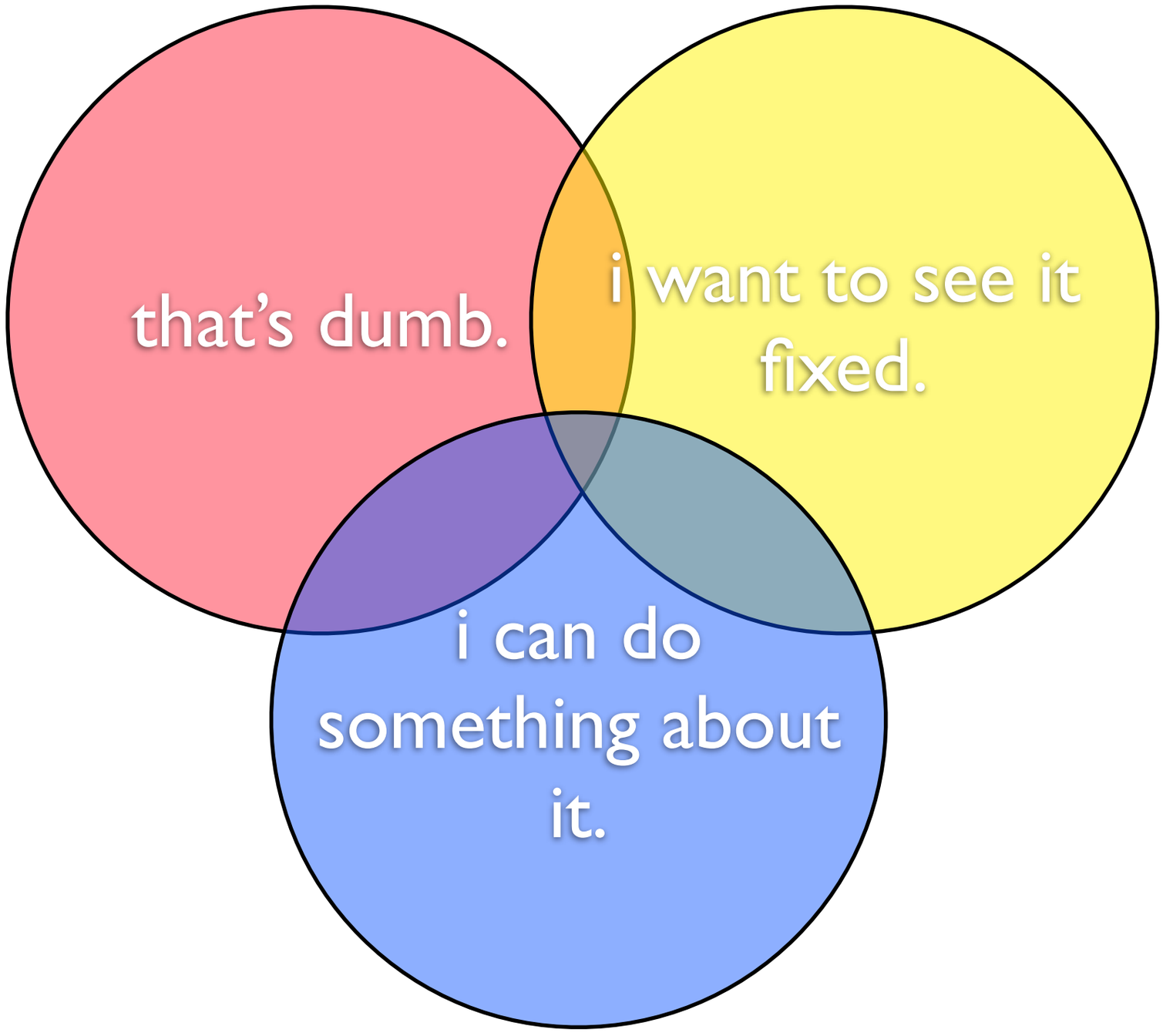

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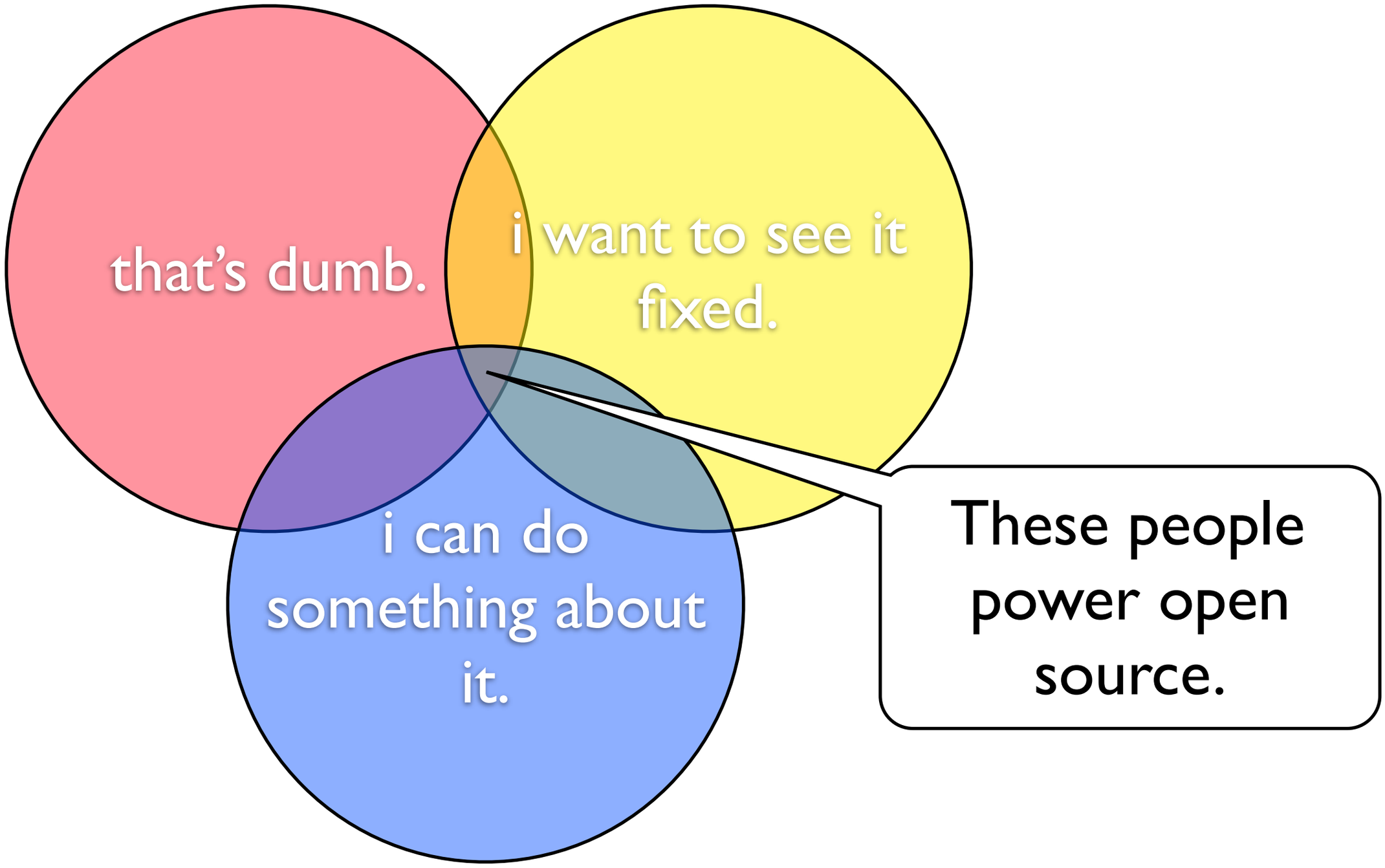

What qualifies as contribution?

```php
/**
 * Root directory of Drupal installation.
 */
define('DRUPAL_ROOT', getcwd());

require_once DRUPAL_ROOT . '/includes/bootstrap.inc';
drupal_bootstrap(DRUPAL_BOOTSTRAP_FULL);
$return = menu_execute_active_handler();

// Menu status constants are integers; page content is a string or array.
if (is_int($return)) {
  switch ($return) {
    case MENU_NOT_FOUND:
      drupal_not_found();
      break;
    case MENU_ACCESS_DENIED:
      drupal_access_denied();
      break;
    case MENU_SITE_OFFLINE:
      drupal_site_offline();
      break;
  }
}
elseif (isset($return)) {
  // Print anything besides a menu constant, assuming it's not NULL or undefined.
```

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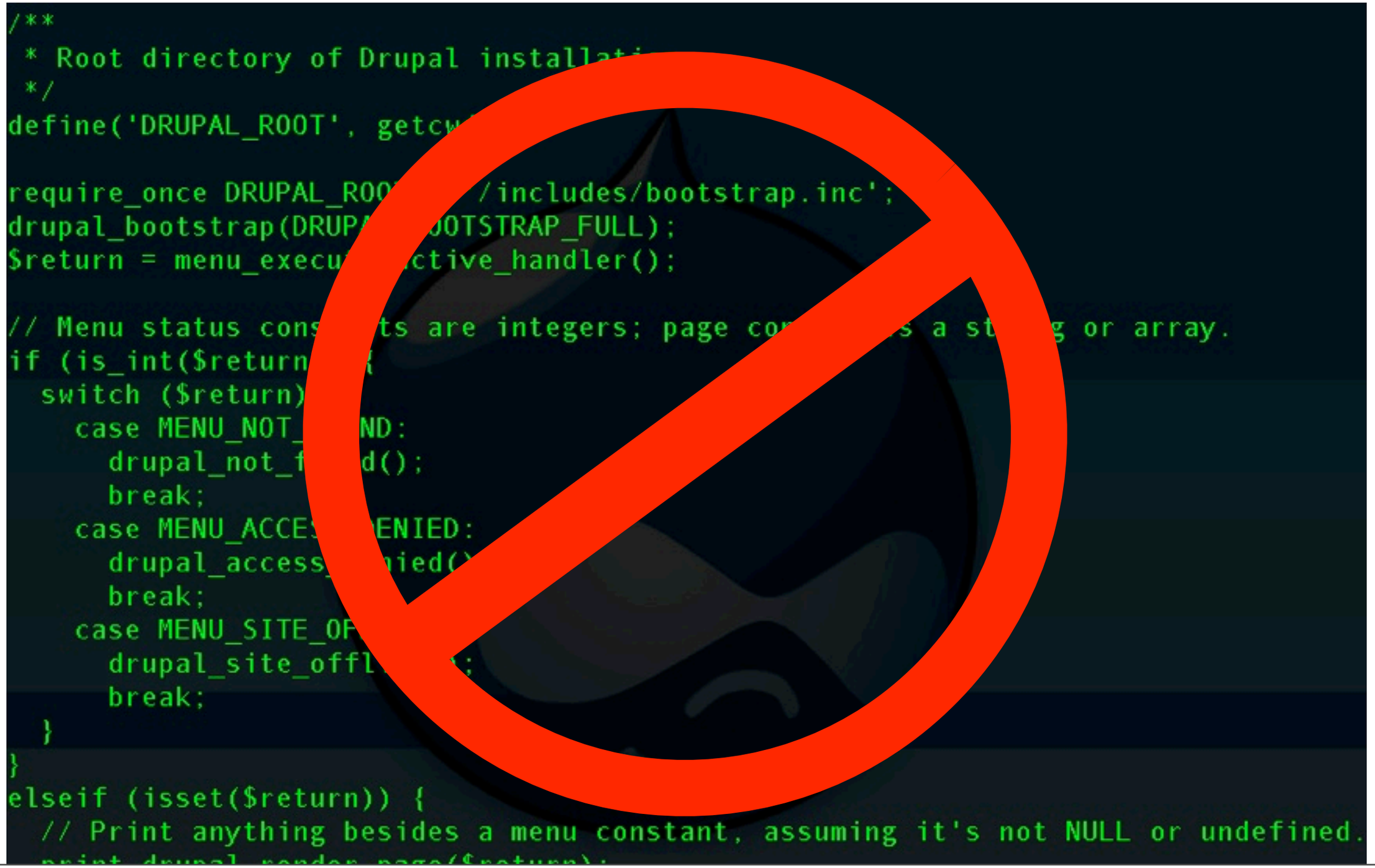

What qualifies as contribution?

- Donations
- Advocacy
- Documentation
- Marketing
- User support
- Testing
- Translations
- Graphic design
- Event coordination
- Bug reports and feature requests
- Issue queue “farming”
- Usability
- ...oh yeah, and coding too. ;)

How improvements are made

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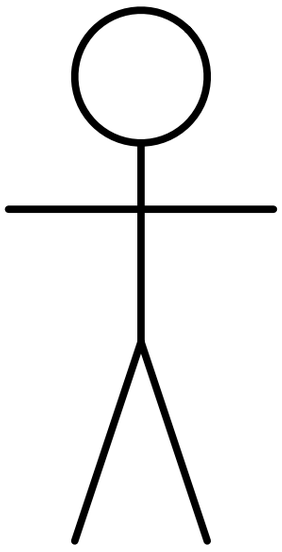
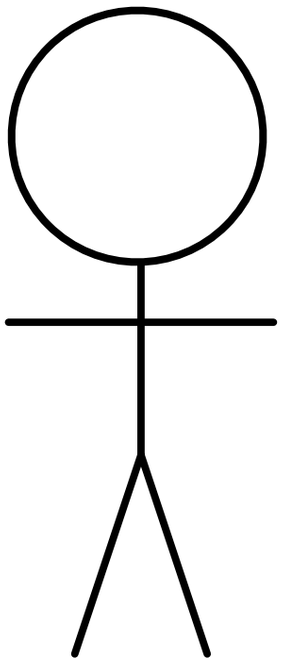


Gina the Genius

How improvements are made



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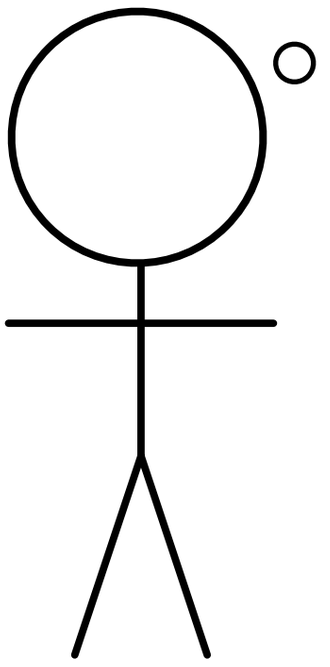
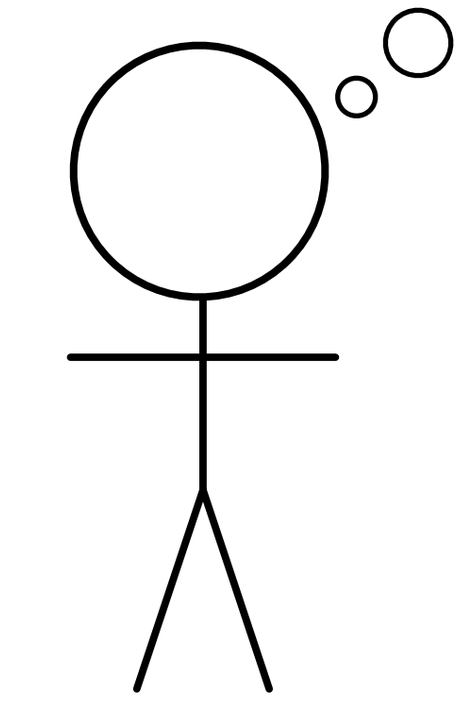


Gina the Genius

How improvements are made



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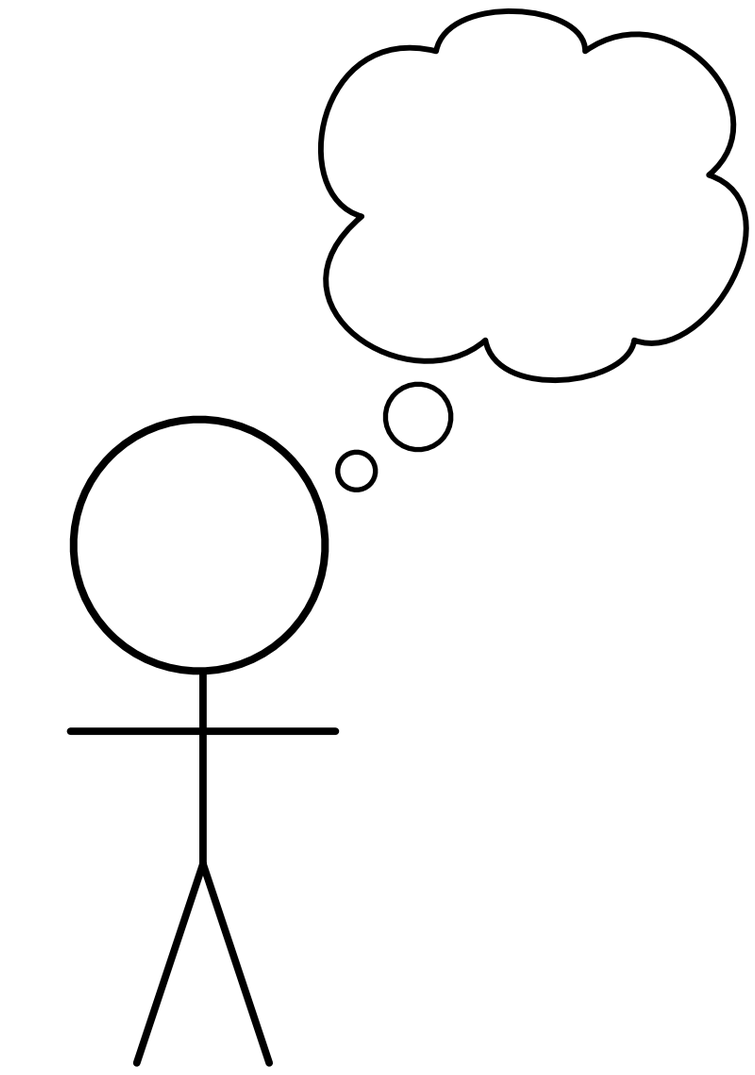

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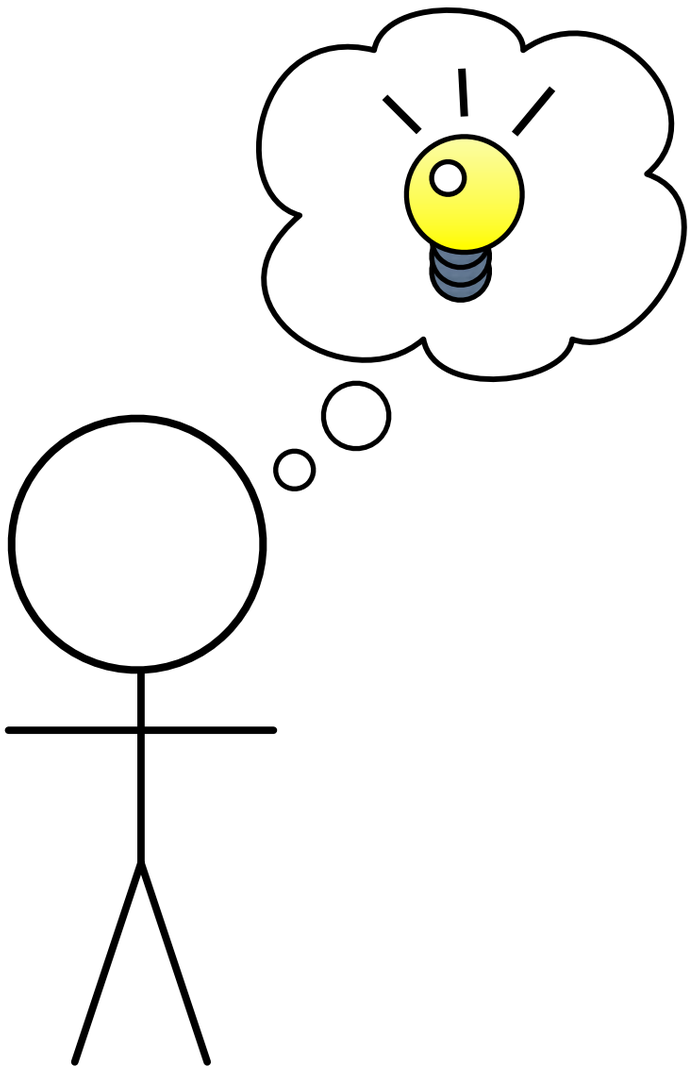

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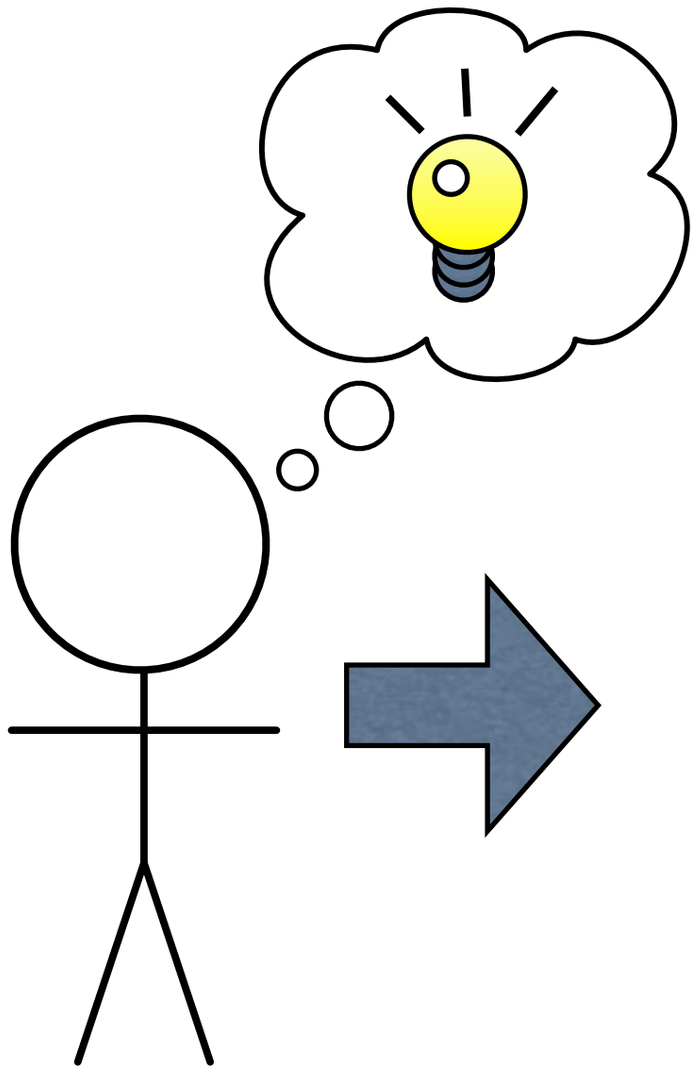

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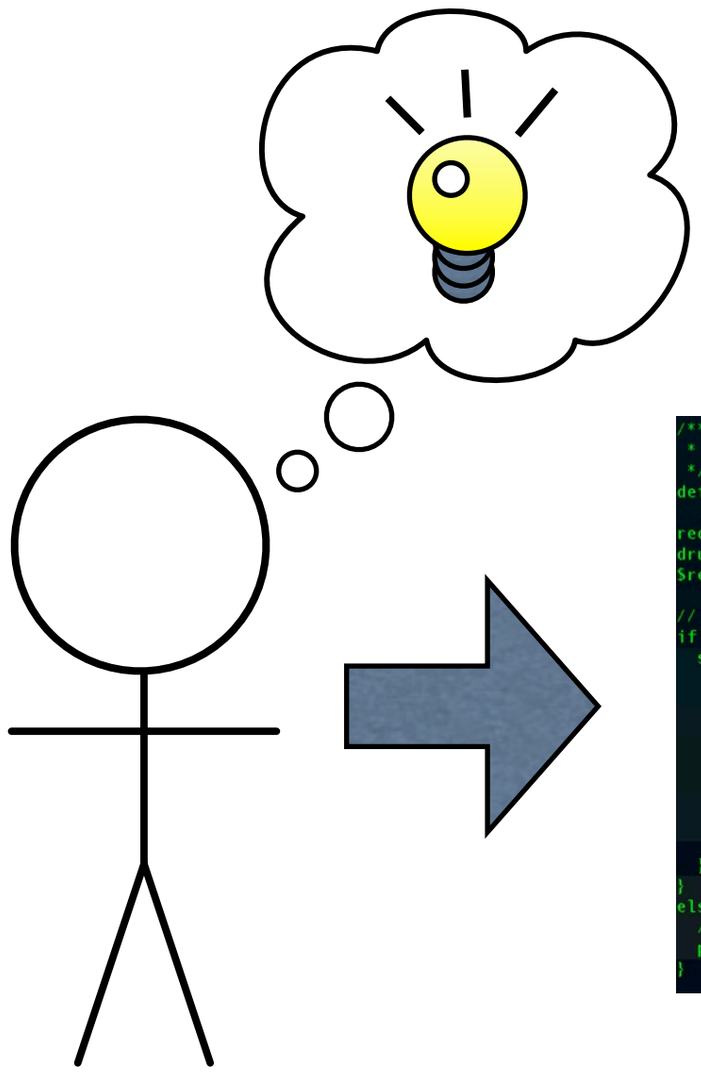

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/**
 * Root directory of Drupal installation.
 */
define('DRUPAL_ROOT', getcwd());

require_once DRUPAL_ROOT . '/includes/bootstrap.inc';
drupal_bootstrap(DRUPAL_BOOTSTRAP_FULL);
$return = menu_execute_active_handler();

// Menu status constants are integers; page content is a string or array.
if (is_int($return)) {
  switch ($return) {
    case MENU_NOT_FOUND:
      drupal_not_found();
      break;
    case MENU_ACCESS_DENIED:
      drupal_access_denied();
      break;
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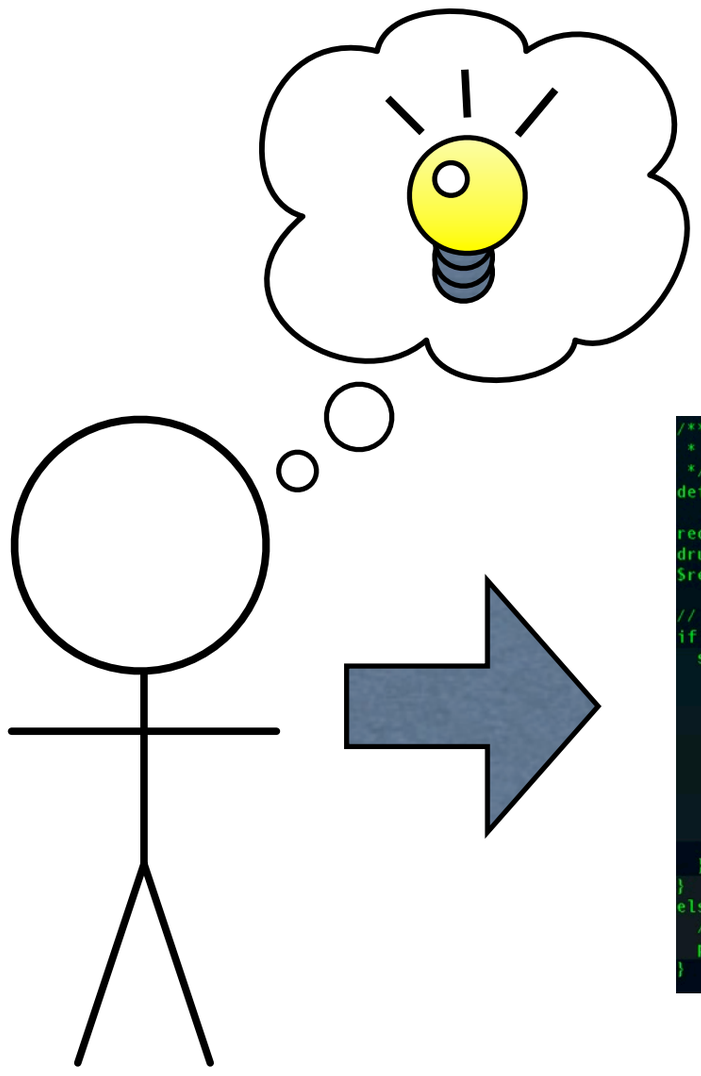

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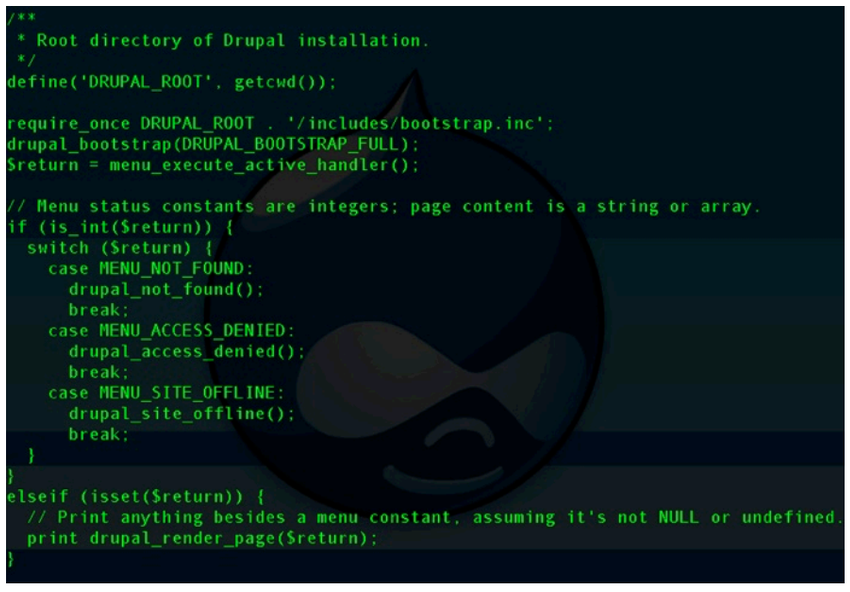

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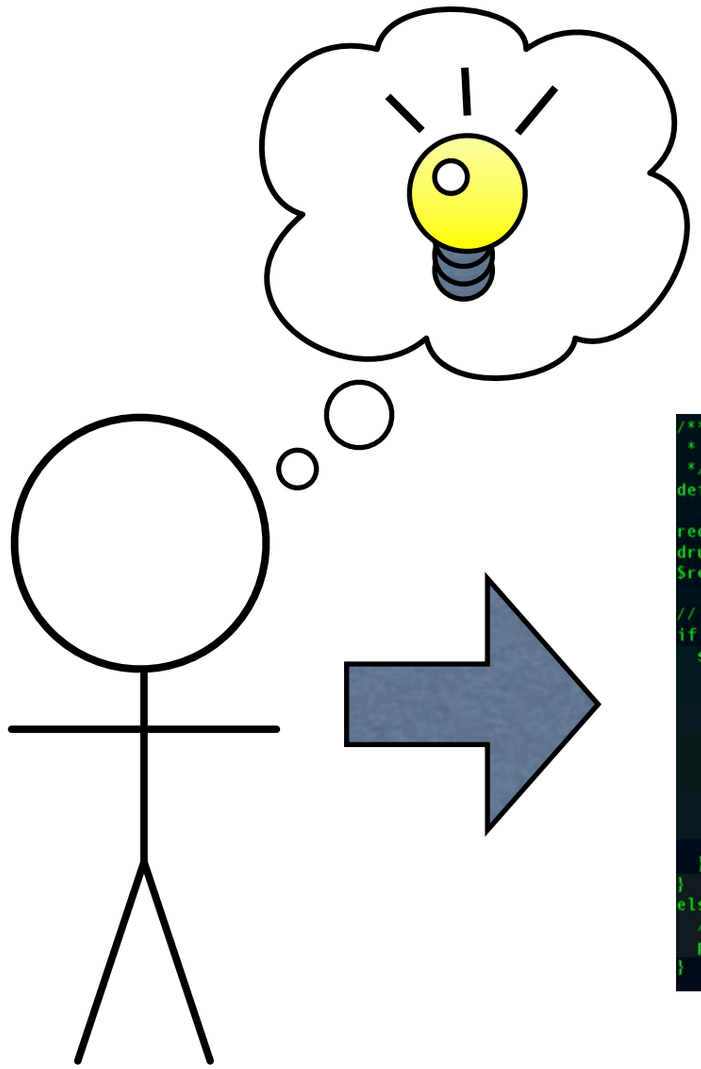

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Wow!

Amazing!

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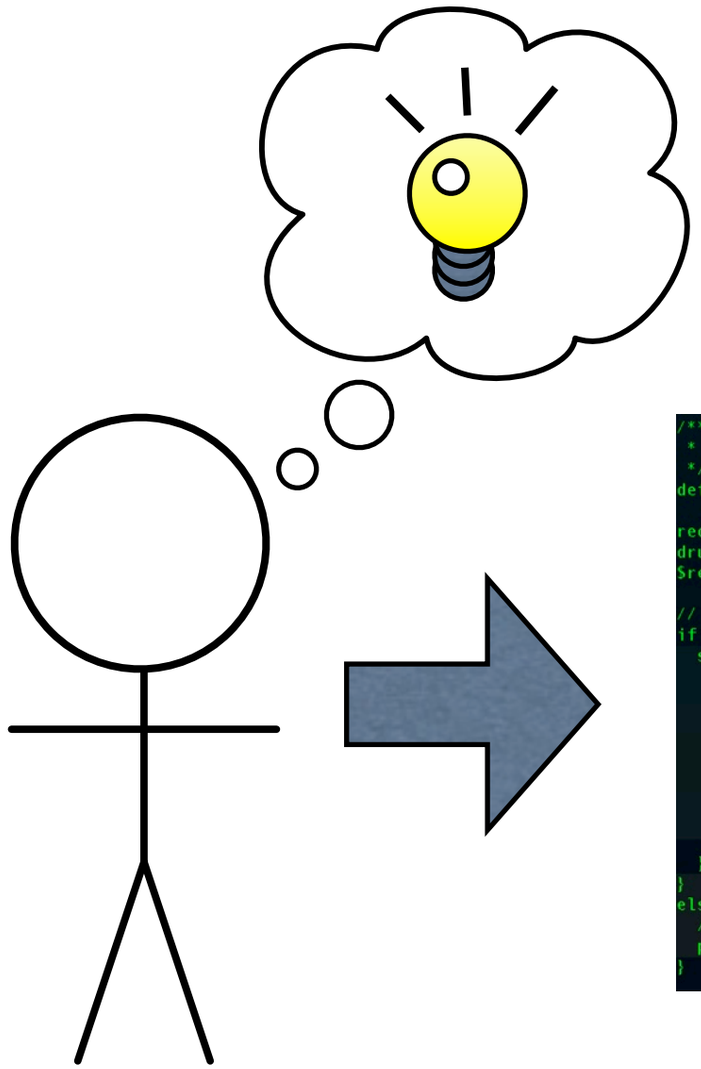

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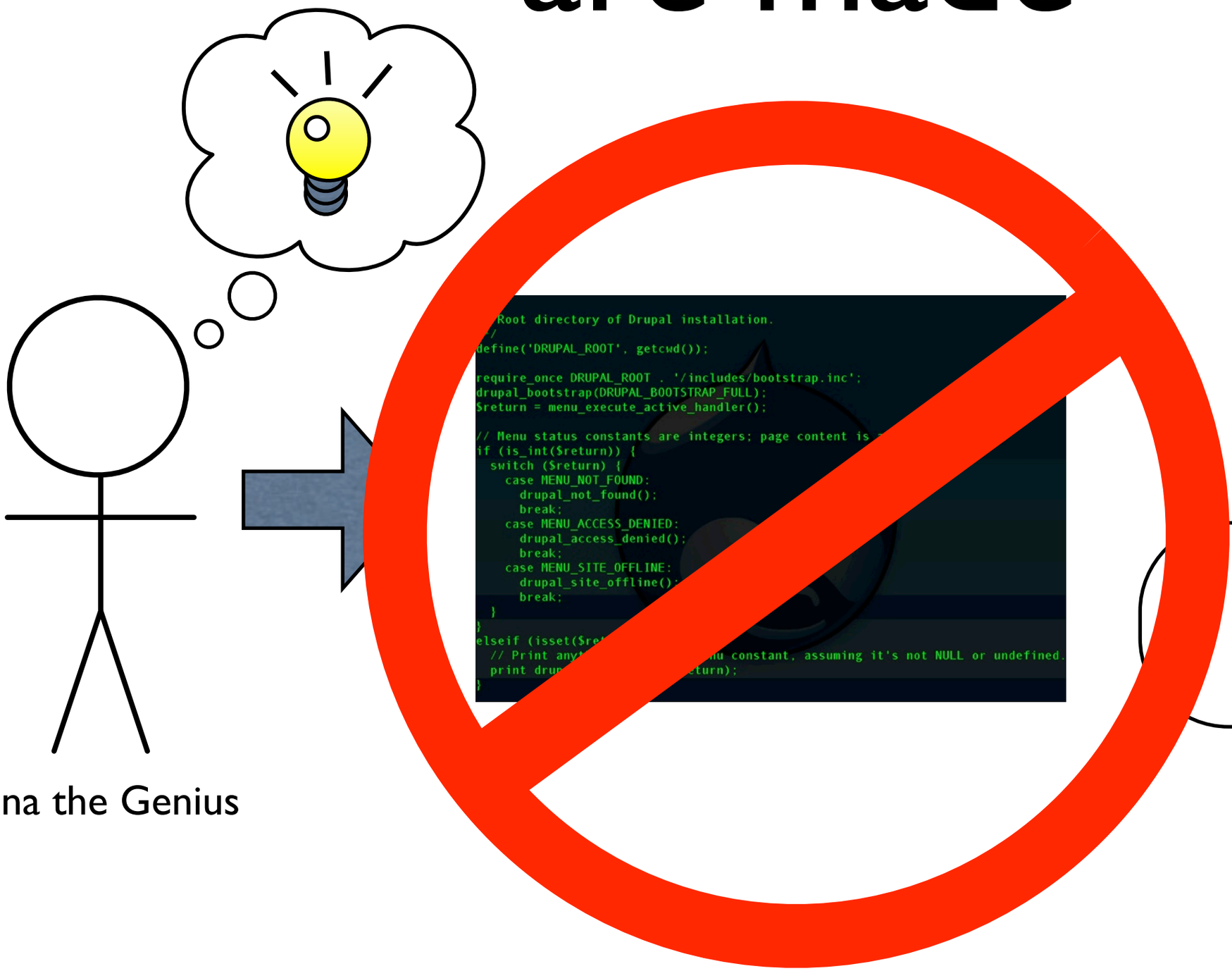

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How improvements are made

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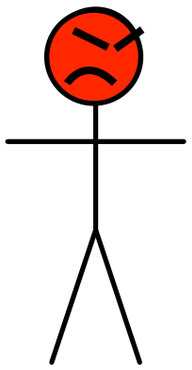

Edwina the
End User

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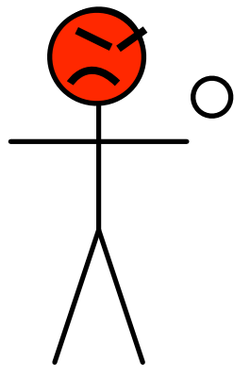

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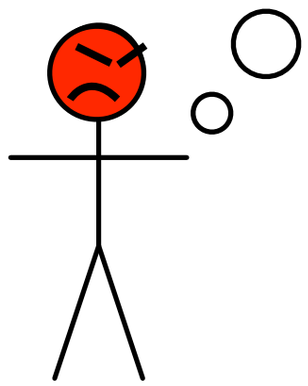

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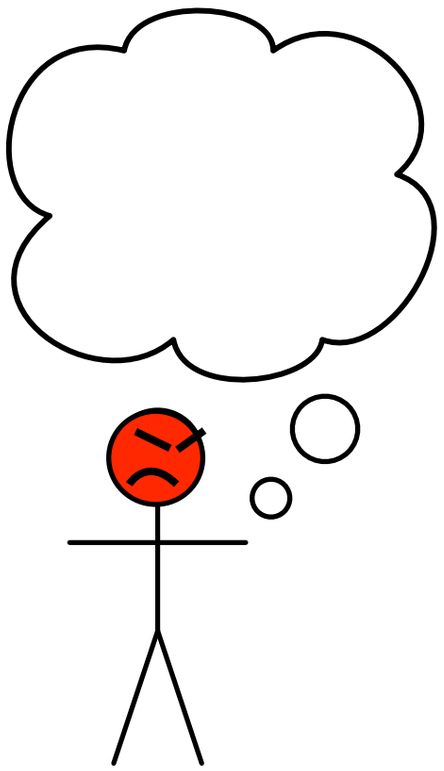

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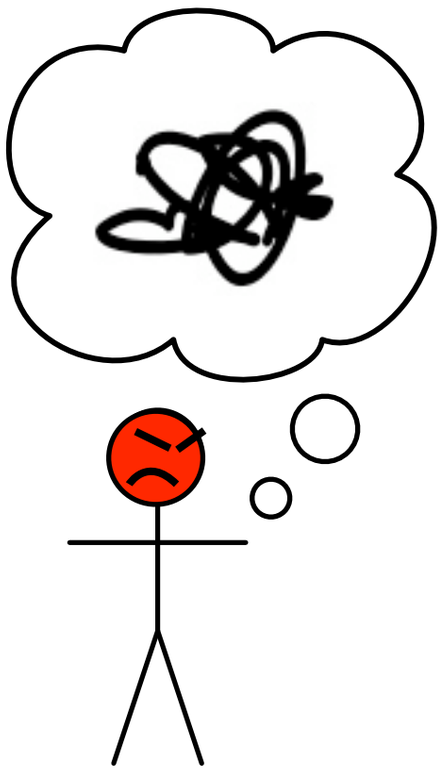

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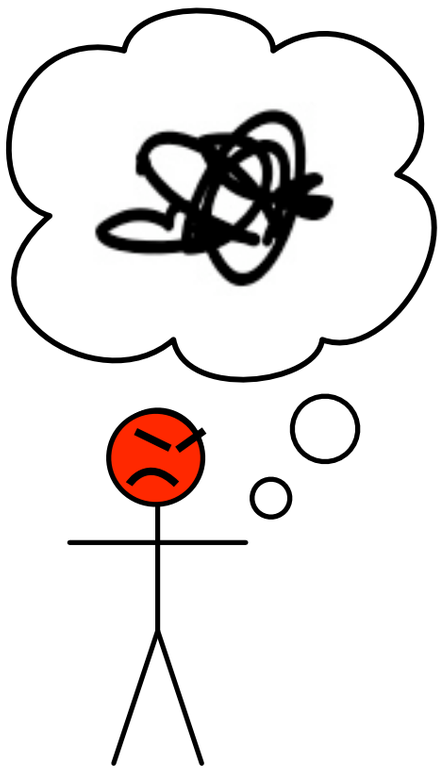
How improvements are made

Issue queue



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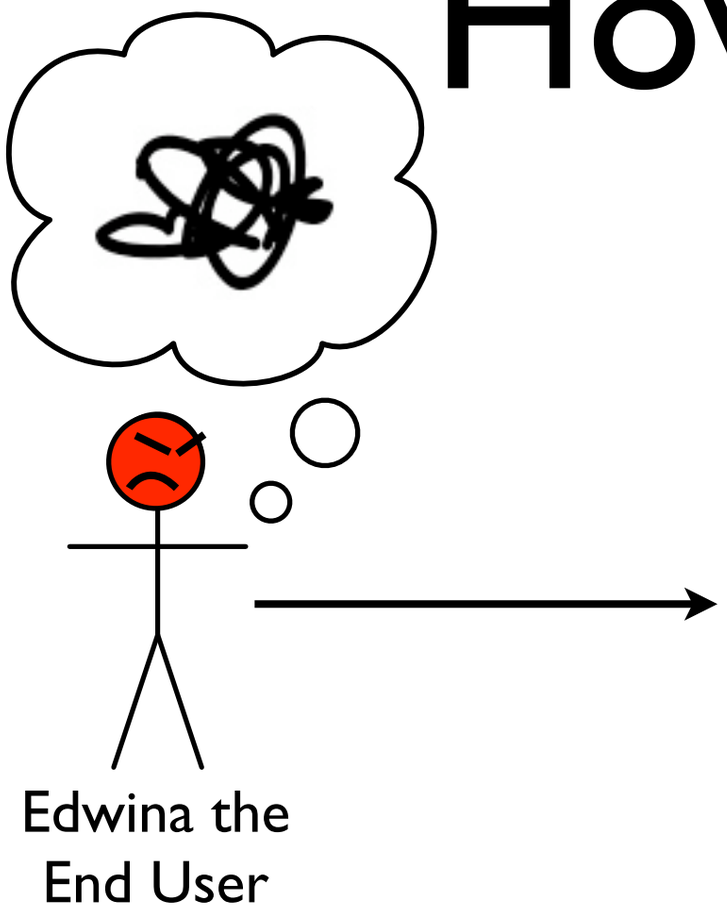

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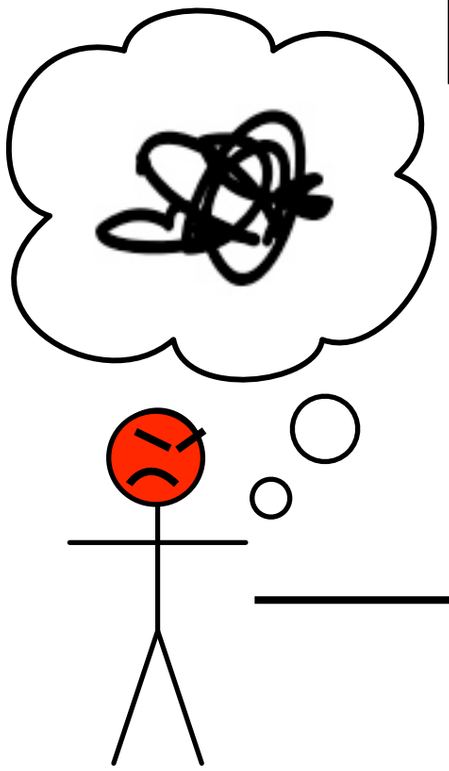

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Bug report

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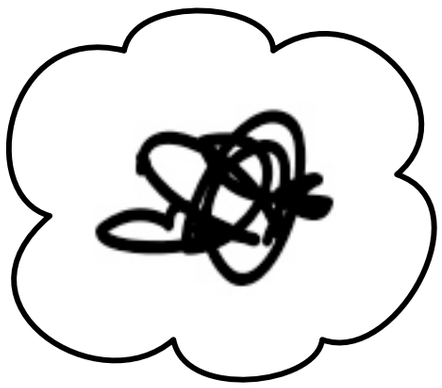

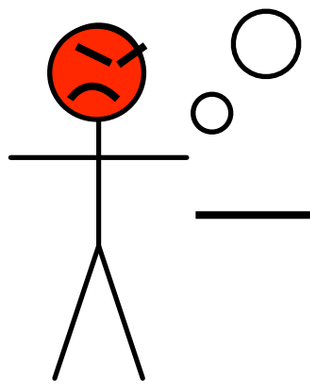

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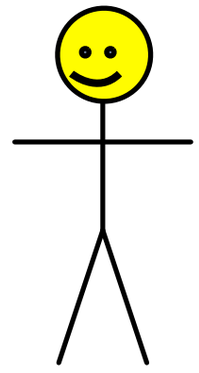
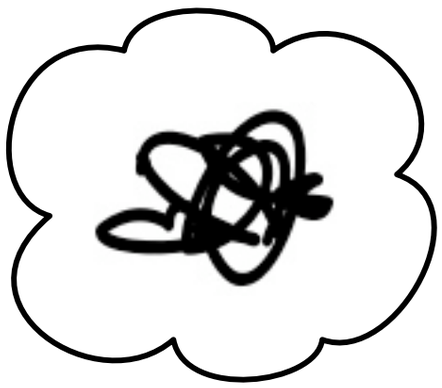
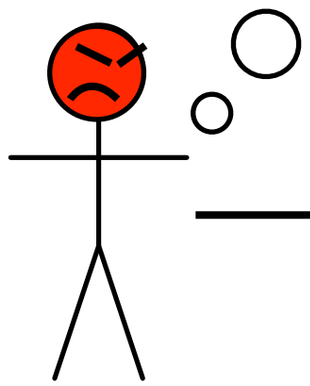


Paula the Programmer

How improvements are made





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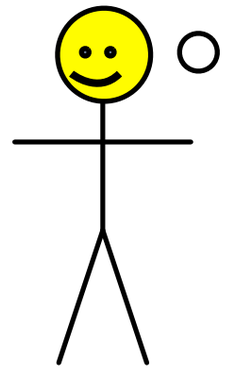

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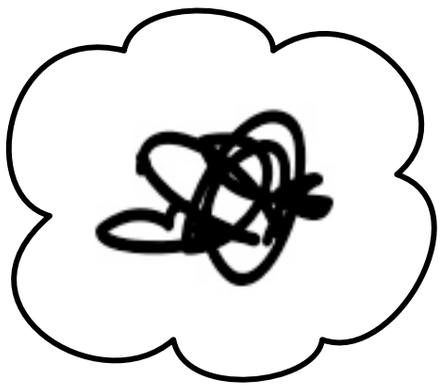

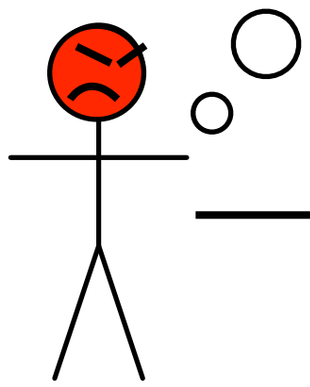

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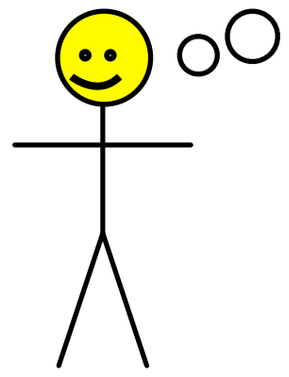

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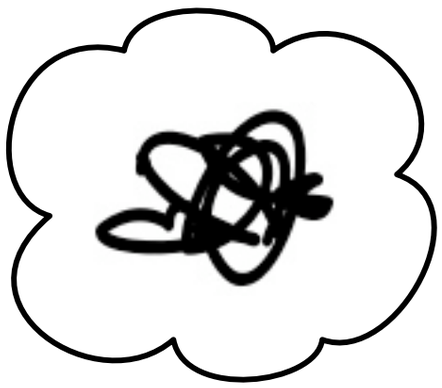

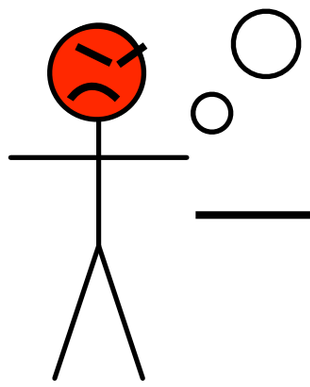

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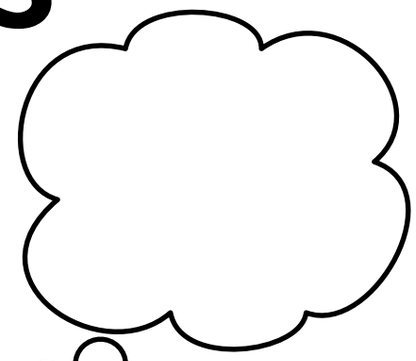

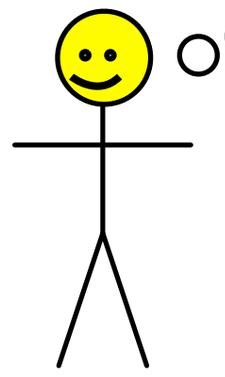

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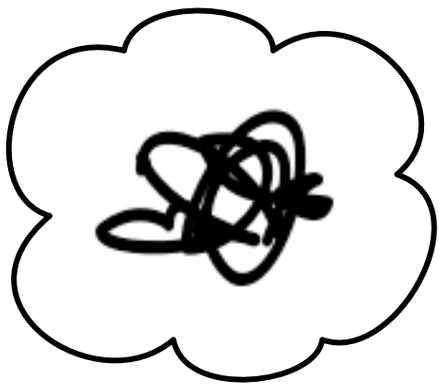

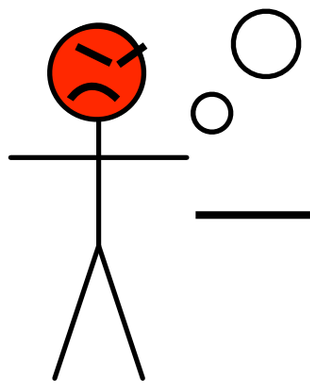

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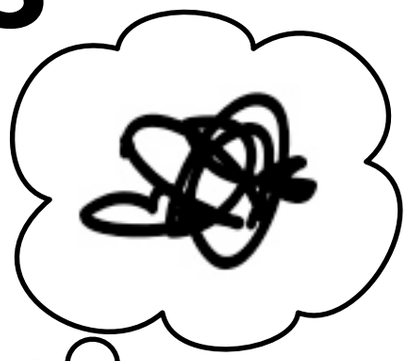

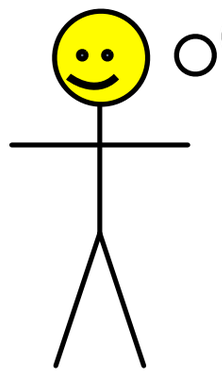

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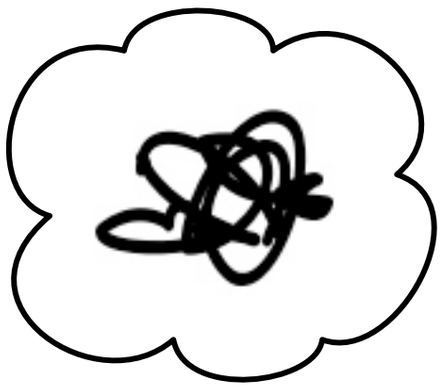

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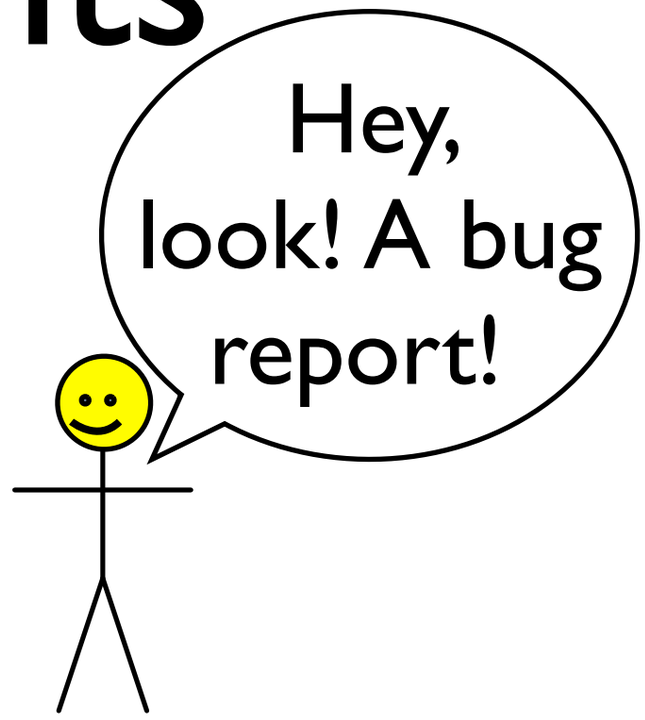

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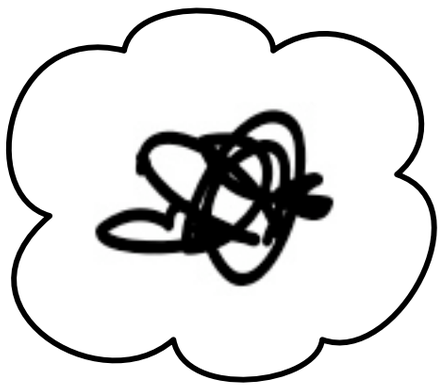

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Bug report

I'll try and fix it.

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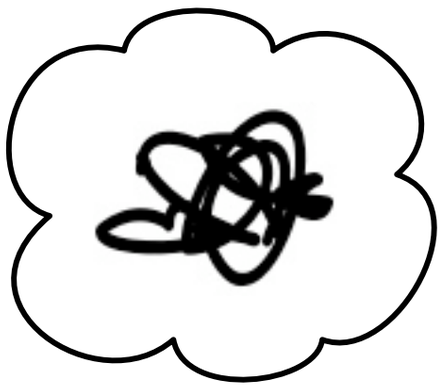

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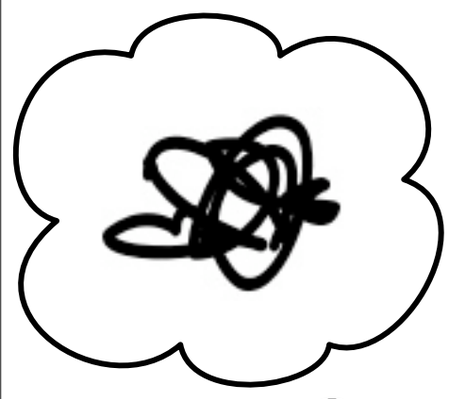

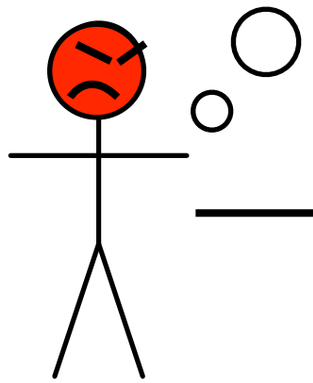

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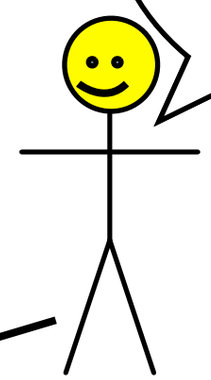
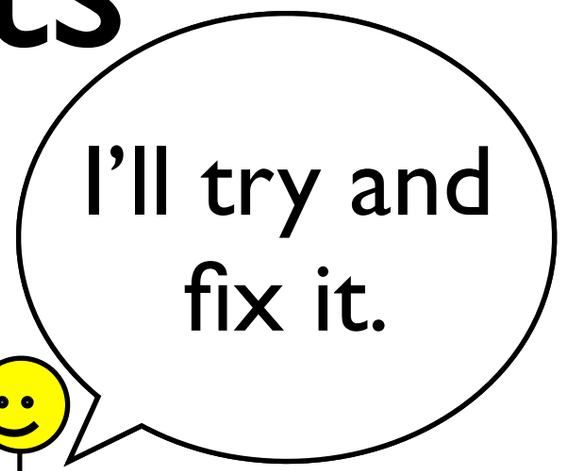
Bug report

Code





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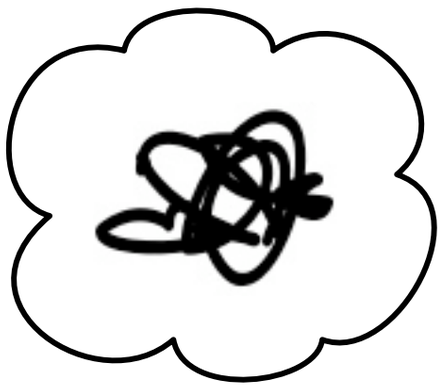

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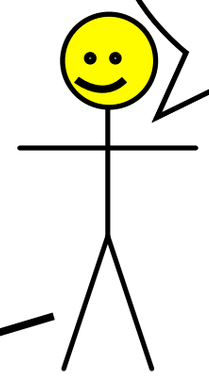

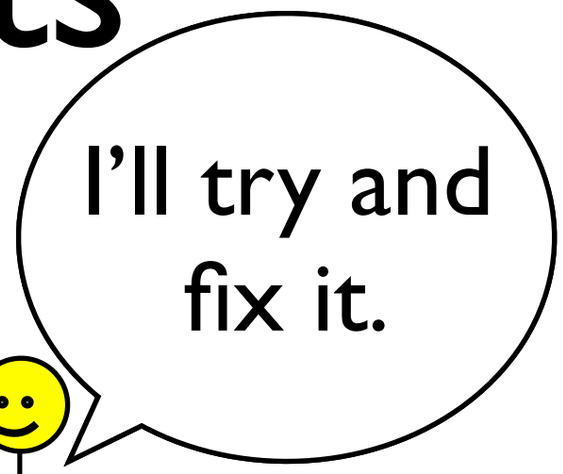

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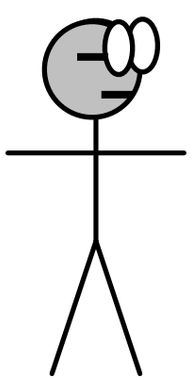
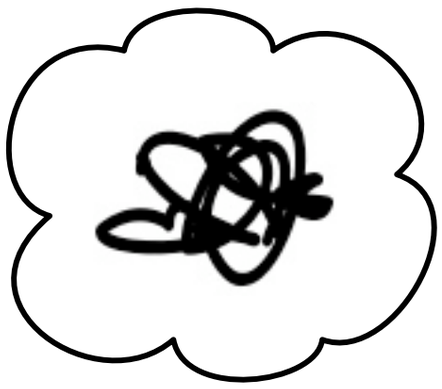
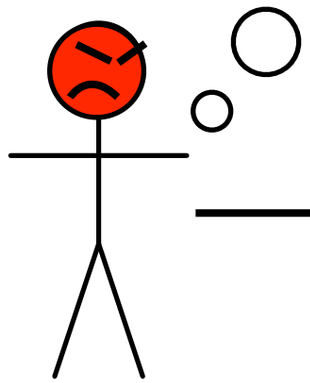


Tatiana the Tester

How improvements are made





Edwina the End User

Issue queue

Bug report

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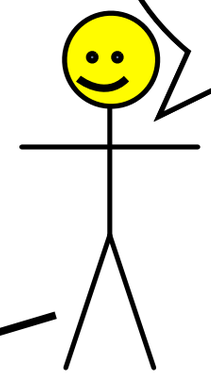

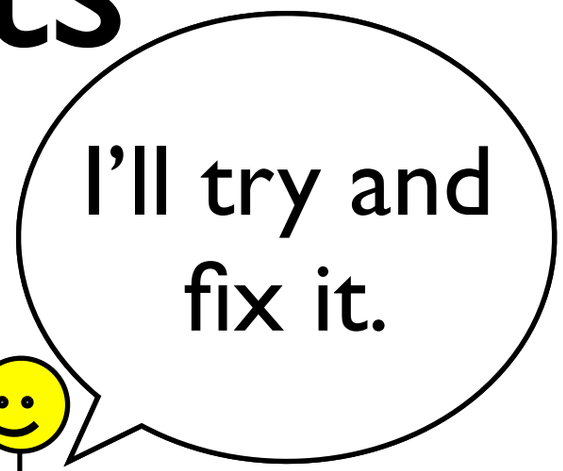

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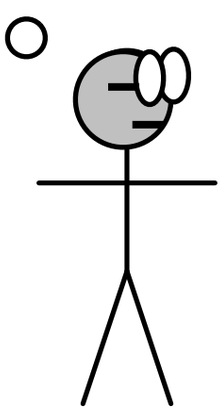

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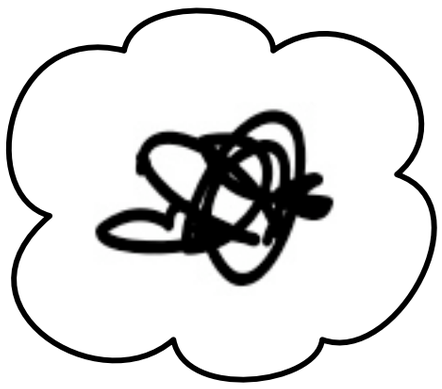

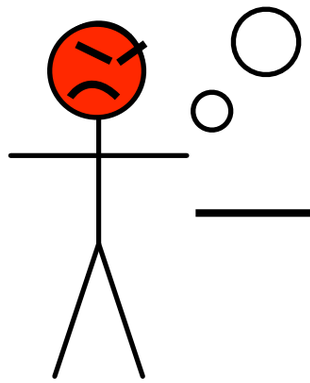

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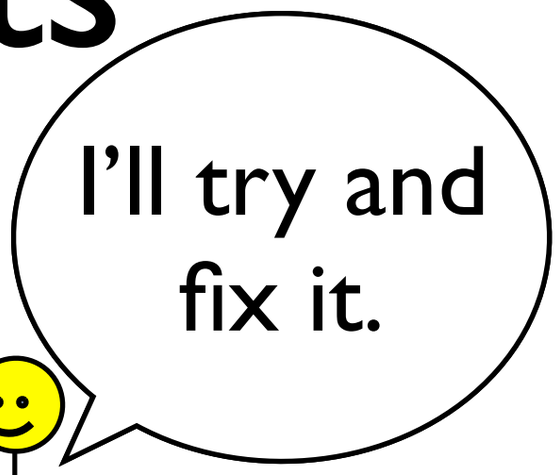

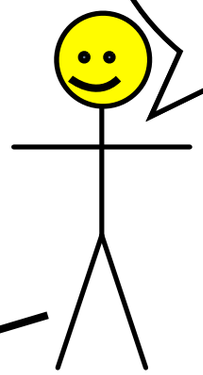

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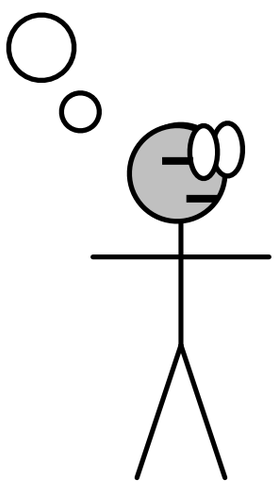

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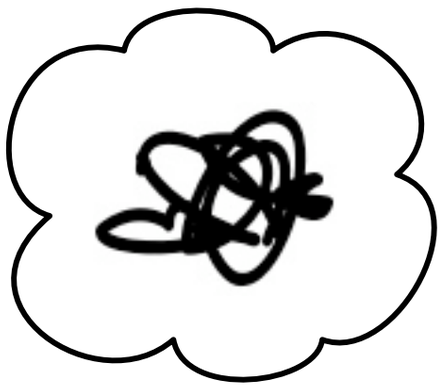

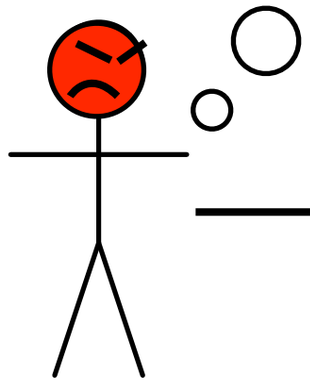

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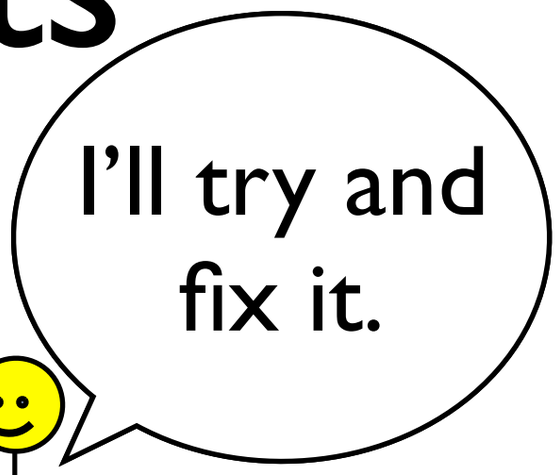

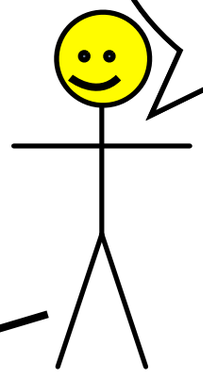

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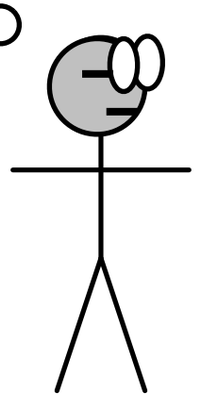

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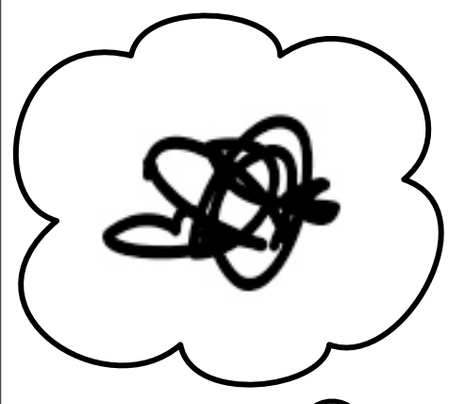

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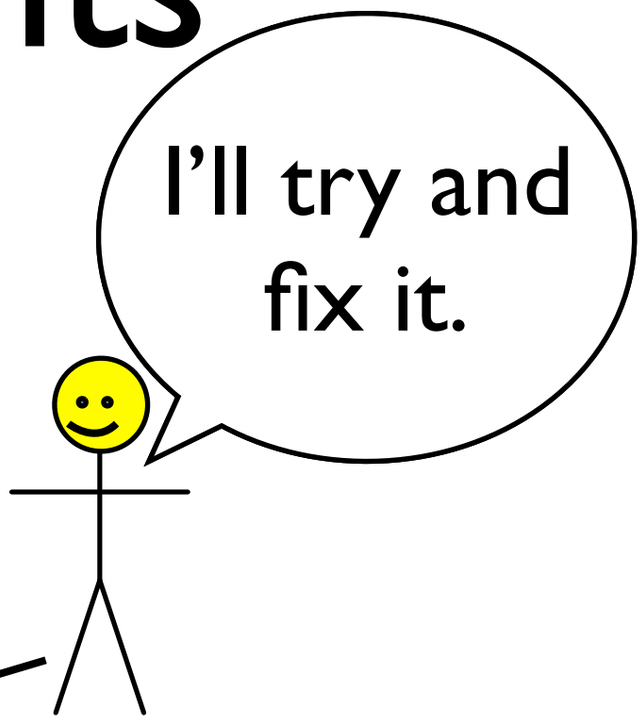

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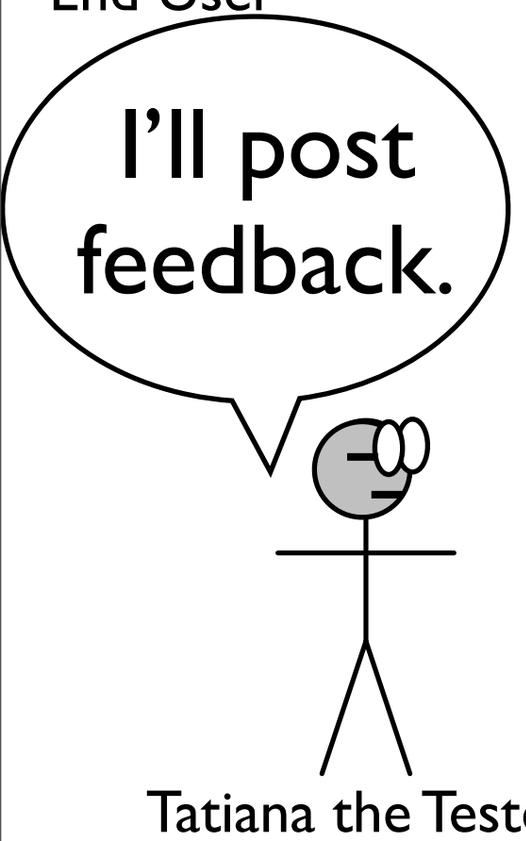

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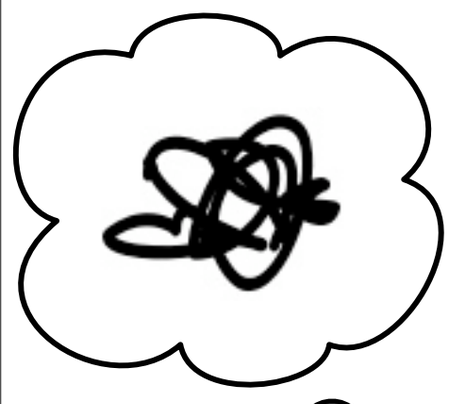

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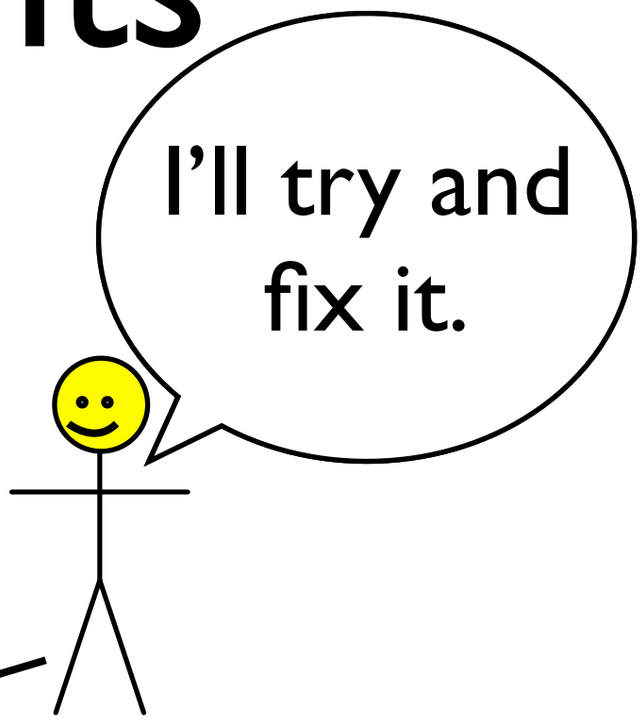

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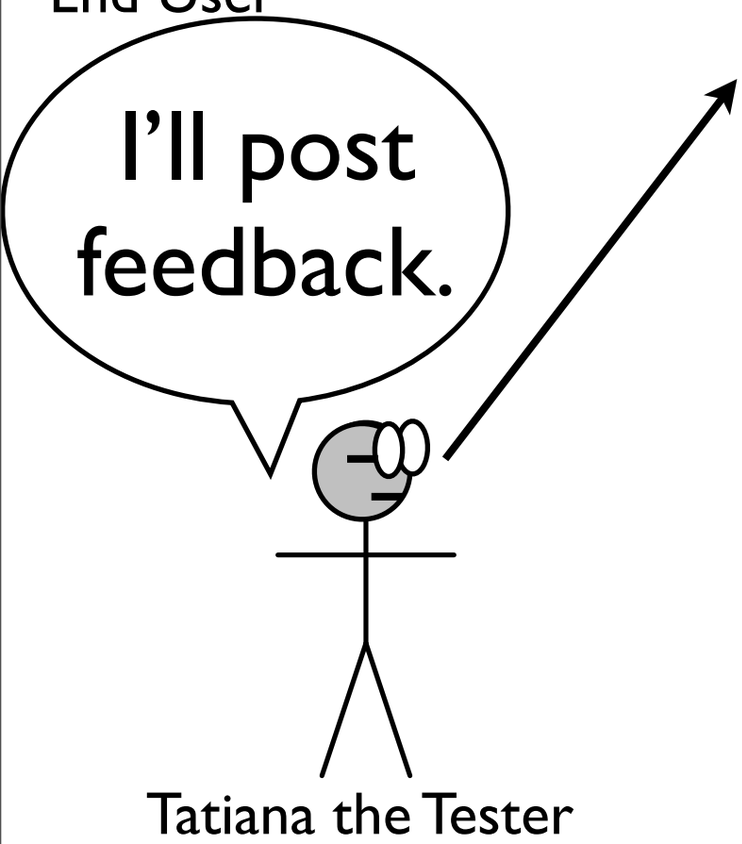

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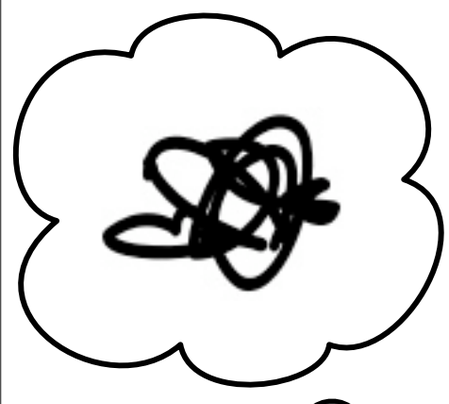

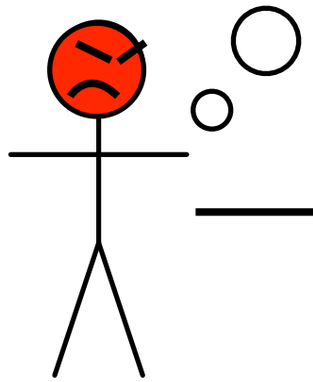

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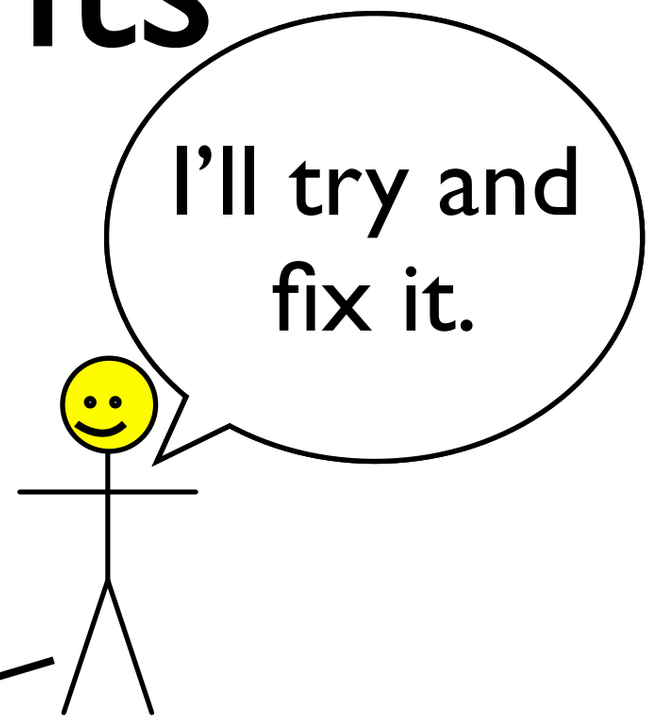

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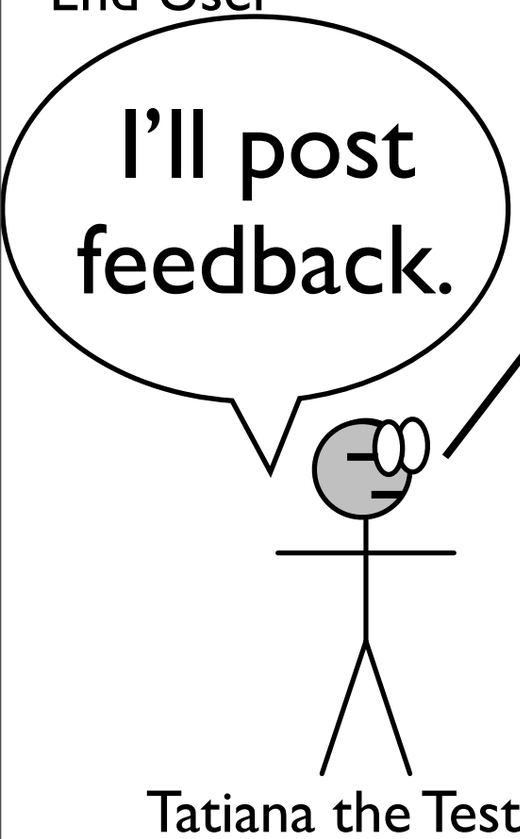

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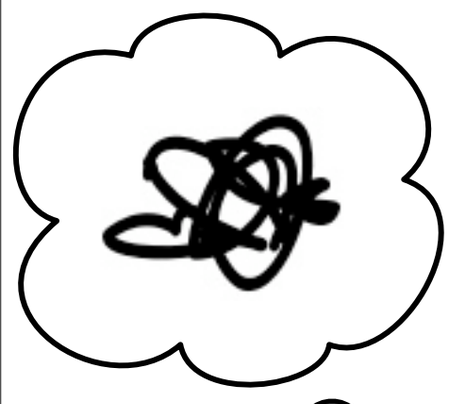

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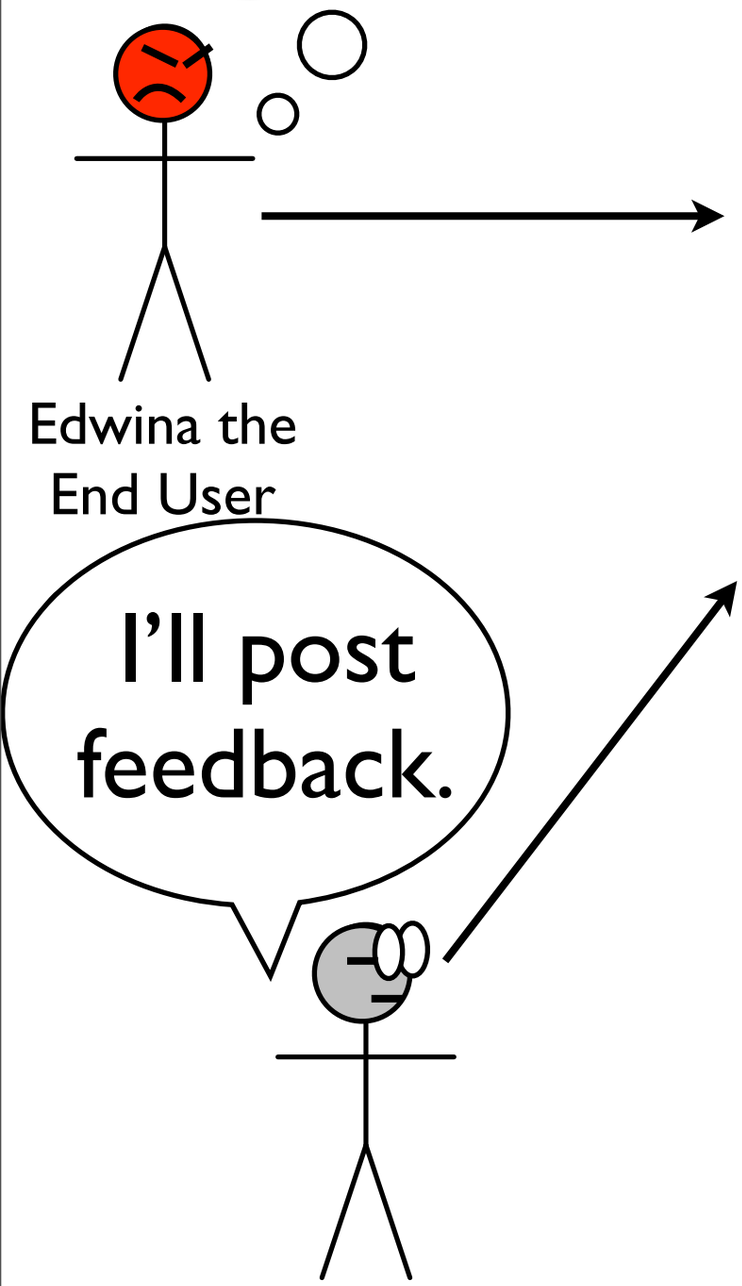

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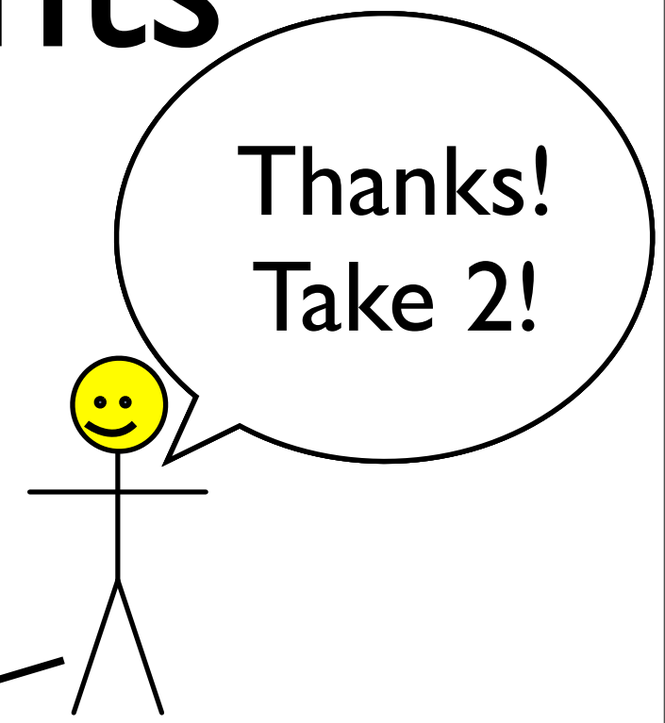

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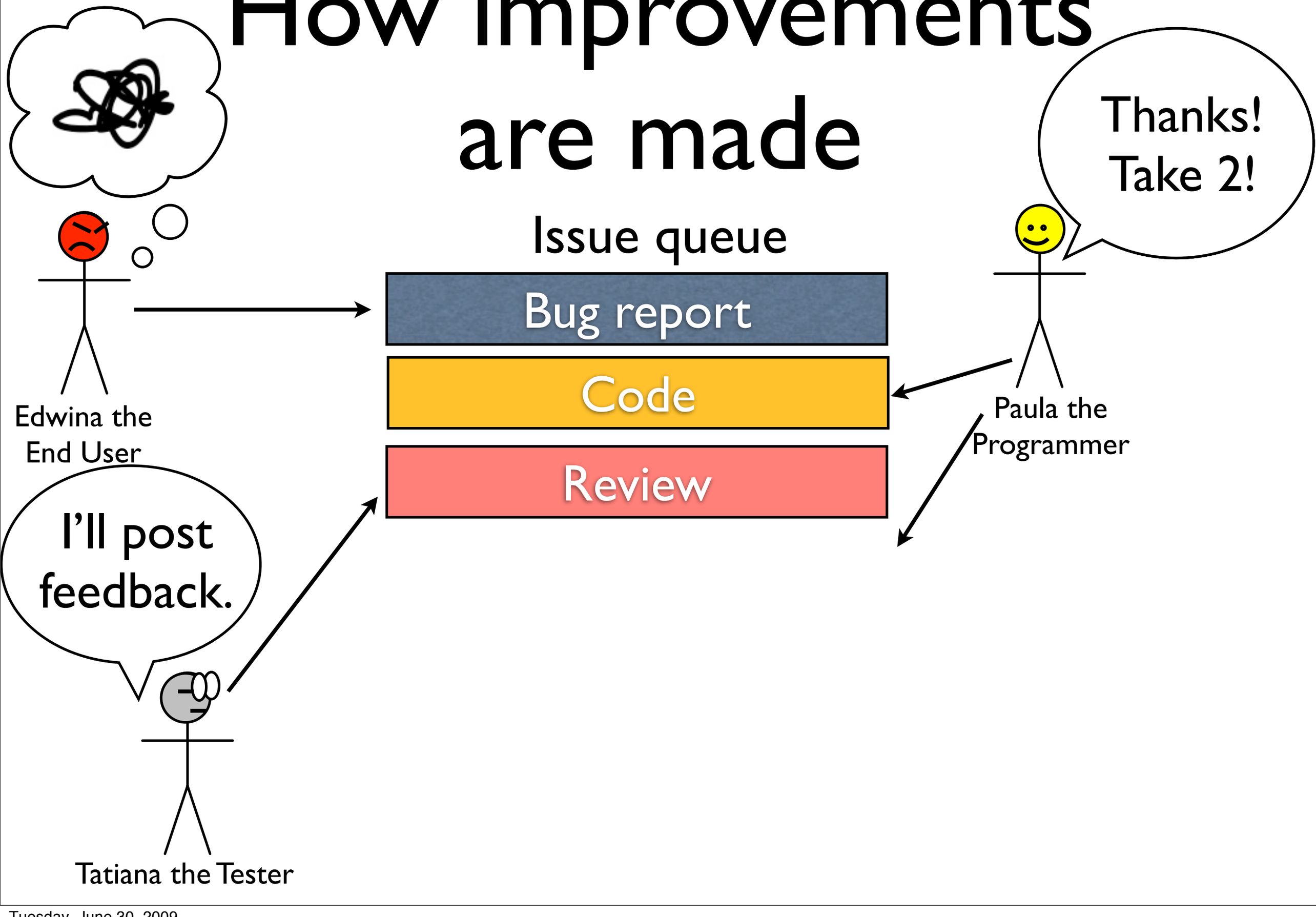

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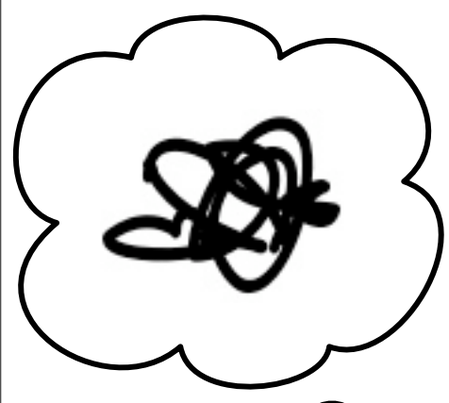

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Thanks! Take 2!

Paula the Programmer

I'll post feedback.

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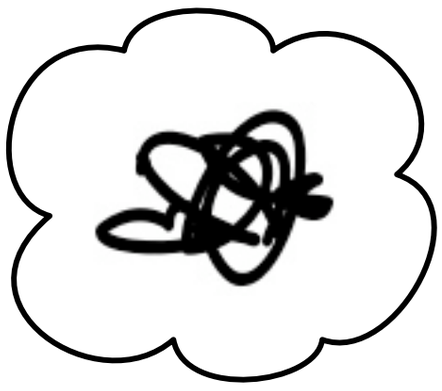

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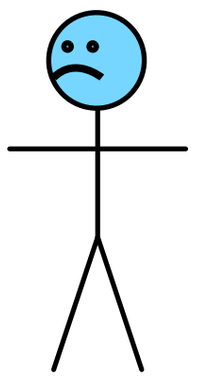

Wendy the poor soul stuck on Windows XP

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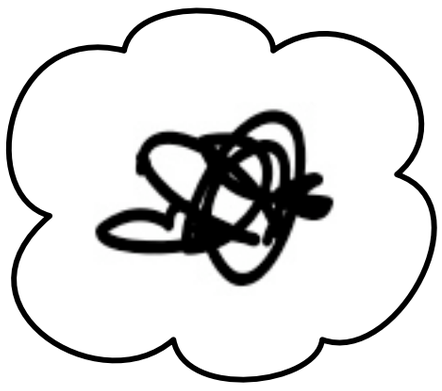

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Breaks in IE 6.

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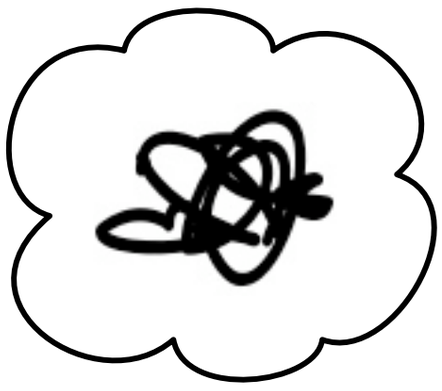

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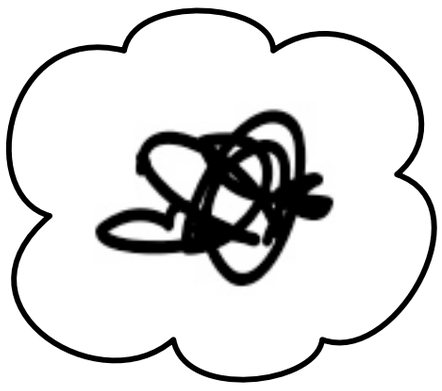

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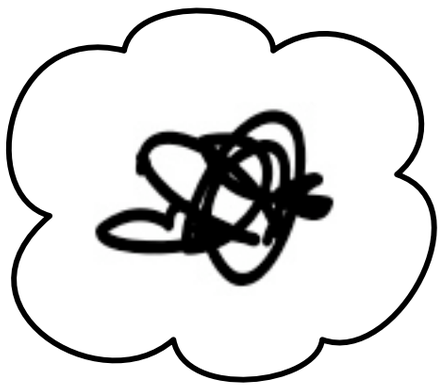

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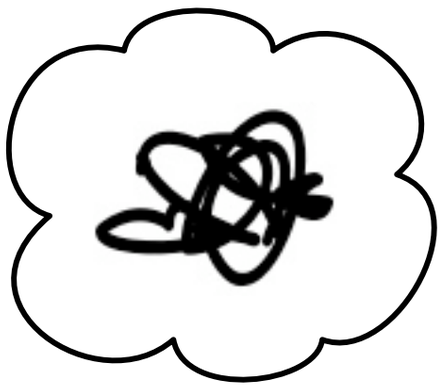

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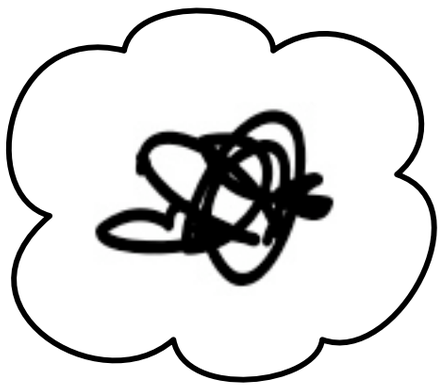

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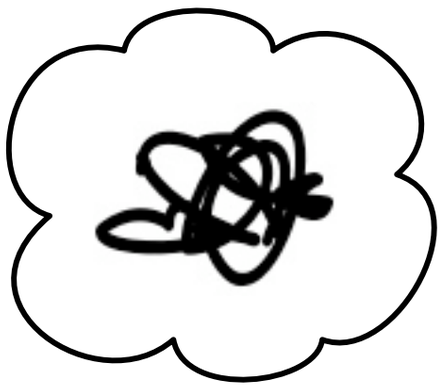

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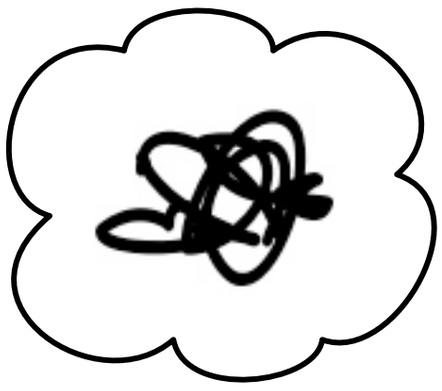

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Wow! Much better!

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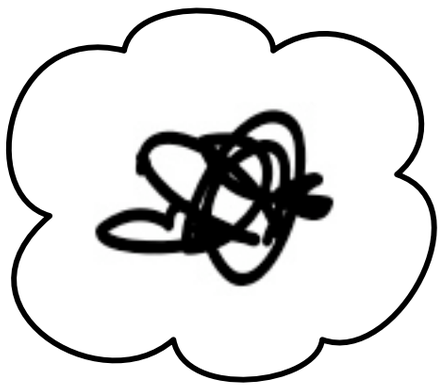

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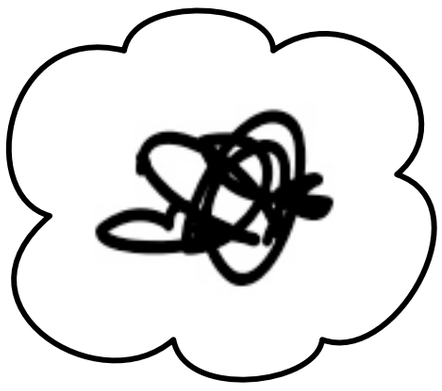

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Ship it!

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Conclusion

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

Homework

- Invite a woman to your next local tech user group.
- Next time you encounter ass-hat behaviour, call the person out on it.
- Revisit documentation for your project/ community. Is it easy to get started?
- Blog about a woman in your life who's inspired you.

Discussion