

Open Source Documentation doesn't have to suck

OSCON July 2009

Thursday, July 23, 2009



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OS is working towards world domination but
not hacking for hackers anymore
docs crucial for OS to spread beyond hackers

Challenges



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/maistora>

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People are a pain and they all want to do their own thing
Diff cultures can cause conflict



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/eyesore9>

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different skill sets that you didn't hire



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/cute-is-what-i-aim-for>

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we're cats and we scratch our own itches

Documentation is like sex;
when it's good,
it's very, very good,
and when it's bad,
it's better than nothing.

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in OS typically the standards for docs are low

Opportunities



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/maistora>

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Diff perspectives can create unique solutions



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/eyesore9>

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find skills you didn't expect or know you needed



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/dearbarbz365>

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appealing for people who want to learn
free training for work



<http://flickr.com/photos/emurray>

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teamwork and passion are built in

Experiments

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Our attitude: throw it on the wall and see if it sticks



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/martyn>

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Opened docs editing
got more edits but bad “team” definition
overall plus with some peripheral things to work on still



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/jamaladi>

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Sprints, both physical and virtual
help people connect and communicate
need to work out better coordination



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/brianarn>

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Roadmap – how to get to where we need to be
Totally crazy for Drupal, where we “don’t do roadmaps”
just started, we’ll see



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/practicalowl>

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Communication: not everyone works the same way; need to broaden the conversation
old: mailing list, issue queue
new: meetings (irc), blogging, in person, news page

Lessons

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Overall lessons so far



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/hebe>

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cheerleading is hard and exhausting
but you **have** to do it
keep it in the “news” or people forget



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/colinwhittaker>

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the work/docs itself AND the community are both equally important
no way to sustain without both



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/johnlemon>

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helping others help you is of utmost importance
creating new leaders
create opportunities for unknown skills to shine



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/bogdansuditu>

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have goals, even if you don't hit them
motivation and metrics

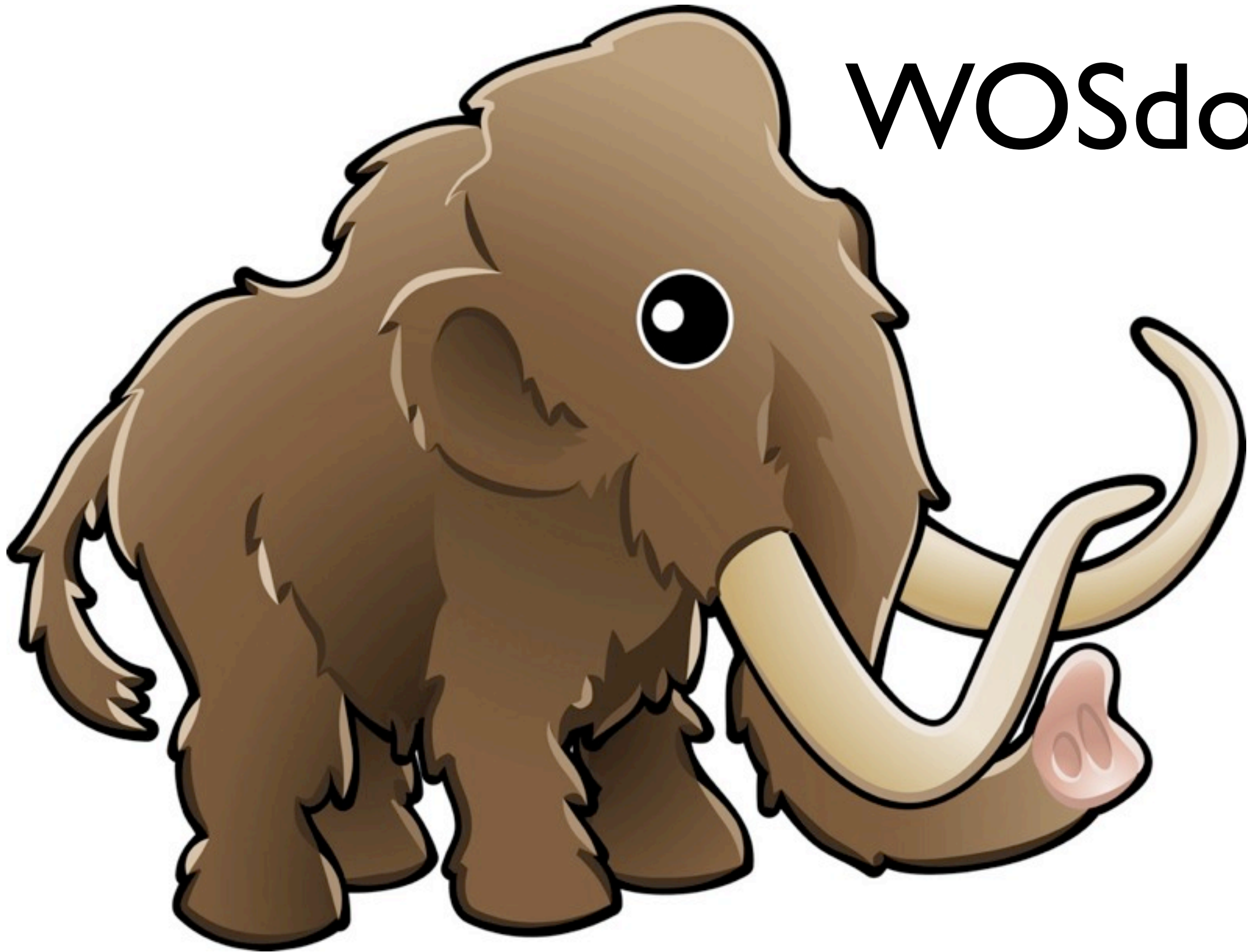
What's next?



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For Drupal : IA Redesign, team defining/building

WOSdocs



<http://writingopensource.com>

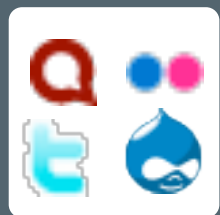
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More important, OS help OS
not just one person or one project will make OS docs kick ass

Addison Berry



<http://rocktreesky.com>



add1sun



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/atc>

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Let's share