



# **BRIDGING THE GAP**

## **Successful Collaboration with External Development Teams**

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## **Kevin Kochanski**

I am Client Liaison at Notch8

1 year getting to know the Samvera Community.

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## NOTCH8

- © Full stack web consultancy in our 12th year, specializing in Ruby on Rails applications.
- © 14 developers in San Diego, Utah, and the United Kingdom



## NOTCH8 AND THE SAMVERA COMMUNITY

- © Four years of engagement with the Samvera Community
- © Rutgers, Indiana U, ATLA, OHSU, WUSTL
- © Hyku pilot projects include DORIS and PALNI/PALCI



## WHAT ARE THE CIRCUMSTANCES?

### Internal

- ⊙ Organization has their own team of developers to some extent
- ⊙ Working on a core project (Samvera or otherwise)

### External

- ⊙ Resources outside the organization are brought in
- ⊙ Supplement an existing internal team
- ⊙ Help work through backlog, or provide expertise

**WHY BRING IN  
AN OUTSIDE  
DEVELOPER  
WHEN YOU  
HAVE YOUR  
OWN TEAM?**

- ⊙ Unavailable internal resources
- ⊙ Specific technical expertise required
- ⊙ Alternative to institutional path
- ⊙ Started a project and reached a blocker
  - ⊙ First two reasons above
  - ⊙ Schedule pressures

# BENEFITS



## **BENEFITS: SKILLS**

- ◎ Access to different backgrounds and skills
- ◎ Outside perspective: forest vs. trees
- ◎ Add breadth to the narrow/deep model
- ◎ Bring knowledge and features from other projects
- ◎ Context switching keeps a developer sharp

**BENEFITS:  
EFFICIENCY &  
OPPORTUNITY**

- ◎ Increase velocity without hiring staff
- ◎ Shorten the learning curve
- ◎ Developers have learned from previous mistakes
- ◎ Introduce new tools and methodologies
- ◎ Freedom from the institutional structure
- ◎ Outside voice might find it easier to speak up

## **BENEFITS: SAMVERA**

- ◎ Exposure to a variety of use cases
- ◎ Immediate knowledge of opportunities, but also pitfalls and limitations
- ◎ Identify patterns in projects and opportunities for collaboration
- ◎ Crystal ball
- ◎ Introduce new developers to the community

# CHALLENGES



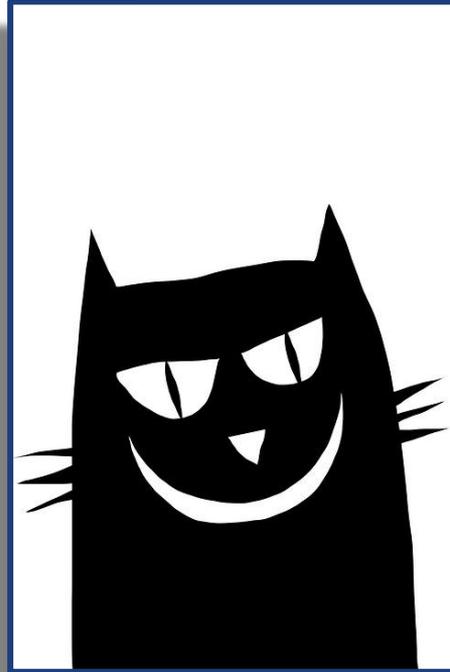
## **CHALLENGES: OUTSIDER**

- ◎ Less insight to project and end user
- ◎ May offer solutions that don't fit
- ◎ Sometimes relegated to busywork
- ◎ Different rhythm on each project
- ◎ Adjust to new management and define boundaries
- ◎ Adapt to new guidelines and coding styles

## **CHALLENGES: LOGISTICS**

- ◎ Time management
- ◎ Time differences and scheduling
- ◎ Hard to feel equal and integrated
- ◎ Communication can be inconsistent
- ◎ New tools to adopt

# CONSIDERATIONS FOR SUCCESS



**CONSIDERATIONS  
FOR SUCCESS:  
COMMUNICATION**

- ⊙ Onsite and face to face
- ⊙ Make roles clear
- ⊙ Quick communication
- ⊙ Good established tools
- ⊙ Acknowledge and plan carefully for time and schedule conflicts

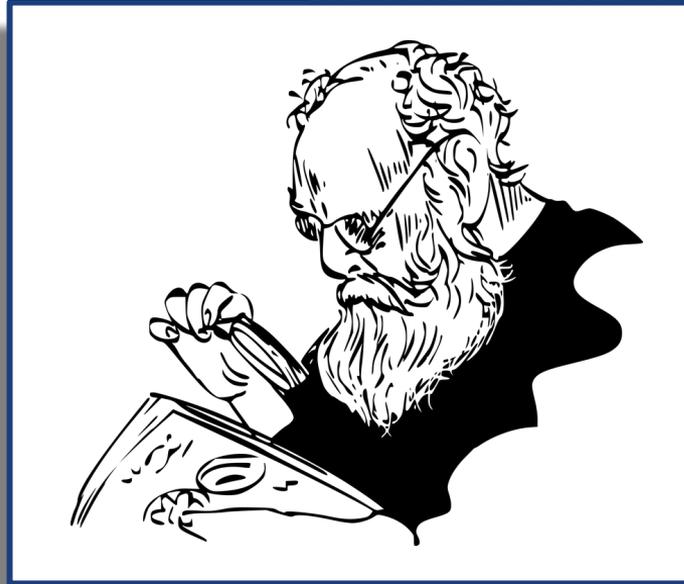
**CONSIDERATIONS  
FOR SUCCESS:  
TEAMBUILDING**

- ◎ Teams shouldn't work in bubbles
- ◎ Integrate to the culture and “team” vibe
- ◎ Have external developers participate in standups and planning meetings
- ◎ Share successes

**CONSIDERATIONS  
FOR SUCCESS:  
MAXIMIZE  
POTENTIAL**

- ◎ Define rules and boundaries upfront
- ◎ Establish clear expectations
- ◎ If possible, use external developers for core work, not just a backlog
- ◎ Encourage mentorship across teams *in both directions*
  - ◎ Take advantage of their expertise!

# CASE STUDIES



## PROJECT 1: INDIANA UNIVERSITY

### Requirements:

- ⊙ ESS Images into Hyrax
- ⊙ Assistance with backlog
- ⊙ Key feature: flexible metadata

### Benefits:

Originally brought on Notch8 to assist with a backlog of tickets.

Able to make progress on a substantial feature.

Immediate access to folks with specialized knowledge

Hit the ground running - HUGE value

### Challenges:

Not sure what's OK in a new team; ie, adding a new gem

Getting everyone on the same systems

Distance, time zones, coordinating meetings

## PROJECT 2

### Requirements:

- ◎ Project Management for an internal developer team
- ◎ Introduce tools and methods (kanban board, slack, a roadmap)

### Value:

Senior Samvera developer is joining some meetings for additional technical guidance.

Project needs an importer and may benefit from work being done on other projects.

Because no one on the team reported to anyone, they avoided conflict which was a cost to productivity

Put tools in place to facilitate communication and organization.

Helped prioritize tickets.

## **ADVICE FROM PROJECT PARTNERS**

- ◎ Establishing clear, concrete goals and open communication is very important
- ◎ Maintaining a friendly, non-toxic work environment across teams is key
- ◎ Plan specific time for wrap-up and handoff when engagement ends
- ◎ Keep channels of communication open after the engagement

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**THANKS!**

**Any questions?**

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