



# *OSS Leadership*



Robin Rowe

CinePaint Project Leader

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**Ubuntu FOSScamp**

**December 6, 2008**

**10am-11am**

Location:

Google, Inc.

Crittenden Campus, Bavorr Room

1400 Crittenden Lane

Mountain View, CA 94043



# *Leadership Style*

- Cult or No-Cult
  - Fan clubs and divorces
  - Celebrity and glamour
- Emergent or Self-Ordained
  - As simple as won a stupid bet
  - Or, wrote an article for Linux Journal
- Confidence
- Communication
  - List and off-list
  - IRC
- Good leaders have longevity, prevail



# *Leadership Roles*

- Set direction: focus, organize
- Persuasion: herding cats
- PR and publicity
- Recruiting and firing
- Build trust
- Settling arguments
  - Stopping sniping on forums
  - Handling controversy of fork
  - Stopping bikeshedding (that is, endless conflict over insignificant details such as the color of the bike shed)



# *Leadership Tasking*

- It's possible to assign tasks
  - FOSS features don't have to be random
  - Assign accountability
- Getting things done
  - Be happy/fun/yes
  - Set atmosphere: tone and empowerment
  - Set release schedule (six month cycle)
  - Persuasion works on first try or not at all
  - Give other ideas a chance, let try and fail
  - Shut futile discussion down
  - Assign someone else on team to do last 10%
  - Remove players who won't play by rules 4/8



# *Timeline*

- Set timeline and features
  - If-else feature deadline scenarios
  - Setting soft-freeze for release
- Avoid time-wasting hard to debug software
  - GTK1 to FLTK, but still doing GTK2
  - Autotools to Cmake
- Funded or unfunded projects can meet timelines
  - Ubuntu vs. GNOME
- Handling burn-out
- Releases
  - Friction, evolving, recognize value
  - Bazaar: branching, soft releases, packaging



# *Failed CinePaint Initiatives*

- Failure defined as having given up...
- Collaborate with GIMP
- Wiki
- Push off-list discussions to list
- Let project steer itself



# *Today's CinePaint Initiatives*

- Set release tempo (six months, like Ubuntu)
- Outstanding packaging across Linux distros
- First class native support on all platforms
- Robust build systems
- Pushing significant off-list questions to blog
- Recruiting, publicity, funding
- IRC
- Dr. Know: user id, crash detection, stack tracing
- More plug-ins and new types of plug-ins
- Collaboration with industry (e.g., Sony, ILM)
- Collaboration with universities (e.g., Glasgow)



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