

Open Source



Press Relations

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March 2000

“Linux needs a marketing department.”

- *Elwin Green, Newsforge*

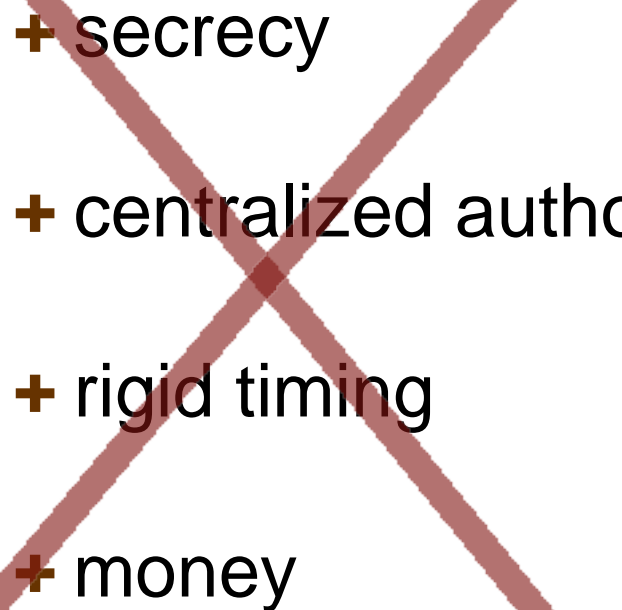
June 2009

“Your project needs a marketing department.”

- *Josh Berkus*

PR practice vs. OS development

▶ PR requires:

- + secrecy
 - + centralized authority
 - + rigid timing
 - + money
- 

▶ Open Source requires:

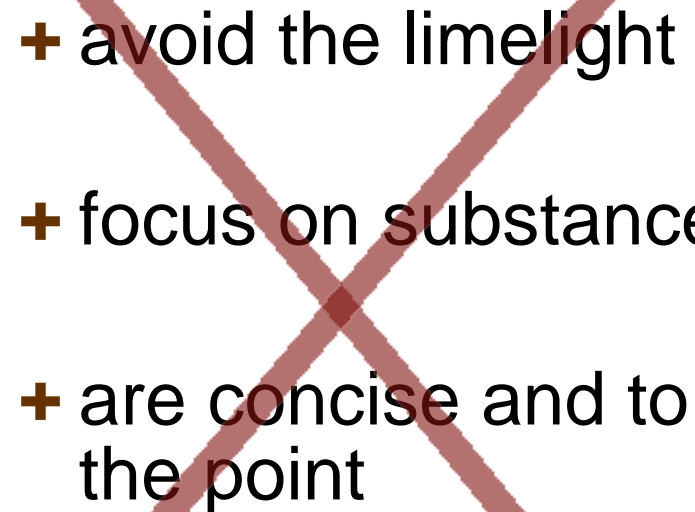
- + openness
- + democracy
- + “flexible” dates
- + cheap/free

flaks vs. hackers

▶ PR “f aks” always:

- + seek attention
- + focus on apearance
- + talk at great length about nothing

▶ OS “hackers” always:

- + avoid the limelight
 - + focus on substance
 - + are concise and to the point
- 

Open Source Press Relations

Resources

OS/PR Resources

- ▶ volunteers
- ▶ press contacts
- ▶ reference users
- ▶ press kit
- ▶ OSS tools
- ▶ money (a little)

Volunteers Wanted!

▶ writers/designers

- + press releases
- + web design and graphics
- + handouts and articles

▶ translators

- + all of the above

▶ regional contacts

- + one per country/region/language
- + press/business experience
- + e-mail & phone for work hours

volunteers: care & feeding

you do not pay volunteers

- ▶ PR contributions are as valuable as code: treat it that way
- ▶ OS-PR is participatory: ask, don't tell
- ▶ make sure each PR volunteer gets their 15 minutes



press contacts: your list

▶ collect a list

- + bloggers/reporters in your community
- + reporters who have covered your project
- + lists from conferences
- + business cards

▶ manage the list

- + keep in central, secure location
- + separate into categories
 - “cold” contacts
 - “warm” contacts
 - “intimate” contacts

reference users

- ▶ you need them
 - + quotes
 - + interviews
 - + case studies
- ▶ get them through your community
 - + mailing lists
 - + consultant clients
 - + conferences
- ▶ keep their contact info handy

press kit

- ▶ one-stop-shopping for reporters
 - + “what is” document
 - + “latest news” document
 - + case studies & reference users
 - + contact information -- regional contacts
 - + logos/graphics
 - + self-booting CD or USB key (optional)
- ▶ have the same information everywhere
 - + on the website: keep it updated
 - + on paper handouts: give them out at conferences

OSS tools

- ▶ mailing list(s)
 - + communicate with volunteers
- ▶ wiki
 - + for drafting documents & making lists
- ▶ version control system
 - + document editing, translation
- ▶ CMS
 - + for getting stuff on your web site

Open Source Press Relations

Handling The Press

In Three Easy Lessons!

Lesson 1

reporters are people, too.

- ▶ Don't insult them when they get something wrong.
- ▶ Do thank them when they get something right.

Corrections: The Wrong Way

Dear Idiot,

I couldn't believe your article yesterday saying PostgreSQL had no Java support. What kind of doofus are you? Don't you know how to use Google? Where did you get your journalism degree, Eddie's Correspondance School of Media? Or maybe you just get all your news reports from Oracle.

--Josh Berkus, PostgreSQL

Corrections: The Right Way

Ms. M,

I read your article "Open Source Databases Catching Up" in last week's TechMaven with interest. Thank you for covering our database system for your readers.

I did notice a small factual inaccuracy in paragraph 3, in which you say that PostgreSQL lacks Java support. In fact, we have both JDBC and procedural Java. You can find more information about these at jdbc.postgresql.org, and about what PostgreSQL supports in general at www.postgresql.org/about. A correction would be appreciated.

If you have any further questions, or want to arrange an interview, don't hesitate to contact me at 415-752-2500.

--Josh Berkus, PostgreSQL

Lesson 2

nothing is “off the record”

- ▶ Don't share anything with a reporter if you don't want to share it with the world.
- ▶ Do plan everything you're going to say.
- ▶ Don't expect to get a preview of the article.

Lesson 3

*if you want to decide the news,
you do the work*

- ▶ Do respond very quickly to requests.
- ▶ Do offer facts and quotes, and lists of contacts to reporters. And numbers!
- ▶ Do look for the “newsworthy” story.
- ▶ Don't tell them what to report.

some notes on bloggers

- ▶ Bloggers are *not* professional reporters
 - + don't trust them to keep embargo
 - + they won't try for full/balanced coverage
 - + they're not concerned with accuracy
- ▶ However, bloggers are increasing
 - + less and less reporters all the time
- ▶ So find some good, friendly, popular bloggers
 - + befriend them
 - + educate them
 - + buy them beer

Open Source Press Relations

The Release

-8 weeks: draft release

- ▶ Do it in an open source way
 - + involve your advocacy group
 - + use mailing lists and wikis/version control
 - + “many eyes make bugs shallow” is true of press releases, too
 - + allow 3-4 weeks for draft

-8 weeks: draft release

- ▶ use professional release format
 - + top-down composition
 - + emphasize news value
 - + have a “theme”
 - + one to 1.5 pages long

-8 weeks: draft release

▶ use professional release format

eight parts

1. contact information
2. dateline
3. summary paragraph
4. theme paragraph (optional)
5. 1-3 quotes (not more)
6. detail information
7. link to more information
8. about paragraph

-8 weeks: draft release

Josh Berkus

josh@postgresql.org

415-752-2500

San Francisco, CA

contact information

dateline

NY, NY: January 10, 2005 - The PostgreSQL Global Development group has released version 8.0 of the PostgreSQL object-relational database management system, building on its position as the most advanced open source database in the world. This release includes features previously only available in the most expensive proprietary database systems, and is expected to substantially increase the adoption of PostgreSQL by both users and software vendors.

**summary
paragraph**

In addition to significant improvements in scalability, features, and performance, PostgreSQL 8.0 demonstrates the unparalleled development speed of open source. More than a dozen companies, including Red Hat, Fujitsu, Afilias, Software Research Associates, Inc., 2nd Quadrant, and Command Prompt Inc., as well as hundreds of individual developers, contributed to add more major features to 8.0 than have been seen in any previous version.

**theme
paragraph**

-8 weeks: draft release

"We are confident that these enterprise features will attract a great number of new PostgreSQL users.", said Mr. Takayuki Nakazawa, Director of Fujitsu's OSS Database in Software Group. "Fujitsu is proud of its sponsorship of contributions to PostgreSQL and of its work with the PostgreSQL community. We are committed to helping make PostgreSQL the leading Database Management System."

first quote

name & title

New features include:

Native Windows Support: PostgreSQL now works natively with Windows systems and does not need an emulation layer. This provides dramatically improved performance over previous versions, and offers a compelling alternative to proprietary database software for independent software vendors, corporate users, and individual Windows developers.

Savepoints: This SQL-standard feature allows specific parts of a database transaction to be rolled back without aborting the entire operation. This benefits business application developers

**detail info
(make it relevant)**

-8 weeks: draft release

Javier Soltero, Chief Architect at Hyperic LLC, said, "PostgreSQL 8.0 gives us the high degree of concurrency and throughput required by our HQ monitoring product ... "

second quote

In addition to the many features bundled with the release, PostgreSQL has been enhanced by accelerated development of add-ons and optional components over the last year ...

**additional detail
(keep it short)**

About PostgreSQL: PostgreSQL is the collective work of hundreds of developers, building on almost twenty years of development which started at the University of California at Berkeley. With its long-time support of an enterprise level feature set including transactions, functions, triggers, and subqueries, PostgreSQL is being used by many of today's most demanding businesses and government agencies. PostgreSQL is distributed under a BSD license, which allows use and distribution without fees for both commercial and non-commercial applications.

**"about"
paragraph**

To find out more about PostgreSQL 8.0 or to download it, please visit:
<http://www.postgresql.org/about/presskit.html>

**link to more
information**

-4 weeks: create press kit

▶ press release, plus:

- + links to more advocacy information (case studies, etc.)
- + full text of quotes
- + detail that didn't fit in the release
- + information about quoted companies
- + links to regional contacts

▶ get website ready to roll:

- + use CMS so that you can activate content “all at once”
 - + links to downloads
 - + home page announcement
 - + traffic monitors
- ## ▶ release to translators

-1 week: “embargoed” releases

- ▶ contact press whom you “trust”
 - + must agree to not release until the release date
 - + must be willing to postpone/cancel release in case of problems
 - + a good way to “reward” reporters you like
- ▶ additional advance content
 - + Q&A about release
 - + demo (if appropriate)
 - + arrange interviews with developers/users
- ▶ be aware of press schedules
- ▶ file release with PRWire

-12 hours: stuff up on website

- ▶ last chance to postpone
 - + check with lead developers
- ▶ put up on web
 - + press kits
 - + downloads
 - + docs
 - + lists of regional contacts
- ▶ check that regional contacts are ready

0 hour: send out release

- ▶ contact embargo reporters and give the all-clear
- ▶ “spam” your whole press list
 - + use an easy perl script, or a mailing list
- ▶ tell regional contacts/translators “go”
- ▶ panic!

+1-5 days: follow-up

- ▶ follow up with key reporters
- ▶ start collecting links to press coverage
 - + send corrections, if necessary
- ▶ slashdot it!
- ▶ update press list
- ▶ thank volunteers

more information

- ▶ press kit:

<http://www.postgresql.org/about/press/presskit83.html.en>

- ▶ regional contact list:

<http://www.postgresql.org/about/press/contact>

- ▶ about pages: <http://www.postgresql.org/about/>

- ▶ me

- + josh@pgexperts.com

- + www.pgexperts.com

- + it.toolbox.com/blogs/database-soup

