BERLIN 2012
CONFERENCE

17th-19th October

Interaction Anti-Patterns

Michael Meeks <michael.meeks@suse.com>
mmeeks #libreoffice-dev, irc.freenode.net

*"Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the
ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk
in it, and you will find rest for your souls..."* -
Jeremiah 6:16

LibreOffice

Communities are built out of ?

A. String

B. Software

C. Relationships

D. Specifications

Our Relationships are built using ?

A. IRC

B. E-mail

C. Identica / Twitter

D. Diaspora / Facebook etc.

E. in-person interaction

Caveat in advance:
I am not a social scientist !
Social science changes &
advances regularly etc. ...

ALAN FISKE
ANTHROPOLOGIST

THERE ARE THREE MAJOR HUMAN RELATIONSHIP TYPES ACROSS THE WORLD'S CULTURES

EACH PRESCRIBES A DISTINCT WAY OF DISTRIBUTING RESOURCES

EACH HAS A DISTINCT EVOLUTIONARY BASIS

EACH APPLIES MOST NATURALLY TO CERTAIN PEOPLE

Stills from: Steven Pinker – The Stuff of Thought– Language as a window into human nature, with thanks to the RSA and Cognitive Media

ALAN FISKE
ANTHROPOLOGIST

THERE ARE THREE MAJOR HUMAN RELATIONSHIP TYPES ACROSS THE WORLD'S CULTURES

EACH PRESCRIBES A DISTINCT WAY OF DISTRIBUTING RESOURCES

EACH HAS A DISTINCT EVOLUTIONARY BASIS

EACH APPLIES MOST NATURALLY TO CERTAIN PEOPLE

DON'T FORGET... I PAY YOUR WAGES !

BUT CAN BE EXTENDED THROUGH NEGOTIATION TO OTHERS AND THAT'S WHERE LANGUAGE COMES IN

Stills from: Steven Pinker – The Stuff of Thought– Language as a window into human nature, with thanks to the RSA and Cognitive Media

Stills from: Steven Pinker – The Stuff of Thought– Language as a window into human nature, with thanks to the RSA and Cognitive Media

Stills from: Steven Pinker – The Stuff of Thought– Language as a window into human nature, with thanks to the RSA and Cognitive Media

Problems: mixed relationship types

Reciprocity applied to a Communality relationship.

Which are we primarily aiming for ?

- Most successful Free-Software projects talk about: **'Community'**
  - Concept firmly rooted in **'Communality'**
- Why does this community 'feel wrong' ?
  - Perhaps a Dominance instead of Communality ?
- The long-term successful projects start by getting this foundation right.
- We have to have Governance:
  - Light-touch, Representative, Meritocratic, Peer governance
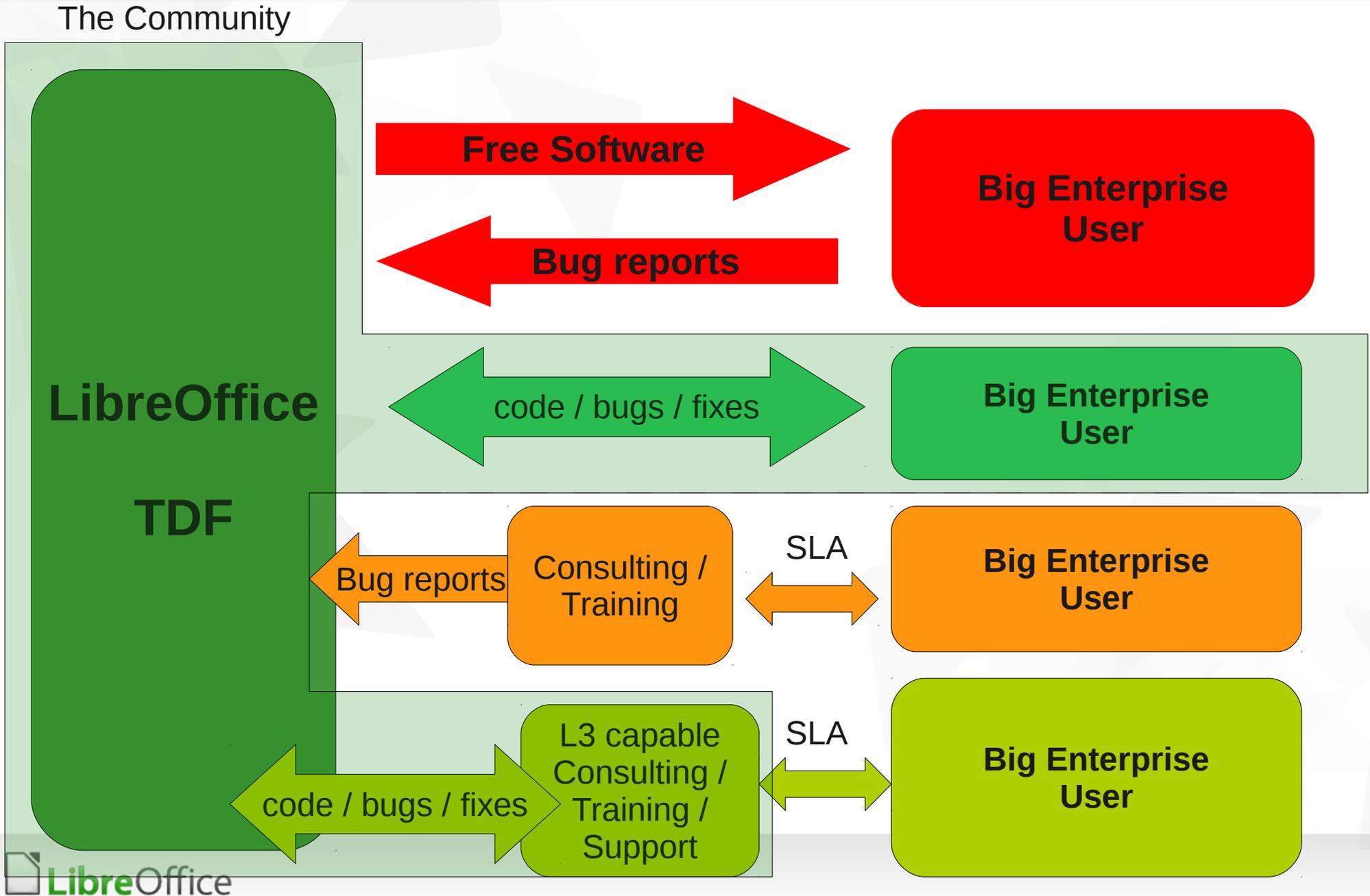
Language is key to negotiating relationships:

bug: *foo feature **must** render baa as baz*

*We **have to** stop developing new features until XYZ bug is fixed !*

Vehemence inversely proportional to influence ?

All seen in the wild: origin obscured to spare the guilty.
Hard-working, well meaning volunteers deal with this routinely

LibreOffice

Community interactions

The Community

LibreOffice

TDF

Free Software →

Bug reports ←

Big Enterprise User

← code / bugs / fixes →

Big Enterprise User

Bug reports ←

Consulting / Training

SLA ↔

Big Enterprise User

← code / bugs / fixes →

L3 capable Consulting / Training / Support

SLA ↔

Big Enterprise User

LibreOffice

Conclusions

- Communities: Communality: Symmetric Relationships
  - Dominance is death: can't-do attitude; benign influence is better
- weak copy-lefts work well:
  - re-inforce and guarentee symmetric relationships in the core
- The Economics of the Ecosystem are critical
  - If we cannot get the flow of code & finance right – we fail;
  - Free-riders need to **join** the community and enjoy the ride.
- This talk + more rambling http://www.gnome.org/~michael
- Thanks to: The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) & Cognitive Media

"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." - Romans 12:1

Thank you for listening ...

- See you at the next LibreOffice Conference
- For more talks see http://conference.libreoffice.org