

LibreOffice

The Document Foundation

The foundation behind LibreOffice Lessons learned from 13 years

- ▀ Florian Effenberger
- ▀ Open Source Conference Luxembourg
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About Florian

- ▀ **free software enthusiast** since 2004
- ▀ former international marketing project lead at OpenOffice.org (volunteer role)
- ▀ founding member, statute co-author, executive director of **The Document Foundation**
- ▀ in the past: freelance journalist, networking and infrastructure, open source consultancy



Terminology

Double meaning

- ▀ **LibreOffice** is

- ▀ 1. the leading free (as in speech **and** beer) office productivity suite *used by over 210 million people worldwide*
- ▀ 2. a worldwide community (“project”) *with hundreds of contributors from around the globe*

- ▀ **The Document Foundation (TDF)** as legal entity is

- ▀ a nonprofit “Stiftung” (foundation) based in Berlin
”*The objective of the foundation is the **promotion**
and development of office software
available for use by **anyone**”*

- ▀ does **not contain a product name** on purpose



LibreOffice
The Document Foundation

Our philosophy

- support the development of **both software and community events, knowledge sharing, infrastructure**
- built on the community's **values** and **ideals**
*through statutes that vouch for **openness and transparency***
- **independent** from one **single** sponsor
thanks to the support of many
- **ecosystem** for contributors and commercial stakeholders
certification, joint development efforts
- lower **entry barriers**: *Easy Hacks, Hackfests, mentoring, workshops*
- **cooperation** with other entities: e.g. *OASIS, OSI, FSFE*



The Foundation

How we are structured



What the Foundation is about

- ▀ **enduring** and **stable** (“built for eternity”)
- ▀ **foundation’s objective** can **not be changed**
- ▀ **safety** for community, end-users and the ecosystem
- ▀ acts as “**trustee**” for trademarks and domains
- ▀ handles **donations** and manages budgets
- ▀ is not part of the commercial ecosystem itself
- ▀ **guarantees rights** for all participants



Public by default

In the statutes

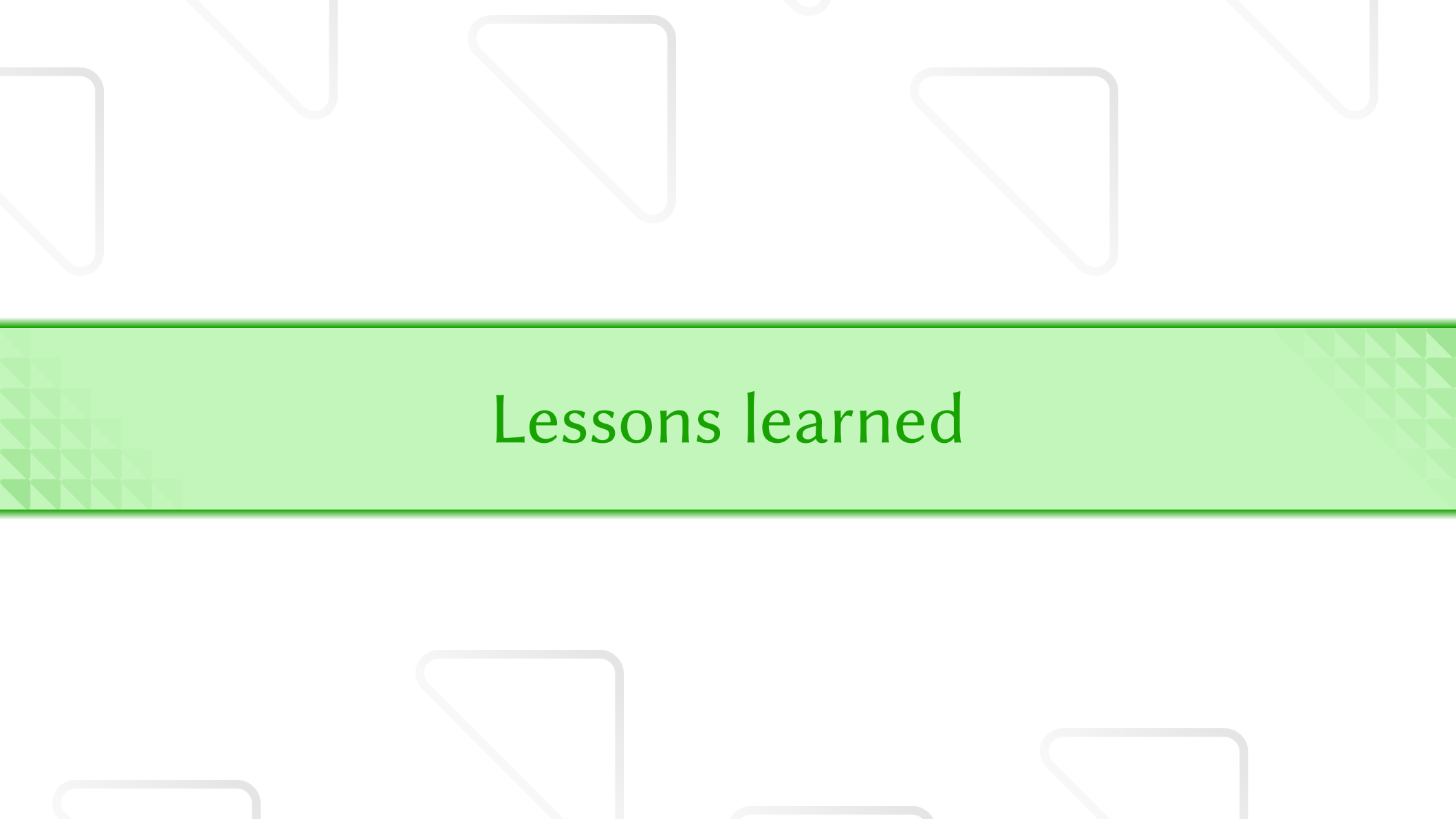
- ▶ “**one-third rule**” to prevent conflict of interest
- ▶ **openness and transparency**
 - ▶ all **board meetings** are public
<https://community.documentfoundation.org/tags/c/board-discuss/26/minutes>
 - ▶ all **decisions** of the bodies are public
<https://community.documentfoundation.org/tags/c/board-discuss/26/decision>
 - ▶ the **accounting** is public
<https://wiki.documentfoundation.org/TDF/Ledgers>
 - ▶ the **board’s mailing list** is public
<https://community.documentfoundation.org/c/board-discuss/26>
private decisions are public as soon as confidentiality is resolved

Our annual report

- ▶ **jointly written** with the community in English and German
- ▶ turned our legal obligation into a marketing activity
- ▶ overview on foundation, community, project, software, events, budget
- ▶ German and English version:

<https://blog.documentfoundation.org/blog/2025/09/15/tdf-annual-report-2024/>





Lessons learned

Food for thought

- ▶ money is needed, **contributor time is invaluable**
- ▶ **transparency** requires a lot of effort, but **is key**
- ▶ **legal obligations** grow and **can become a challenge**
- ▶ things you don't understand **can be important**
- ▶ **trust is the anchor** of open source and free software
- ▶ the **human side of things** cannot be underestimated
- ▶ further reading
 - <https://effenberger.org/en/texts/ten-thoughts-on-community-leadership/>
 - <https://effenberger.org/en/texts/what-do-open-source-and-cooking-have-in-common/>
 - <https://effenberger.org/en/texts/what-the-open-source-community-means-to-me/>

Thank you very much!

Let's get in touch...

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