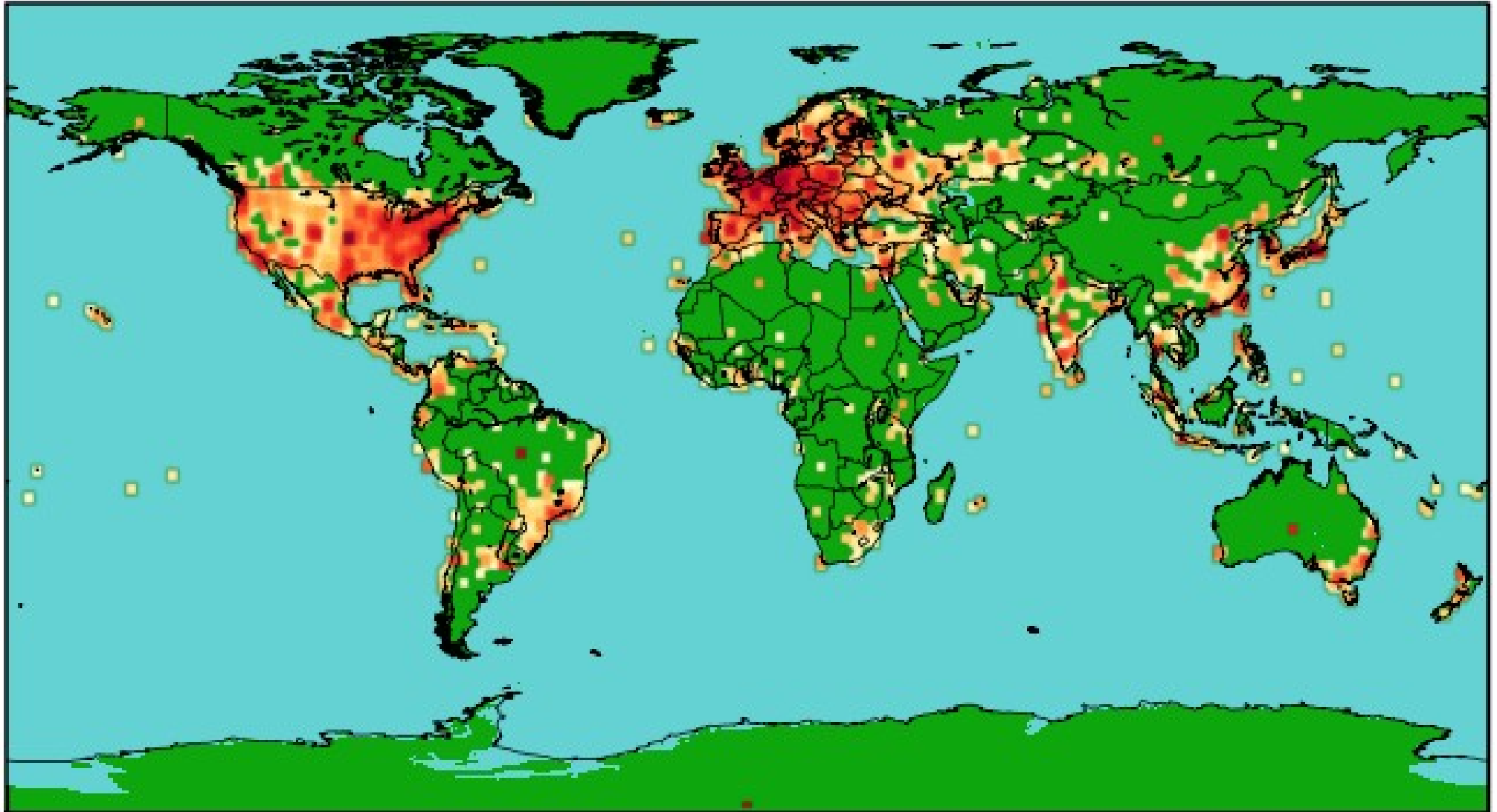


320,000 Fedora boxes checked in for updates last week.



The Thesis

If we do not invest in the ability to harness the **ideas** of the community, then we incur all of the costs of proprietary software without gaining the primary benefit of free software.

ideas

“I wish I could download my own custom version of Fedora from a website.”

“I wish I could use all of these old computers in our school's classrooms.”

“I wish I could carry my entire computer with me on a single USB key.”

ideas

“I wish I had the power to fix this simple bug in Thunderbird.”

“I wish someone would fix the bug I filed six months ago.”

“I wish they'd teach how open source works at my university.”

“I wish I could just run this one command on every system in the company and get the results in a simple list.”

Our Core Strategy

blah blah blah

community of development and use

blah blah blah

[**How is this actionable?**]

The community has a million ideas.

**Which ones should we invest in...
and how?**

I. How do we decide where to invest?

The Key Questions for community investment

1. Does this project have a chance to **transform** Red Hat's business?
2. Is this investment **low cost / high value**?
3. Do people **outside** of RH care **passionately** about this idea?
4. Are there clear ways to invest in **community capacity**?
5. Is there a **simple plan** to get started, with **aggressive goals**?

1. Does this project have a **chance** to **transform** Red Hat's business?

Top line: new products, new markets

Func & Cobbler could become the next generation systems management product
K12 Linux could revolutionize 1-to-1 computing in schools

Bottom line: *dramatically* improving current products and processes

Fedora infrastructure: million\$ in bandwidth savings
Fedora packaging: million\$ in volunteer engineering time
Fedora translations: million\$ in translation services

2. Is this investment **low cost / high value?**

Example: Fedora packaging

1700 packages maintained by 230 RH engineers
3800 packages maintained by 370 community engineers
750 packages with shared maintenance

Project requirements:

A public build system
Technical leadership from within the company

Cost:

A few salaries we were paying anyway
Hardware, much of which has been donated
A big bar tab for the guys who show up at FUDCon

Return:

**ONE THIRD the cost to Red Hat compared to
developing Fedora entirely on our own**

3. Do people **outside** of RH care **passionately** about this idea?

Example: Revisor

The Fedora Unity community wanted different versions of Fedora...
versions we didn't offer.

So they started their own project.

We helped them with tools and a little bit of hosting space.
They did the rest.

Their work could be the future technical foundation
of the appliance business that we've started with Amazon.

**All we did was give them
permission and encouragement.**

4. Are there clear ways to invest in **community capacity?**

Example: Fedora Infrastructure

Everyone wants Fedora on release day,
but the cost to Red Hat in bandwidth has been **enormous**.

But some people with lots of bandwidth **love** Fedora,
and will deliver it for us **for free**,
if we make it easy for them to do so.

The investment:

Mirror management software (time)
plus a NetApp for iBiblio (\$10,000).

The return:

Millions of dollars in bandwidth savings:
Fedora could cost Red Hat \$0 in bandwidth.

5. Is there a **simple plan** to get started, with **aggressive goals**?

The plan should not be perfect,
because perfect plans take too long to implement.

But the goals should be clear,
and everyone should know what they are.

Fedora Extras, in the beginning.

The aggressive goal:
to have as many packages as Debian
(over 10,000 packages)
[**clear, ambitious, inspiring**]

The simple plan:
Get a public build system running
in two weeks, and see what happens.
[**three years later, tremendously successful**]

II. Once we invest, how do we manage?

The Key Questions for community management

1. Is the project **progressing** towards its goals?
2. Do contributors feel like their work is **meaningful**?
3. Is community participation **growing** over time?
4. Is strong **leadership** developing within the community?

1. Is the project **progressing** towards its goals?

Progress does not have to be rapid,
so long as it is **steady** and **commensurate with investment**.

Low Investment, Rapid Progress = **Awesome!**

High Investment, Rapid Progress = Good

Low Investment, Slow Progress = OK

High Investment, Slow Progress = **Bad!**

(make a project show **progress** before increasing investment)

2. Do contributors feel like their work is **meaningful**?

Are they being thanked for their work?

Are their concerns being addressed?

Are they personally engaged with other contributors?

(**life is too short to volunteer your time where it isn't appreciated**)

(**THIS IS WHY FUDCON AND PERSONAL INTERACTION MATTERS!**)

3. Is community participation **growing** over time?

If the community ideas are good ideas,
and if the core leadership is strong,
and if the needs of new participants are being met,

then and only then will participation grow over time.

(a community that does not grow will ultimately stagnate)

4. Is strong **leadership** developing within the community?

As a community grows,
the leadership must grow with it,
in order for Red Hat's investment to scale.

Valuable community members
welcome the challenge of leadership
and the status and experience that come with it.

**The best community leaders
ultimately become the best Red Hat employees.**

(**Jesse Keating / Jack Aboutboul / Seth Vidal / Mike McGrath /
Toshio Kuratomi / Luke Macken / Paul Fields**)

III. Conclusion

SELinux

RHEL 4, developed in **Fedora 2 and 3**.

Virtualization, NetworkManager

RHEL 5, developed in **Fedora 5 and 6**.

Yum

RHEL 5, developed in **Fedora** to replace up2date.

Tickless Kernel

RHEL 6, developed in **Fedora 7 and 8**.

FreeIPA

RHEL 6, developed in **Fedora 9**.



Fedora is where Red Hat generates potential value.

RHEL is where Red Hat distills that potential into revenue.

Jesse Keating

Founder of Fedora Legacy project, 2003.

Hired 2005.

Mike McGrath

Lead architect, Fedora Infrastructure, 2005.

Hired 2007.

Seth Vidal

Founder of the yum project, 2002.

Hired 2007.

Paul Fields

Co-lead, Fedora Documentation Project, 2004.

Fedora Board member, 2006.

Hired 2008.

Fedora's competitive advantage is its **people**.

Red Hat's advantage is that it doesn't pay most of those people.

Community investment builds **mindshare**, **enabling people** to develop new **features** that appear in **Fedora, first**.

Fedora must be the best in the world at community building.

the end
(for now)