

How FOSS can help human to keep their sanity during a pandemic crisis?

Building better open source projects

by

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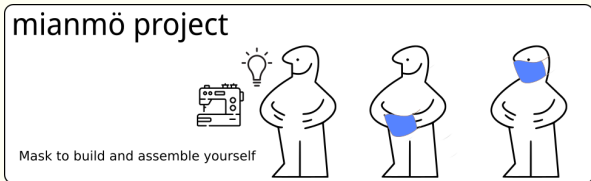
Background

*During the lockdown, should we work on an obscure open source natural language processing project or **just do cloth face mask?***

Another video chat.

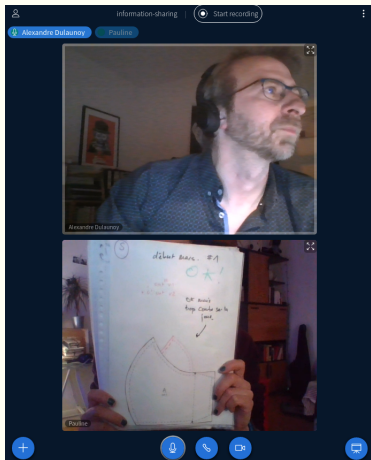
Meaning of Life

- ❖ **Doing** something which is an imminent and vital need: **face masks**¹
 - ❖ It works
 - ❖ and many open source rules and practices apply
 - ❖ What did we learn? and help your next open source security project



¹<https://mianmo-project.github.io/>

Resonate and be human



- ❖ *Users are wonderful things to have, and not just because they demonstrate that you're serving a need, that you've done something right.²*
- ❖ In other words, face masks without users are useless
- ❖ **Be your first users**, this will already saves life

²The Cathedral and the Bazaar, Eric Steven Raymond

Try and don't be afraid

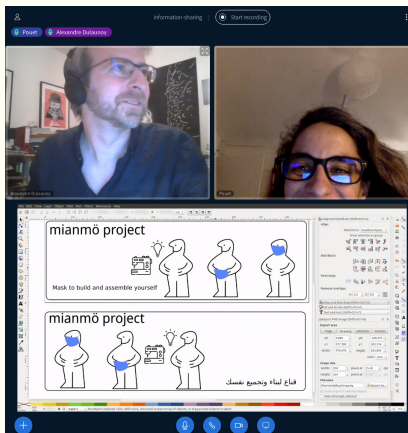


- ❖ Learn from scratch
- ❖ Keep a trace and **publish your failures**
- ❖ Why git was under-used during the design of cloth face mask?
- ❖ Keeping track of all face mask design videos is a f*cking challenge³
- ❖ Pick a video and try⁴
- ❖ Filling the gap of written documentation

³ but we enjoyed seeing the different cultures through the lens of face mask design

⁴ bound to YouTube recommendation algorithms

Tooling



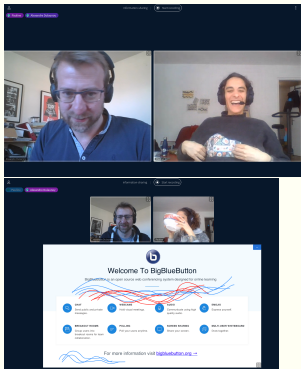
- ❑ *Ivan Illich defined convivial tools as those most accessible by each person, the least controlled by others, and without restricting equal use by others.*⁵
- ❑ While designing and building face-masks, people took back the control of the tools by becoming producers
- ❑ They use the **most easy and accessible tools** (not always open source) to provide guidelines

⁵Ivan Illich's book "Tools for Conviviality," published in 1973.

Less "Intellectual Property Rights"

- ❖ The fluidity of creative exchanges was helped by fewer legal constraints
- ❖ Social pressure can help in such period
- ❖ Many projects during the lock-down relied on **existing open source, free software and content licensing schemes**
- ❖ A lot of cloth face mask designers didn't know they were doing open source

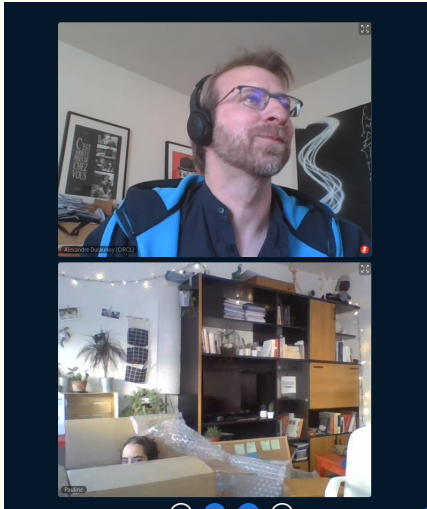
Reinforcing Social Relationships



- ❖ **Fun is key** to keep sanity in an open source community
- ❖ With covid-19, all open source contributors discovered the social reality of existing remote contributors
- ❖ Relying on the existing experience of managing open source community⁶

⁶Social Architecture - Building On-line Communities by Pieter Hintjens

Fun is really important



How to cultivate your FOSS project?

- ❖ Fun is important but the gift aspect is a strong community cement
- ❖ Sharing common tools and objectives to create values
- ❖ Create knowledge via open source projects as a medium
- ❖ **Reciprocity to support self-management of open source communities**
- ❖ Diverse contributors and contribution ensure project stability

Thank You

- ❖ **Markdown** format and all the open source rendering implementations
- ❖ **Inkscape** (to make cool logos for open source project)
- ❖ **git** (even if the handling of binary files is still hard)
- ❖ **BBB BigBlueButton** and **Jitsi** (diversity is good when one fails)
- ❖ **Python** (for extracting large table of filtering tests only available in crappy PDF generated from an unpublished XLS file)
- ❖ **SciHub** (thanks Alexandra) as it was the only way to download the academic papers about the filtering of textile fabrics
- ❖ **All the people who did face masks** and didn't know they were part of the open source and maker community

Where We Succeeded

- ❖ The **open source and maker communities resonated** during the crisis with a lot of initiatives
- ❖ The past 20+ years of open source licensing did help a lot (less friction in exchange)
- ❖ Git repositories supported the coordination effort on contributions and content publishing

Where We Failed

- ❖ Some open source tools are still **too complex** to use compared of the sharing of a YouTube video
- ❖ We are still bad at indexing, evaluating, coordinating and archiving projects (how many face mask designs on GitHub?)
- ❖ Release early, release often. We failed there as early was a matter of days and not weeks
- ❖ **Opportunity for new open source projects** such as markdown notes taking and video screenshot at the same time

Bibliography

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2. Eric Steven Raymond, The Cathedral and the Bazaar, 1997. <http://www.catb.org/~esr/writings/cathedral-bazaar/>

3. Pekka Himanen, The Hacker Ethic, 2001.

4. Pieter Hintjens, Social Architecture - Building On-line Communities, 2016.

<http://www.foo.be/docs-free/social-architecture/book.pdf>