Not Just Building Tools

Strategies for sustaining software and associated communities

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The Open Preservation Foundation

- International, not-for-profit membership organisation founded 2010
- Sustain the results of R&D projects
- Steward open-source digital preservation software
- Members & supporters are libraries, archives, universities, companies who provide digital preservation services

OPF has a vested interest in FOSS

Sustainability through use

What makes software sustainable?

In a single word:

USERS

In another word:

YOU

Sustainability through care

It's not even just users, it's care. FOSS users show they care by:

- Reporting bugs
- Submitting feature requests
- Contributing to documentation
- Helping other users through mailing lists, community sites

It's not just good technical staff

Without users who care developers must guess:

- What to develop next
- What needs fixing
- Whether the software performs in the real world
- If the "developer centric" documentation they produced is adequate

It's not always better technology

Been "technically" best doesn't equal more users

It's not good support staff

Again support staff can't operate in isolation

- Good support staff need user interaction
- While they offer a non-dev perspective, by definition they're not users
- Better testing, a better website and better documentation doesn't mean sustainability

But it's not just about users

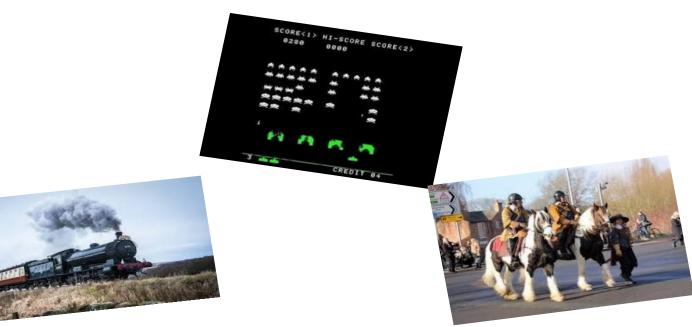What happens if all of these groups work together?

In a word:

COMMUNITY

In another word:

US

Communities of care

When communities care anything is sustainable:

What's worked? OPF war stories