

What I learned from 365 days of contributing to Open Source projects

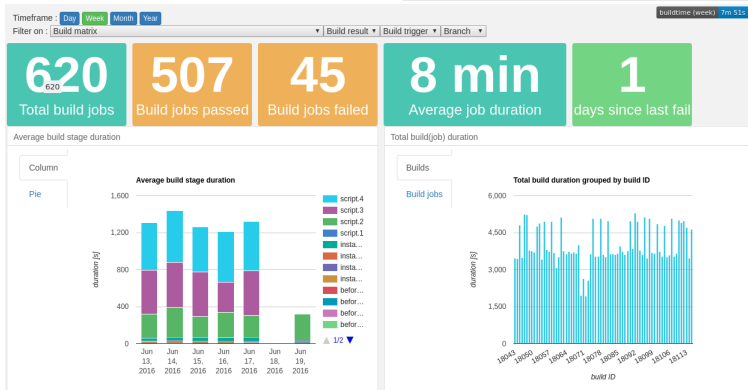
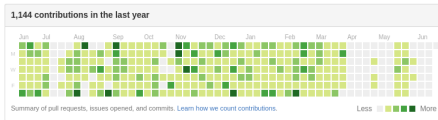
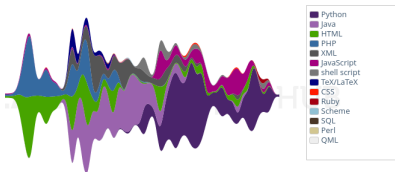
Dieter Adriaenssens

Open Source developer - @dcadriaenssens

DebConf 2016 - Cape Town, South Africa
July 3rd, 2016



Introduction



How it started

- 14 January 2014 : I returned from an 'unplugged' holiday
- previous 100+ day commit streaks
- see how far I would get

What and how

- Open Source projects hosted on Github (public repos)
- at least 1 commit per day
- any type of contribution
- after day job (evenings, weekends)

Planning

Depending on availability of :

- time
- internet
- infrastructure

Planning

- typical : weekend afternoon at home
- plenty of time
- larger tasks, requiring some preparation :
 - new features
 - bug fixes
 - split tasks into smaller subtasks

Planning

- typical : while traveling by plane or train
- plenty of time
- no internet
- tasks with no internet required :
 - refactor
 - improve unit tests
 - improve documentation

Planning

- typical : busy day
- limited time
- keep a list of smaller/easier tasks :
 - fix coding style
 - fix typos
 - translations
- for emergencies ;)
- code quality improves

June 2014 : Getting serious

- Josh (@dzello), Open Sourcerer at Keen.io pledged to do a 365 day commit streak
- I was at 162 days
- I took the challenge to do a 365 day streak

Holiday



- July 2014 : climbing trip
- climbing during the day
- limited time in the evening
- planning to do small commits
- close call on a few days

Difficulties

Can I keep the streak going?

- busy day at work
- other things to do (friends, family, sports, ...)
- stuck on a problem
- master branch
- traveling
- timezones

Savers

- easy tasks list
- commit time vs push time
- commit just before/after midnight
- issues and pull requests

Cheating

- bogus commit
- cronjob
- change commit time

Value of a streak?

Josh's experience



- Josh stopped his 66 day streak going to Burning Man
- other people with a considerable streak : relieved it was over

365 days of Open Source



- 13Jan2015 : 365 day commit streak!
- 10Apr2015 : End of commit streak after 452 days

Lessons learned

- one commit leads to another
- one commit per day creates a habit
- warning : afraid to break the streak

Lessons learned

- contributing to a project should be the primary drive
- don't let the metrics drive you
- similarities in sports, goals, projects, ...

Lessons learned

- Will I do it again?
- Should you try it?
- find a balance between work and relaxing
- take regular breaks

Introduction



Acknowledgements

Big thanks to input from

- Josh Dzielak (@dzello)
- @ryanseys
- @NatashaTheRobot
- @gjermundbjaanes
- Erik Romijn (@erikpub)

Questions?

Dieter Adriaenssens - @dcadriaenssens

Blogpost : <http://ruleant.blogspot.be/2015/01/what-i-learned-from-365-days-of.html>