LibreOffice:
Economics & Governance

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"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

Collabora
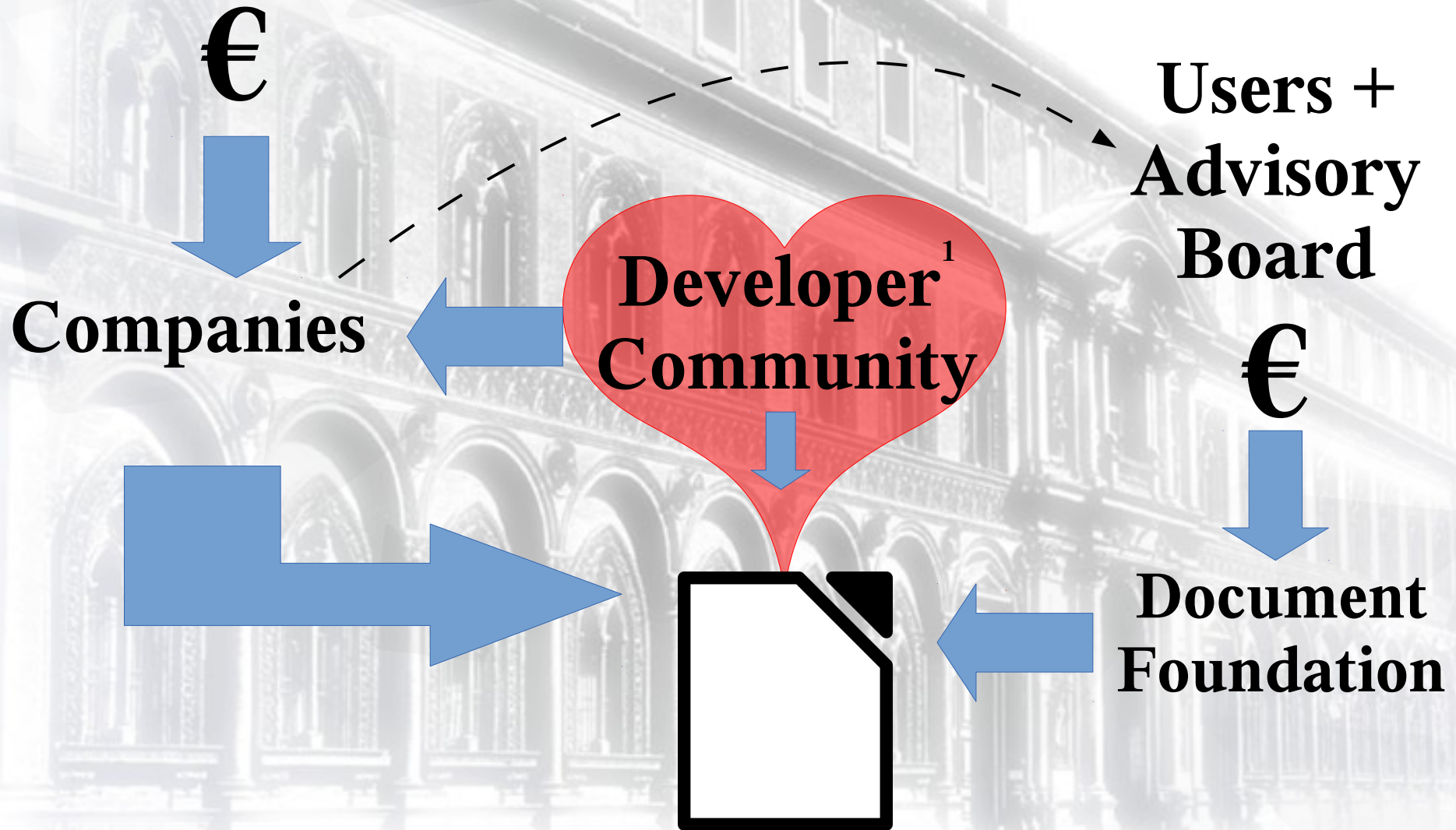
Highly coupled topics

Community Members

Governance

Economics

Follow the money ?

Or can we make the money follow us ?

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Companies

Developer Community [1]

Users + Advisory Board

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Document Foundation

Why does the balance here matter ?

The generosity of our Advisory Board members & user donations means – TDF has to choose how to spend

- Should TDF provide (for free):
    - Migration, Training, long term support releases ?
- Should TDF hire programmers and/or QA / triage ?
- Should TDF produce an Android app ?
- Should TDF employ Marketers ?

How can we best invest the little resources we have, most effectively ?

The foundation's objective is to nurture and develop office software that is free to use by everyone.

A bit about governance ...

What are all these boards & things about ?

The Board of Trustees ...

- Are you a member of The Document Foundation ?
  - If you are here, perhaps you should be

- The most important group in our governance

- Meritocratic

  - Meaning – to become a member, you need to make a sustained, concrete contribution

  - As judged by the Membership Commitee ...

Some of our trusty Trustees

With a few others thrown in for good measure

MIL NO
CONFERENCE2013

LibreOffice
The Document Foundation

The Membership Committee

- Guards The Document Foundation's meritocracy

These guys do a vital, tough, and not so glorious job.
Not only **selecting members**, but **overseeing elections** of the board.
Please thank them if you meet them !
Please consider standing for this ...

Deputies ...

http://www.documentfoundation.org/foundation/membership-committee/

The Board

▸ Running the foundation, reducing conflict, evangelism etc.

- A wonderful group of friends
- working together to solve the challenges of growth
- bringing newcomers into the community
- maintaining minimal relational process
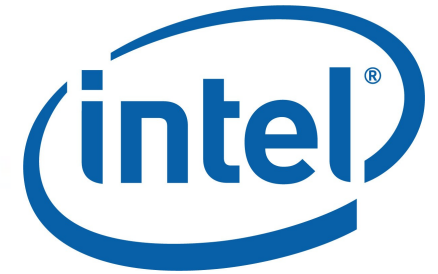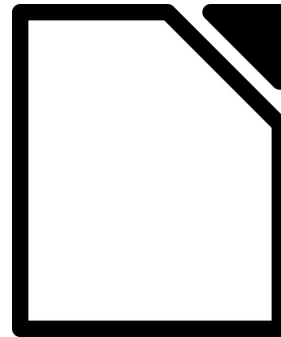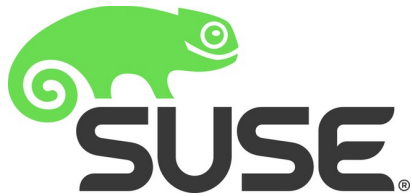- avoiding getting in the way.

Deputies ...

http://www.documentfoundation.org/foundation/board/

Supporters of LibreOffice:
the Advisory Board

This slide's layout is a victim of our success here ...

Engineering Steering Committee

- Empowered by the board to handle day-to-day Engineering
- Primary role: to be boring
- 99% consensus based
  - one controversial decision / vote – when to have 4.0
- Packed with good people …
  - Includes relevant stake-holders; QA, UX, Dev, L10n ...
  - minutes each week.
- Like all other bodies of TDF any single entity cannot be dominant.

Lanedo
MOTAH
Canonical
Individual
CloudOn
TDF
Collabora
RedHat
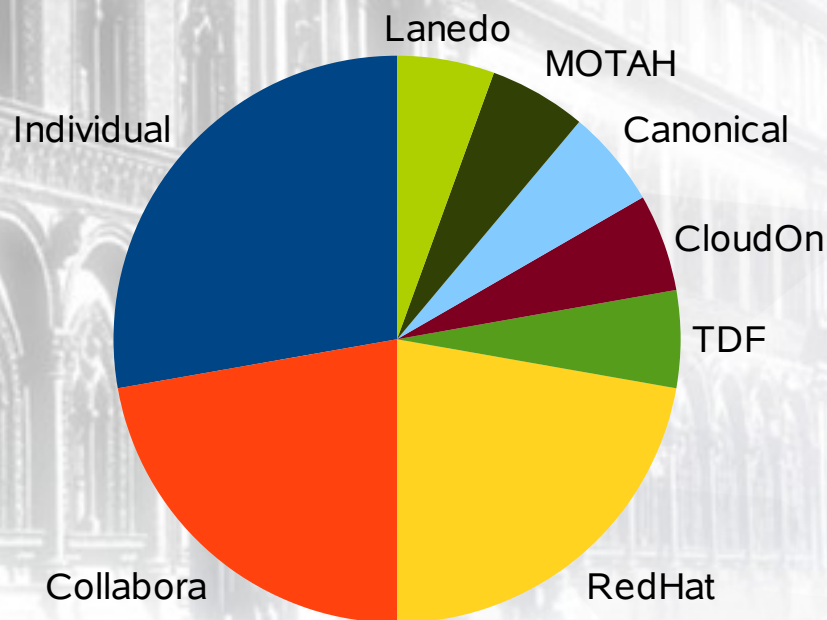
How all of this interacts ...

All decisions about the project are taken by the elected representatives of the Members, and/or their appointees.

Trustees (Members)
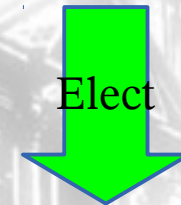
Review & Approve

Elect

Elect

Advisory Board

Advice !

Board

Membership Commitee

Appoint

Engineering Steering Commitee

A key tool to reduce conflict ...

Some of the method behind the madness ...

Schedule conflict avoided: the release train

- Feature-packed, On time, Excellent Quality
  - pick any 1 ½
- In some countries people know what trains are: like clocks ...
- Famed for leaving on-time: lots of knock-on grief otherwise
  - **Eazel / Ximian** experience ...
- We release every six months
  - Why ? In-sync with our **indirect** Linux distro channel.
  - Could do it more or less frequently at 6 monthly
  - Conflicting requirements … Moral hazard issues ...

LibreOffice
The Document Foundation

Copy-left code-base (MPLv2)

- All participants can be sure:
  - Fixes / improvements to the core code will be shared
- Little space for:
  - *"should we compete on quality ?"*
- Less space for:
  - *"should we compete on proprietary features ?"*
- Other alternatives:
  - Huge sterilising effect:
- Removes conflict around:
  - *"Should we contribute: now / later / **never** ?"*
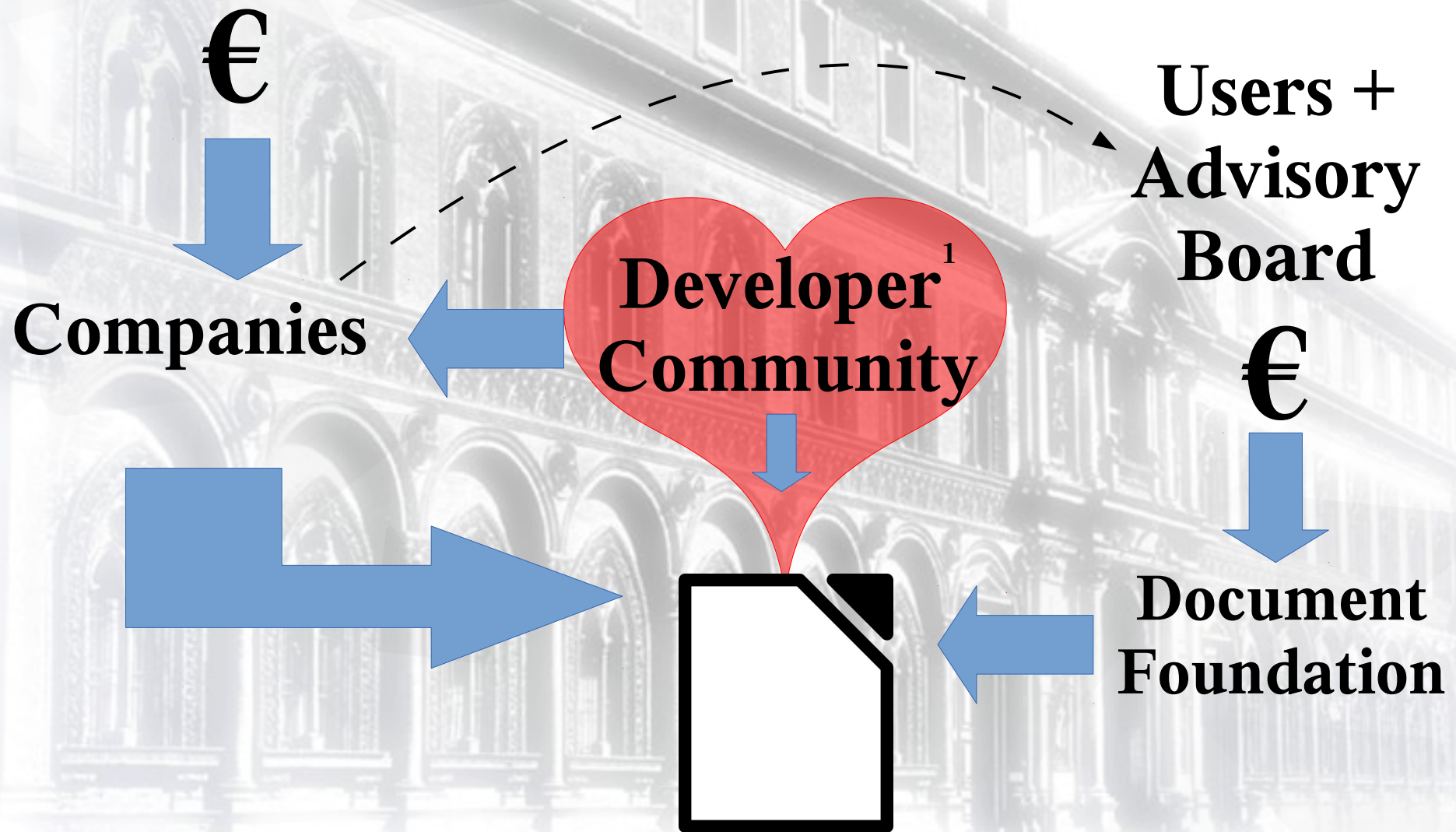 - *"We don't want XYZ to ship our fix / feature before us !"*
- All should be available.

Predictability & stability ...

- Here for the long-run
- Guaranteed diversity – 30% ...
  - Monitoring and avoiding corporate capture
- Inclusion: all are welcome
- Flexibility: lots of options are possible
- Can-do philosophy … or at least lets try.
- Subsidiarity
  - top-down decisions are a very last resort
- Tiny number of individuals: majority of soul searching ...
  - very limited sanctions
  - very occasional short-term bans from infrastructure
  - man hours of board time for that.

Something about Economics

Why do people contribute & where ?

Back to the money diagram:

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Users + Advisory Board

Companies ← Developer Community[1]

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Document Foundation

1 – Developer: Coder, Translator, QA tester, Packager, Documentation etc.

First: Community / Volunteer developers

- The heart of the developer community
  - The backbone of commits, committers, members etc.
  - Volunteers are valued & appreciated
  - We can survive & cruise with Volunteers alone.

- As **volunteers** consider:
  - how can we harness business & the market.
  - get investment to improve the code
  - fund hackfests, conferences, travel
  - employ fun people to hack alongside ...

LibreOffice
The Document Foundation

Some other ecosystems:

Search / Priority

Company ⇄ **Non-profit** ➜ **Code → End User**

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Reasonably unusual: **End/user** projects ...

Works only with scale => large entity

Central planning.

Poor economic ecosystem.

LibreOffice

Some other ecosystems:

Hardware & Software

Consumer ⟳ **€** **OEM** → **Code**

Rather common:
Linux Kernel
Android
Etc.
Very diverse ecosystems ...

A functioning LibreOffice ecosystem

Deployments

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Long term support
Level 1-3 support
Local language support
Training + Migration

MAGENTA^{aps} **etc.**

nou&off

Long term support
Level 3 support

One model with a smooth flow of funding resulting in Features & bug-fixes in LibreOffice

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Collabora
Lanedo
igalia etc.

Space
Awareness
Certification

Features &
bug-fixes & €

LibreOffice

Traditionally we had issues with:

Deployments

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**Long term support
Level 1-3 support**

**Local language support
Training + Migration**

MAGENTA^{aps}   etc.
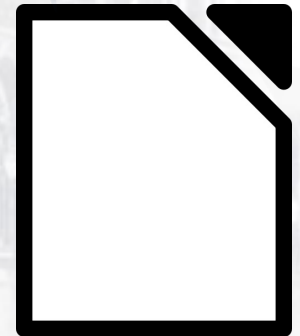
NOU & OFF

**Long term support
Level 3 support**

**Space
Awareness
Certification**

**Perception of 'free'
product:
everything should
be free ...**

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Collabora

Lanedo

igalia   etc.

**Features &
bug-fixes & €**
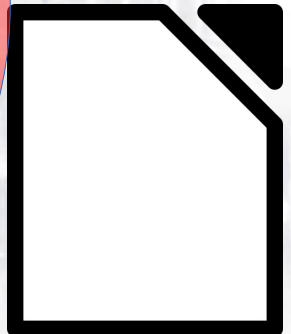
LibreOffice

Investing in LibreOffice via the ecosystem

- As/when we have money to spend:
  - Invest indirectly via contracting, eg.
    - Pootle → translate.za now supporting / developing
      - Improved performance, translation memory + performance.
  - Invest in areas that do no harm to our ecosystem
- Work to complete Certification program
  - Building confidence in competent Migration + Training professionals; giving value to certified individuals ..
- Leave companies to serve & grow parts of the ecosystem
  - masterful inactivity in some areas.
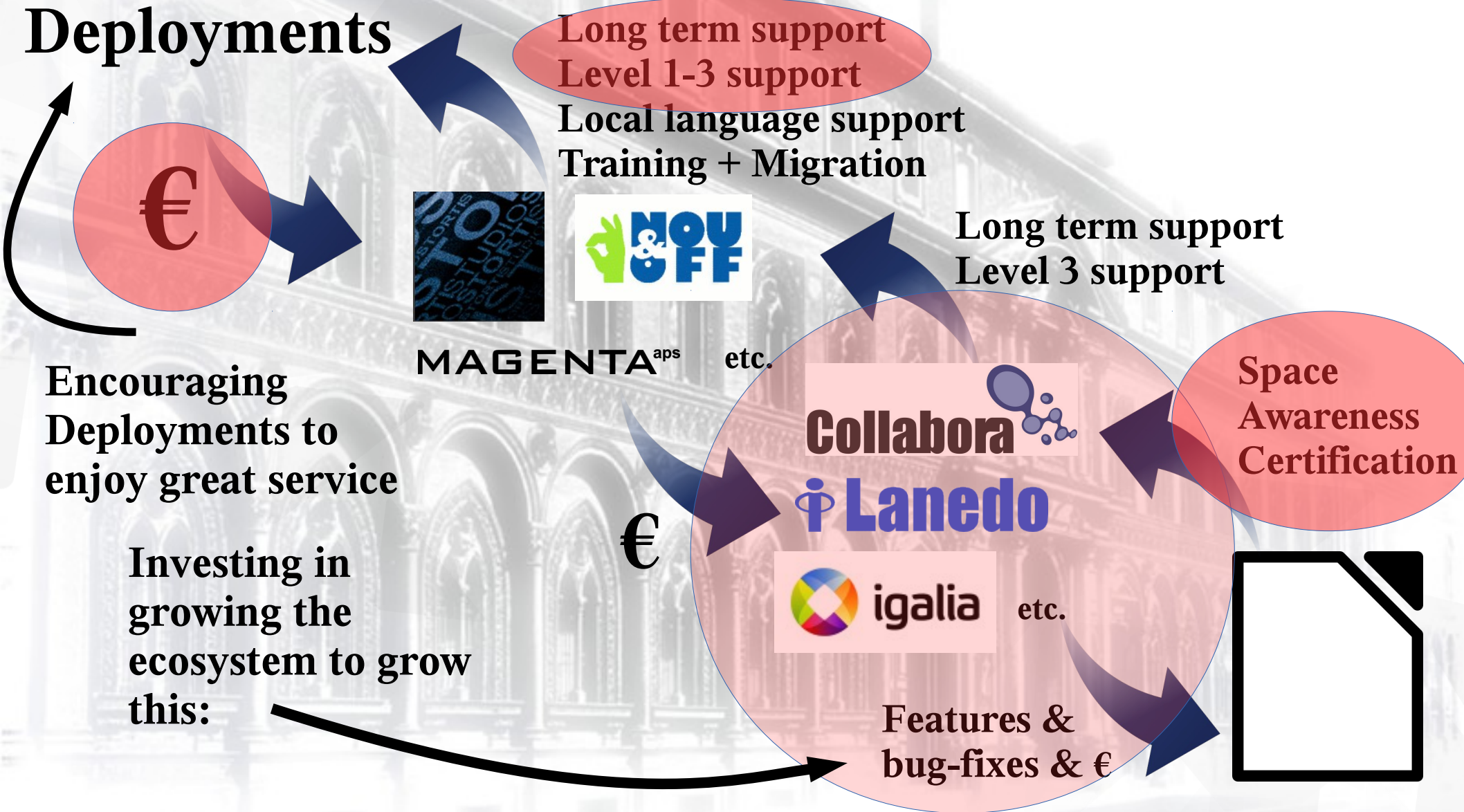- Invest in quality, infrastructure, l10n etc.

Quick Linux (code) comparison … vs. 2012

- Linux Development 2012 …
  - Jonathan + GregKH:
  - http://go.linuxfoundation.org/who-writes-linux-2012
    - *(2012 stats are a simple, no register download)*
- Un-affiliated / commits breakdown:
  - Linux: None (18%) + Unknown (5%)
    - → 23% of commits (60k commits)
  - LibreOffice: → 33% … (6k commits)
- Growing the flow of money into development should help.
- Only one aspect of development: code (we can compare)
  - Big chunks of work QA, l10n, docs, etc. not touched yet.

Issues here …

- Avoiding Corporate Capture: our Meritocracy has a low barrier:
  - make a sustained contribution → membership + vote
  - Individual code contributors: 72% (504) un-affiliated
  - Tons of other developers: QA, l10n, documentation etc.

- Paying for some things & not others
  - eg. certification – nine months in the not-happening …
    - Developers done trivially, but …
  - Finding the right people to pay ...

- Not investing in some things to create economic space
  - Thinking carefully & investing wisely to grow ...

Trying to tackle this:

Deployments

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**Long term support
Level 1-3 support**

**Local language support
Training + Migration**

MAGENTA^{aps}   etc.

NOU&OFF

**Long term support
Level 3 support**

**Encouraging
Deployments to
enjoy great service**

**Investing in
growing the
ecosystem to grow
this:**

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Collabora

Lanedo

igalia   etc.

**Space
Awareness
Certification**

**Features &
bug-fixes & €**

LibreOffice

Collabora (gratuitous plug)

- Collabora:
  - the world's largest independent open-source consultancy
  - A company with a mission:
    - (simplified version) make Free Software rock …
    - Why do you care ? More of your € → LibreOffice
  - Product focus
    - Long term supported builds: 3 years+
      - Security / bug-fixing etc.
    - Level 3 support → PTF builds
  - Consultancy – building / fixing bespoke problems
  - Mentoring / developer training.
- Other companies provide similar services.

Final thoughts:

- Is it socially acceptable for large deployments to invest nothing back into the software they are using ?
  - is our goal to save money for big orgs, whatever the cost ?

- Does the wider ecosystem gain by giving away free:
  - Migration, Training, ...

- Tensions: process-driven quality vs. community growth
  - long term support: 'for free' has a large cost.

- Where to invest to win for the whole ecosystem ?
  - eg. investing in QA / tooling – seems to have a great payback

Summary & Stoning

- LibreOffice has a robust & mature governance
- Please do get involved
  - as a Member – fill out a simple web form:
    http://www.documentfoundation.org/foundation/application-for-tdf-community-membership/
  - Elections soon: Board / Membership Committee
- LibreOffice needs to be:
  - A rich, long-term ecosystem
  - A partnership between all contributors

Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock for ever! I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And though this body has been destroyed yet in my flesh I will see God, I myself will see him, with my own eyes - I and not another. How my heart yearns within me. - Job 19: 23-27