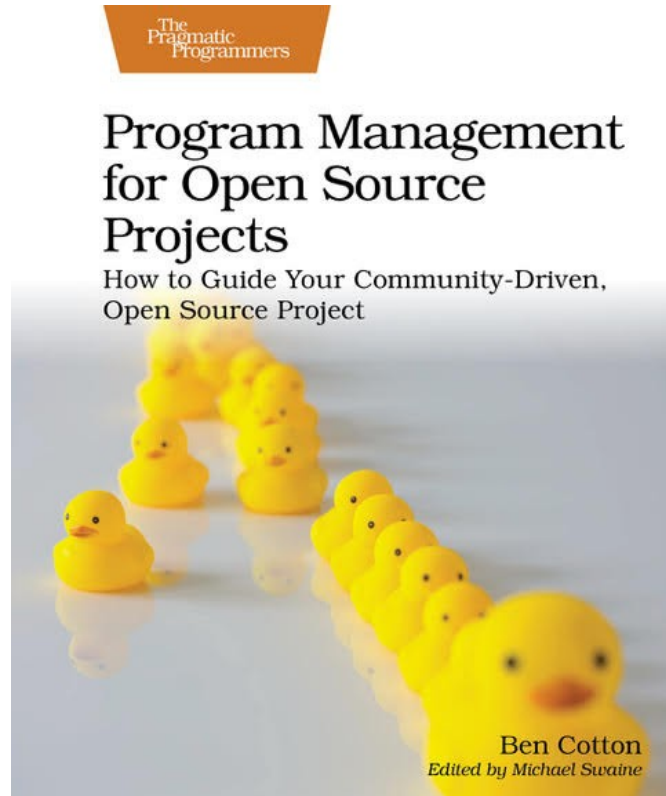# Your bug tracker and you

Ben Cotton

OLF 2022

Housekeeping

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Housekeeping

- **Pronouns: he/him**
- **The usual disclaimers**
- **License: CC BY-SA 4.0**
- **Kind things: @FunnelFiasco**
- **Unkind things: /dev/null**
- **Questions at the end**

Shameless plug

Program Management for Open Source Projects

How to Guide Your Community-Driven, Open Source Project

Ben Cotton
Edited by Michael Swaine

30% off e-book with
Promo code OLFCOTTON

Agenda

- **Why have a bug tracker?**

- **What to track**

- **Picking a tracker**

- **Triaging bugs**

- **Closing bugs**

- **Analyzing bugs**

Why have a bug tracker?

Why have a bug tracker?

To track bugs, silly!

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Why have a bug tracker?

Bug trackers are the
cornerstone of building
an open source community

Why have a bug tracker?

- **Communicate with users**

- **Coordinate with contributors**

- **Maintain a historical record**

- **Build a source of information about the project**

What to track

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What to track

- Type (e.g. "bug" or "RFE")

- Status/state

- Closure type

- Impact

- Priority

What to track

- **Version**

- **Component (if applicable)**

- **Platform (OS and architecture)**

What to track

- **Time (-stamps)**

- **Reporter**

- **Assignee**

- **more?**

What to track

- **Track these as separate fields, not bug content**

- **If you're lucky, the tracker provides this already**

Picking a tracker

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Picking a tracker

- **Authentication & accounts**

- **API libraries**

- **FOSS status**

- **Hosting**

- **Comment/attachment hiding**

- **Moderate accounts**

Picking a tracker

- **Customizable fields**

- **Metadata ACLs**

- **Links to version control, other bugs**

- **Bulk updates**

- **Milestones/epics**

- **Reporting**

- **Private bugs/comments**

Picking a tracker

- **Default assignees**

- **Multiple assignees**

- **Mentioning**

- **Watching**

- **Subscribing**

- **Locking bugs**

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Picking a tracker

Whatever you pick,
you'll use it as more than a bug tracker.

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Triaging bugs

Triage questions (first pass)

- **Is this a bug?**

- **Is it a duplicate?**

- **Is it a security bug?**

- **Is it filed in the right place?**

- **Is it reproducible?**

- **Does it say what happened?**

Triage questions (prioritizing)

- Can physical harm result?

- Does it cause data loss or corruption?

- Does it permit unauthorized access?

- Does it reduce accessibility?

- Is the default configuration affected?

- Is there a *reasonable* workaround?

- Does the bug affect all platforms?

- Does it embarrass you?

Closing bugs

Closing bugs

You totally should!

To close or not to close

- Sends a clear signal of intent
- Makes the tracker easier to scan

- Makes people angry
- "I was going to work on that someday"
- Represents a catalog of known* issues

When to close a bug

- When it's fixed

- If it's a duplicate, invalid, or spam

- If the version reaches end of life

- If you know you can't or won't fix it

- If it's missing information

- If you can't reproduce it

How to close a bug

- **Set and communicate a policy** *ahead of time*

- **Explain why**

- **Give instructions to reopen**

- **Ignore the complaints**

Bug closure process

- **Varies by closure type**

- **Don't be too aggressive with "missing info" and "can't reproduce" closures**

- **Tell people how to reopen**

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Analyze bugs

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Learn about your user community

- **Easier than a well-constructed survey**

- **Learn the approximate**

  - Usage by platform

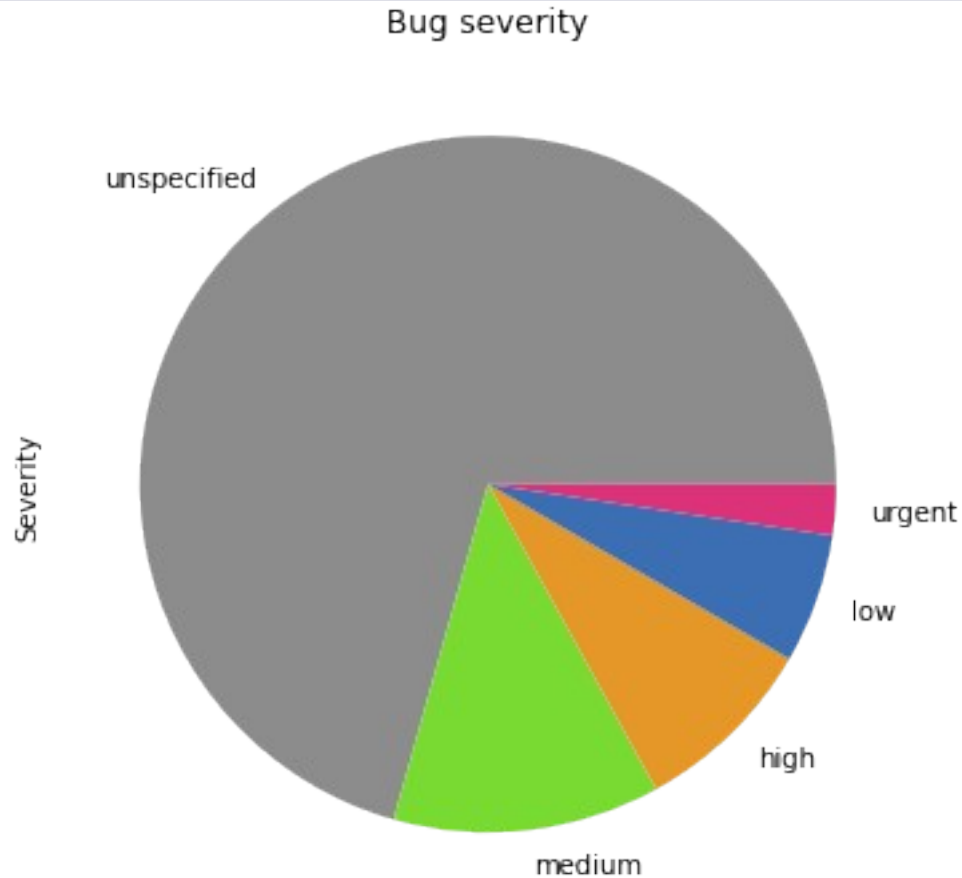 - Use of components

  - Adoption rate of new versions

Learn project trends

- **Bugs over time**

- **Time to resolution**

- **Bug severity**

What you can't learn!

- **Time-to-response**

- **Best (or worst) bug fixers**

- **Affiliations**

Challenge your own assumptions

Bug severity

How to analyze

- **Look for trends that will cause a change in behavior**

- **Ignore duplicates (usually) and spam (always)**

- **Percentages versus raw numbers**

Fedora Linux bugs

- **"Exploring our bugs" at Nest With Fedora 2022**
  - https://youtu.be/mp1PKsQrpCM

Let's talk about it

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