

 Forum PHP

PHP, a mystery success!?

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I did not understand the release process. It also seemed dangerously intransparent even to those involved. This talk covers the processes we have today. Like everything in PHP things are constantly changing. If just for the fact that new people appear and old people disappear.



Rasmus Lerdorf

Andrei Zmievski

Derick Rethans

Wez Furlong

List of speakers from previous years, Zak gave the opening keynote this year. All undisputed rockstars, that have made significant code contributions to PHP, have published books, done multiple keynotes around the world and their names appear all over the place in `phpinfo()`;
So what on earth is Lukas Smith doing up on stage for the closing keynote?



Core PHP

developer?

What is that anyways?

I have only removed code from php-src, not added even a single line
When Forum PHP was announced listing me as a “core developer” Derick “chuckled” on IRC, but did not feel like there is a need to change the announcement.

Still I have commit access to most parts of PHP. Actually I can expand the commit rights of anyone

Release Manager

PHP 5.3 is RM'ed by Johannes and myself (*)

Andrei is the RM for PHP 6 (**)

The only semi formal role we have

Aside from being the guy that rolls the releases, he/she actually does not wield any “real” power

(*) Johannes handles all technical aspects (patch review and packaging)

(**) he just got hired by Digg, lets hope they give me enough time

I am actually just a manager. All technical aspects of the release process are handled by Johannes. I just take care of the organizational tasks. Keeping track of planned changes, making sure that all trouble areas are discussed in an organized/productive manner and that results are recorded



Who works on PHP?

Many core developers can use some company time to develop on PHP

None of them work on PHP internals exclusively!

Most spend plenty of their free time additionally

Many extension authors are just casual contributors

A fair number are university students, that have a hard time convincing their professors that PHP is relevant

Chances are that a new feature or a bug fix is done during the spare time of developers



Karma

Karma is the term we use for access rights. There are a handful of people that can open new accounts (giving the new account holder an @php.net email address). And quite a few more that can then give out karma to the various parts of the project.

Zero to Core in 4 weeks

Submit several high quality patches, especially to unmaintained parts

Use all opportunities to network (conferences, IRC etc.)

Chances are high you will quickly get direct commit access within only a few weeks

Guidelines for the coding standards etc. can be found in the php-src CVS repository and on php.net/reST

Arnaud le Blanc actually managed to get commit access in 3 weeks and has been hacking away at all parts since

would be nice if someone would help convert some more README's to reST
actually Arnaud did post some patches a few months before already, but I don't think anyone even realized this when karma was granted to him.

How stuff gets into PHP

PHP is very quick to adopt new trends on the web

Again, there is really no formal process

Essentially anyone with enough karma can just commit

Maintainers have large freedom

Commits rarely get reverted

Since recently we have wiki.php.net which holds various todo lists and a section for RFC's

For example as soon as JSON was starting to take off there was an extension in PECL and with the next minor release (5.2) it was added to core

Stefan Marr's traits proposal was the first RFC on the wiki. Unfortunately the feature did not yet make it in, but it will most likely be in the next version after 5.3.x

PECL - incubation area

Holds various C extensions that are not part of core

Follows mostly the same coding standards as core

Much more freedom for maintainers

Several recent new core extensions started in PECL

For example ext/tidy, ext/PDO, ext/filter

CVS vs. SVN

Yes, we are still using CVS

For the most part it works just fine

Requires some evil hacks ^^symlinking^^ to move code between core and PECL

Migration to SVN is in progress

One key VCS requirement is that the tools for checkout are widely available on all supported platforms

Not yet the case for Git, Mercurial and the other DVCS

<http://cvs.php.net> vs. <http://svn.php.net>

A couple of years svn was deemed not stable enough. People also did not like how tags were done.

DVCS = distributed version control system

The QA team

Is not formally organized either, its just anyone that follows php-qa@lists.php.net and submits tests

IBM is writing the bulk of the new tests

Progress can be tracked on gcov.php.net

Primary testers list is notified about release candidates

TestFest2008 was a first attempt at a global community event organized by the PHP development team



If the PHP
development
process is so great
where is PHP6?

Andrei ended up being really busy. Still open decisions to make, what should be the default string type? It needs someone to drive it forward. Andrei is now with Digg ..

..00 (and PHP 5.3?)

Alpha3 was just released

Next planned release is Beta1, probably in early January

Original plan was aiming for an early fall 2008 release

Actually its looking more like Q1 2009

Bummer :-)

Originally I hoped for an October release.
It became clear that getting namespaces in would take more time for discussion. Now we hope to have a workable solution.



The namespace “debacle”

Aka the challenges of an open development list

The community cares, most people just do not have the time to follow what is going on

Should you listen to people that bash PHP “who have stopped using PHP to use XYZ 3 years ago”?

The internals@ mailinglist - a natural equilibrium

Nobody is perfect aka magic_quotes wasn't a good idea

Most of the posts only covered half of the truth (just as always).
We do not have a PR team. We obviously do worry about this, but essentially there is nothing we can do.

Alpha3 came out with updated documentation, including an FAQ, in the manual!

My own lessons

Power corrupts .. or at least makes you lazy

Circle new ideas among your friends before proposing them to internals@

Use every opportunity to socialize and network

If internals@ does not pick up your idea, just do it on your own site and run with it

back when I was less known without the RM status, my only chance at affecting the process was to document it. now I find myself taking longer to update the todo lists. tending towards offlist discussions.

Staying alive?!

We need a constant stream of fresh blood

We need not only C developers

We need the community to care

We need companies to allocate resources

We need conferences to socialize

We need YOU!

 Merci!

Questions? Comments?

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