



Community tidbits

How to keep free software projects happy and healthy

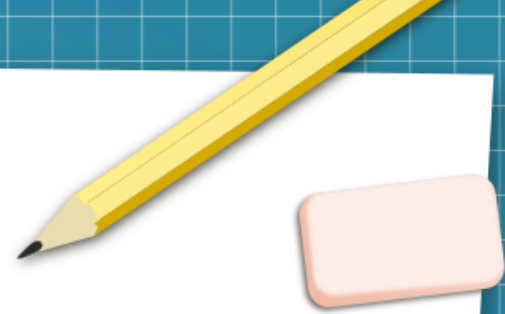
Florian Effenberger

SFScon 2023 in Bolzano
November 10, 2023

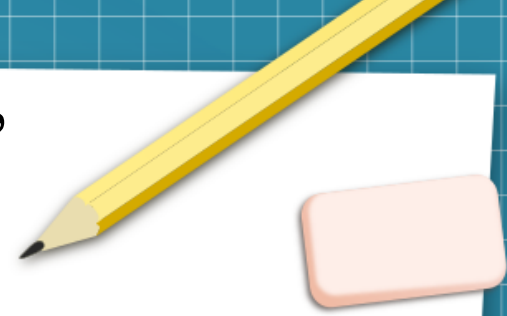
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Who are you?!

- **Free software enthusiast** for over nineteen years
- Founding member and Executive Director of The Document Foundation (**LibreOffice**)
- Proud uncle, former freelance journalist, blogs, loves all things infrastructure, free & open source
- <https://effenberger.org>



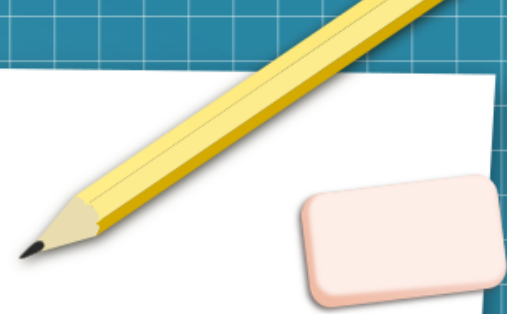
My little “community toolbox”



- How to find and fill your role in a community
<https://www.sfscon.it/talks/ten-thoughts-on-community-leadership/>
- In what creative ways communities can be organized
<https://www.sfscon.it/talks/what-do-open-source-and-cooking-have-in-common/>
- What changed (and didn't) due to the pandemic
<https://www.sfscon.it/talks/on-communities-cooperation-and-charities/>
- And today:
Some practical, legal and administrative bits!

Are communities special?

- They are special for sure, but **legally not so much**
- Depending on legislation, some **exemptions** (e.g. taxes), but also some **drawbacks** (e.g. no input tax deduction)
- Taxes, accounting, social security, pension, employment laws, GDPR, copyright, trademarks, equal treatment, insurances, investment, banks etc.
→ Just **like “any normal company”**
- Staff and volunteers often **focused on more direct areas of contribution**, less on administrative issues

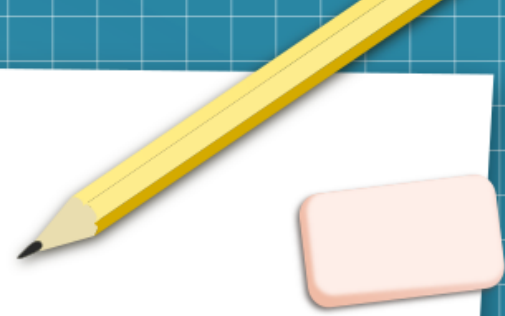


Tedious travels



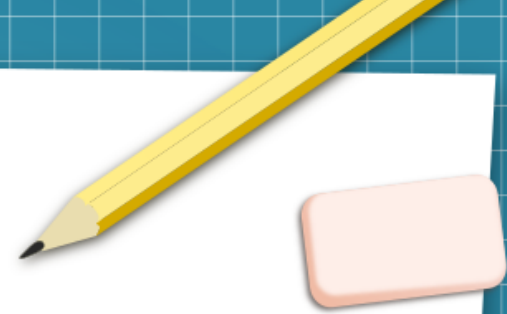
- Some **can't or don't want to travel** to certain destinations
→ Find **locations many can travel to** (EU/Schengen, US, ...)
- Sometimes high **safety deposit** and/or **invitation letter** needed
→ Organize through a **local entity** which can handle that
- Not everyone can **bankroll** travel costs
→ Offer **refunds before** the event starts
→ Be careful with direct bookings (**be no "travel agency"**)
- Tax offices **love paper** and often need things **signed**
→ Make the **refund process straightforward** to avoid iterations

Grumpy globetrotters



- Many already “**donate their time**”, i.e. their vacations and that amount **differs significantly per country**
→ Consider **weekends** and family-friendly slots for meetings
- Travelling **can be exhausting**
→ Find conference spots in **easy to reach venues**, with good flight and train **connections**, ideally **without changes**
- Trips far away **can be scaring or overwhelming** for some
→ Prepare a well-written “**conference cheatsheet**”
incl. public transport, tipping, invoice splitting, important phrases etc.
→ Maybe offer a **shuttle bus** or pick up from the airport
→ Inform about **travel health insurances**

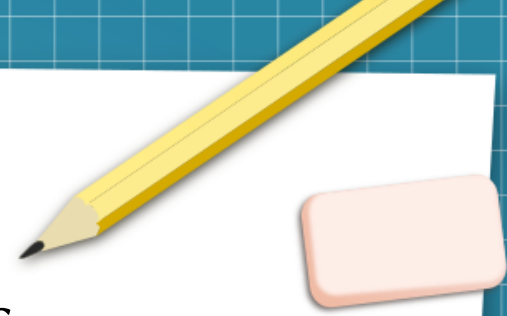
Challenging conferences



- Communities **should be inclusive**
 - **Ensure accessibility** of the venue (rooms, stairs, doors, toilets)
 - Offer “**no picture**” tags for attendees
- Things unfortunately can happen
 - Take **emergency precautions** (first aid, defibrillator)
- **Catering** can be complicated
 - Dietary or religious requirements, personal preferences
- **Technology** can fail
 - **Hybrid conferences** worldwide might need relay servers

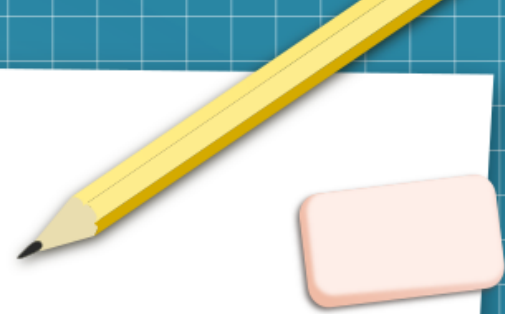
Stressful shipping

- Conference **gadgets** or **hardware loans** are precious
→ **Offer this** to your community
- **International shipments** are a nightmare
 - Have someone to **handle shipment and customs** for you
 - Consider some **external storage facility**
 - Ensure recipient does not have to pay anything
 - Consider to order **directly in the country** (faster, cheaper)



Bad banks

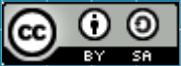
- **People donate their time**, you refund their travels
- **International banking** is slow and expensive
- Refunds should **happen quickly**
 - Have **several payment providers** at hand
 - Find a **competent bank**
 - **Pay the fees** on behalf of the recipient





Any questions? ;-)

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