

Marketing Your Open Source Project

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About me

- 30 years in tech, mostly about communicating
- 11 years in open source
- 9 years in cloud
- Now: Open Source Content Lead, Amazon Web Services



About the team

- Open source technologists and marketers
- Internal consultants to AWS service teams
- Help communicate with and provide deep connections to open source communities
- Help with open source launches
- Run AWS open source marketing channels

What you'll learn in this talk

1. What marketing is (and isn't)
2. Why you need it
3. And How to do it
...for open source.

“If you build it, they will come.”

Just “building it” is rarely enough.

Some more reasons why

marketing doesn't happen in open source

“Eww, marketing”

“Marketing is a 'soft' skill”

“Open source is free, therefore we don't need to market it”



What is marketing?

Merriam-Webster Dictionary:

“The process or technique of promoting, selling and distributing a product or service.”



What is marketing?

Many people who build software:
“Marketing is a bunch of hand-wavy fluff and BS.”

“I’m not selling anything—open source is free! Why would I need marketing?”



You're asking people to dedicate something valuable—their time and attention—to your ideas.



In open source, marketing is about getting people to exchange their time and attention (and sometimes money) for your ideas.

Ugh. Do I have to?

There are millions of open source projects

- Github hosts over 54,000,000 open source repositories
<https://github.com/about>
- SourceForge is home to 430,000 open source projects.
<https://sourceforge.net/about>
- Apache Software Foundation now has 175 committees managing ~300 projects and another 50+ projects in incubation
Source: <https://projects.apache.org>
- Eclipse Foundation now has 163 projects and 120 new projects in incubation
Source: <https://projects.eclipse.org/list-of-projects>
- OpenStack has 49 project teams working on 1,525 project repositories
Source: <https://releases.openstack.org/teams>

Open Source Development is Accelerating

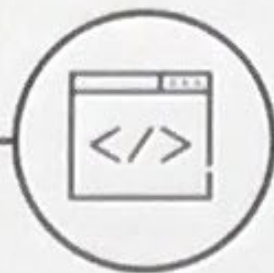
23M+

Open Source
Developers



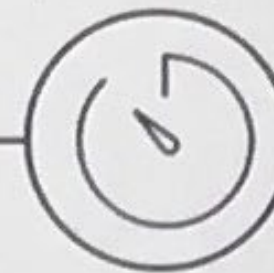
41B+

Lines of Code



10,000+

New Versions
per Day



64M+

Repositories on
GitHub

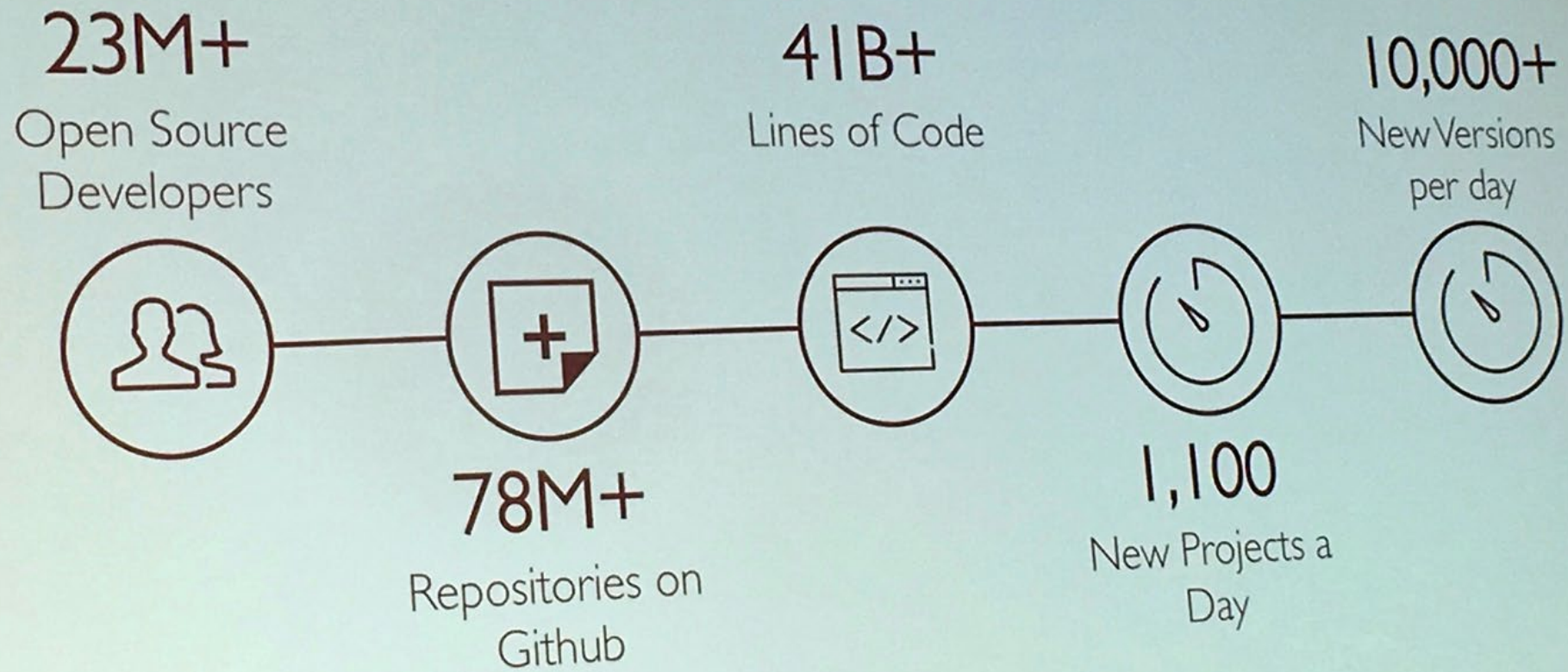


1,100

New Projects a
Day



Open Source Development is Accelerating

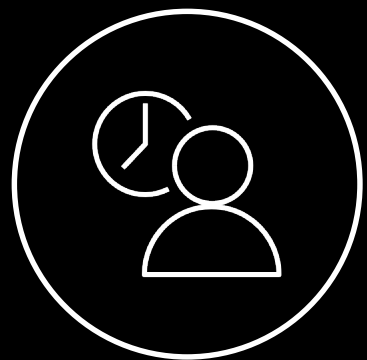


Sources: Sourceclear, Sonatype, Github

THE **LINUX** FOUNDATION



Marketing open source is about capturing scarce attention and resources in a crowded environment.



What
resources do
projects
need?

The time and effort of people:

- Users
- Contributors
Independent, and/or assigned to a project by their employer
(or hired specifically to work on it)



What
resources do
projects
need?

Money:

- Sponsorships
- Salaries
- Bounties
- Investment
- Donations

More reasons
marketing doesn't happen in
open source

“We can't afford it”

“We don't know how”

The components of open source marketing



Customer

Who are your customers?

What do they want?

How do you know?



Code

The basic code

- Architected for participation
- Well-commented

Tools

Tests

Examples and sample code



GitHub checklist

Community profile

Here's how this project compares to [recommended community standards](#).

Checklist

● Description ?	Add
● README	Writing a README Add
● Code of conduct	What is a code of conduct? Add
● Contributing	Writing contributing guidelines Add
● License	Choosing a license Add
● Issue templates	Add
● Pull request template	Add

Readme

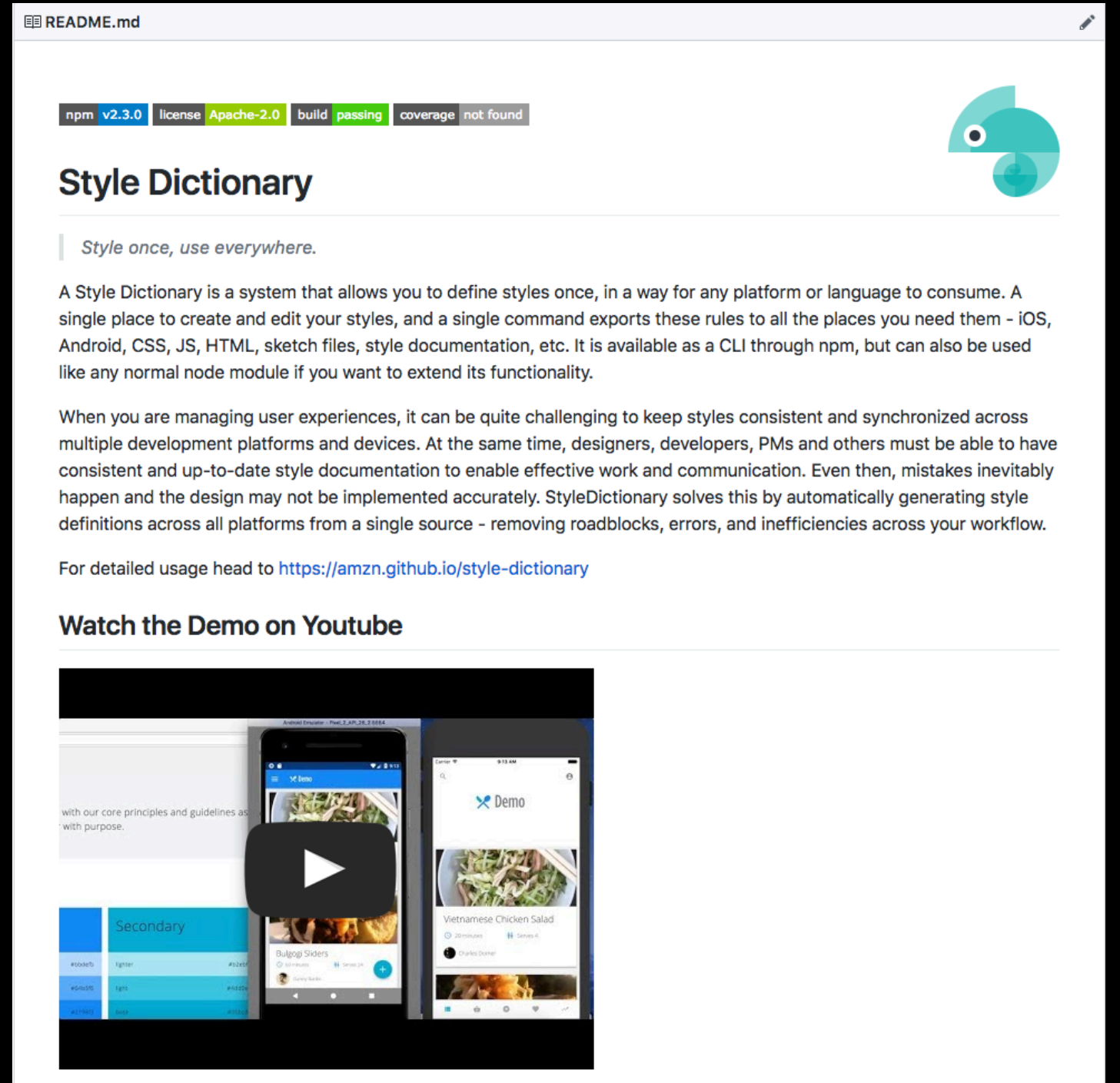
Badges

Quick description

Quick start

Easy to navigate

Video demo



README.md

npm v2.3.0 license Apache-2.0 build passing coverage not found

Style Dictionary

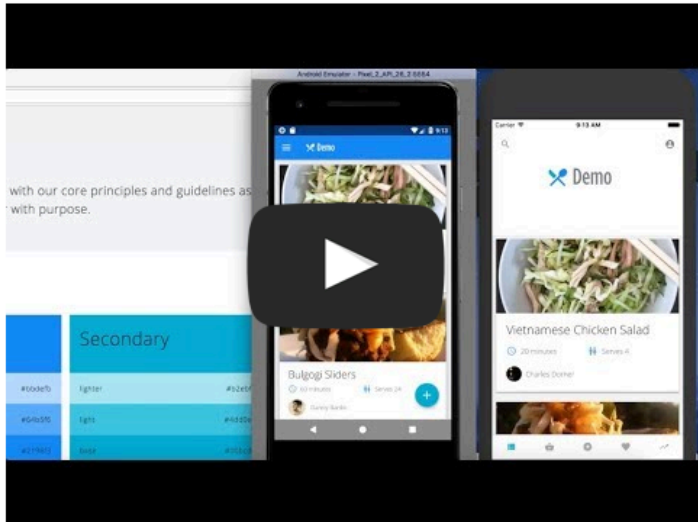
Style once, use everywhere.

A Style Dictionary is a system that allows you to define styles once, in a way for any platform or language to consume. A single place to create and edit your styles, and a single command exports these rules to all the places you need them - iOS, Android, CSS, JS, HTML, sketch files, style documentation, etc. It is available as a CLI through npm, but can also be used like any normal node module if you want to extend its functionality.

When you are managing user experiences, it can be quite challenging to keep styles consistent and synchronized across multiple development platforms and devices. At the same time, designers, developers, PMs and others must be able to have consistent and up-to-date style documentation to enable effective work and communication. Even then, mistakes inevitably happen and the design may not be implemented accurately. StyleDictionary solves this by automatically generating style definitions across all platforms from a single source - removing roadblocks, errors, and inefficiencies across your workflow.

For detailed usage head to <https://amzn.github.io/style-dictionary>

Watch the Demo on Youtube



The video demo shows a design system interface. On the left, there's a 'Secondary' color palette with various shades of blue and green. In the center, a smartphone displays a mobile app interface with a play button overlay. On the right, another smartphone displays a 'Demo' app interface with a play button overlay. The background shows a desktop view of the design system with text like 'with our core principles and guidelines as with purpose.'



Documentation

Good documentation is **absolutely crucial**
It can also be very hard to achieve



Style Dictionary

Getting started

Overview

Quick Start

Examples

Package structure

Extending

Reference

API

Transforms

Transform groups

Formats

Templates

Actions

npm v2.1.0 license Apache-2.0 build passing code climate unknown

Style Dictionary

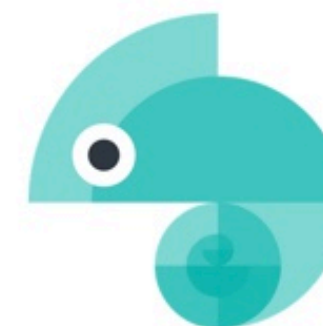
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A style dictionary consists of:

1. [Style properties](#) organized in JSON files
2. Static assets that can be used across platforms





What is marketing?

Marketing helps people understand what a technology is about...

...and how they can use it to **kick ass**.*

*Thanks, Kathy Sierra!

Beyond GitHub



- How-tos, blueprints, architectures, etc.
- Blog
- Videos and screencasts
- Articles and press (trade press, scholarly journals, refereed conferences)
- Books
- Education
- Logo/mascot



How-tos,
blueprints,
etc.

- Various terms used (and abused) various ways
- Don't get hung up on terminology
- DO create this kind of material

A note about white papers

- Have an even worse rep than marketing in general
- Nowadays tend to be aimed at C-level execs
- ...which may be relevant to your project, especially if you are going after an enterprise market

Blog

Yes, have one!

Technical and news posts both appropriate

There is no canonical length

AWS Open Source Blog

Amazon Corretto 8
Now Generally Available



Amazon Corretto 8 Now Generally Available

by Arun Gupta | on 31 JAN 2019 | in [AWS Java Development](#), [Open Source](#) | [Permalink](#)

Amazon Corretto 8, a no-cost, multiplatform, production-ready distribution (previously in preview since we announced it in November, 2018). Amazon runs Corretto 8 at Amazon and we are committed to keeping Java free. Since preview, we've listed...

[Read More](#)



Supporting The Apache Software Foundation

by Zaheda Borat | on 28 JAN 2019 | in [Open Source](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments](#) | [Share](#)

At AWS, we are excited to support The Apache Software Foundation, which does good. Apache's software is core to much of the Internet and is used by many. In 2019, we are increasing our support of The Apache Software Foundation: [...]

[Read More](#)



FOSDEM

Open Source Love at FOSDEM 2019

by Shirley Bailes | on 25 JAN 2019 | in [Events](#), [Open Source](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments](#)

It's that time of the year again, and thousands of open source enthusiasts soak up as much as they can in 700 sessions covering hundreds of open source projects at Libre de Bruxelles, Solbosch Campus. For those of [...]

[Read More](#)

Video and screencasts

Types of videos

Not “slick” may be more appropriate

YouTube is your friend

Attention spans are short

Subtitles/captions

The screenshot displays a YouTube video player for a video titled "Style Dictionary Demo" by Amazon Web Services. The video content is a screencast showing a web browser displaying a "Style Dictionary" website. The website has a sidebar with navigation links like "Introduction", "Principles", "Styles", "Overview", "Colors", "Typography", "Dimensions", "Icons", "Motion", "Property Explorer", "Components", "Layouts", "Usage", and "Resources". The main content area is titled "Colors" and includes a "Brand Colors" section with a table of color swatches.

Primary		Secondary	
lighter	#bbdefb	lighter	#b2ebf2
light	#64b5f6	light	#4dd0e1
base	#2196f3	base	#00bcd4
dark	#1976d2	dark	#009794
darker	#0d47a1	darker	#006064

Below the video player, the video title "Style Dictionary Demo" is shown with 2,829 views, 33 likes, and 0 comments. The channel name "Amazon Web Services" is displayed with a "SUBSCRIBE 191K" button. A description snippet reads: "Learn more about AWS at - <http://amzn.to/2E6dxlK>. A Style Dictionary is a system that allows you to define styles once, in a...". To the right, an "Up next" section features a video titled "WRITE LESS CSS" by Coding Tech with 74K views and a duration of 14:53.



Trade press

- Get professional PR help with this
- Getting press coverage is an art, not a science
- Yes, PR does still matter



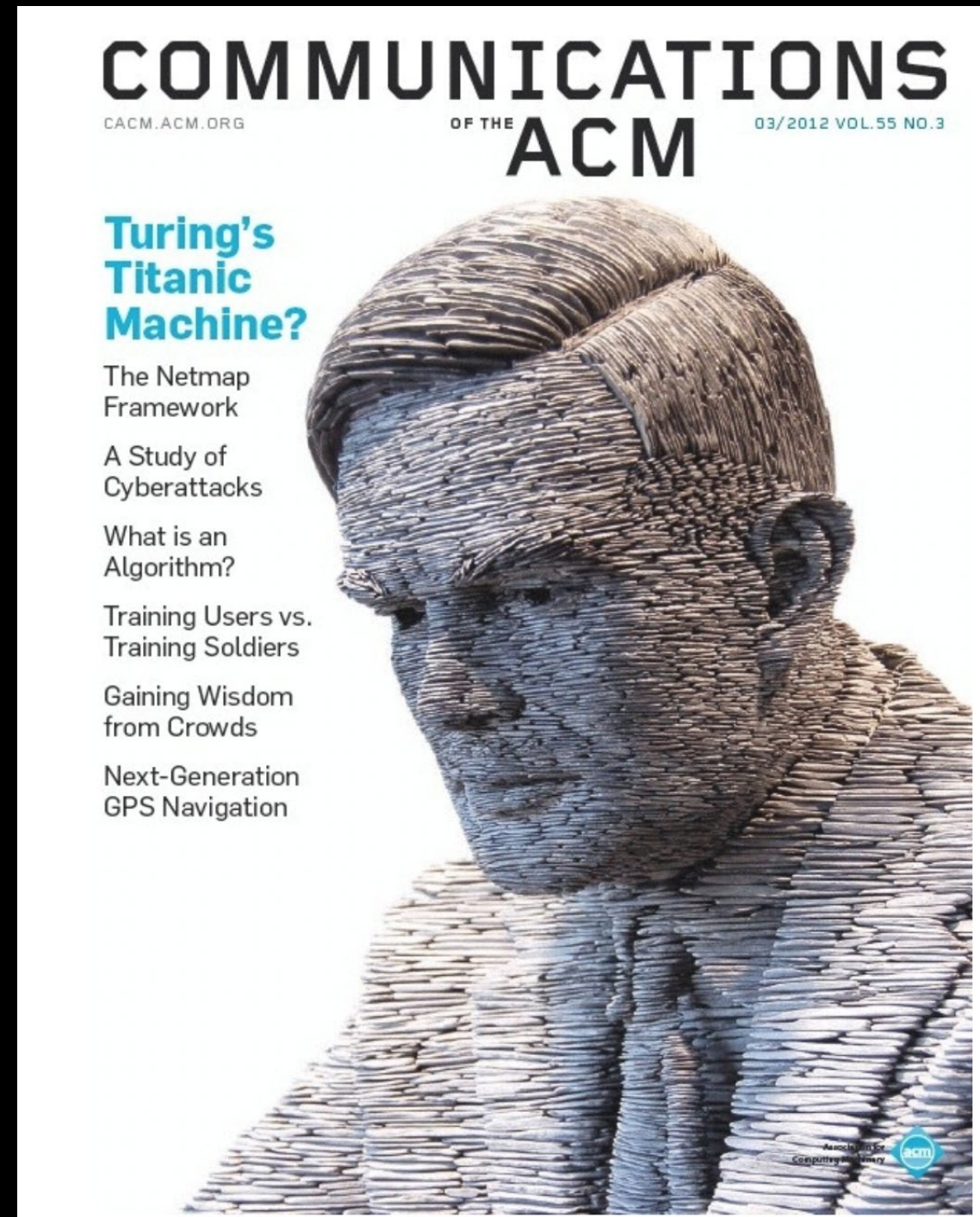
News sites

- Hacker News
- Reddit

Refereed journals

Communications of the ACM

USENIX ;login:



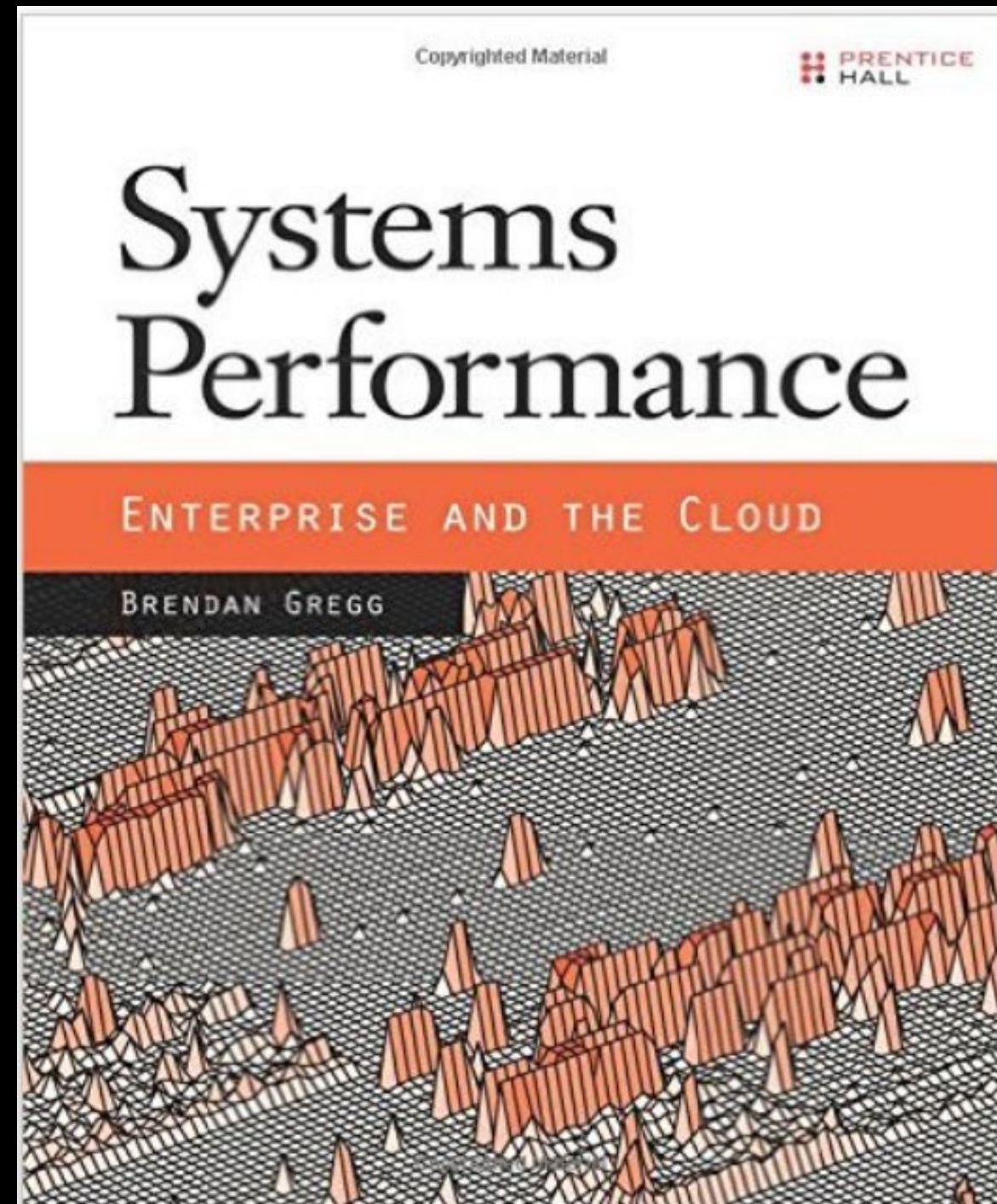
Books

Great marketing tool

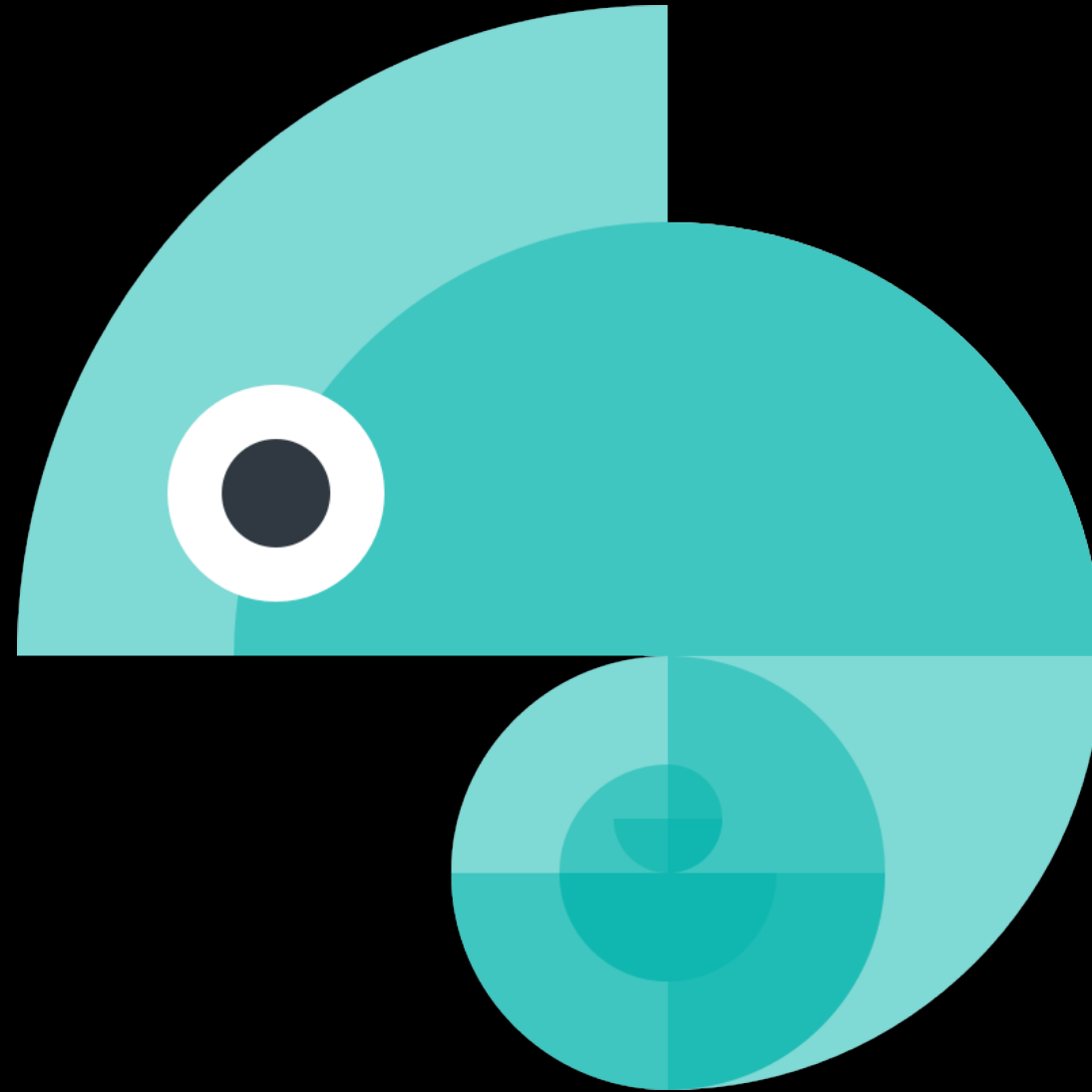
Possibly a great career move

Tons of work

Never write a book for
the money!



Logo/mascot

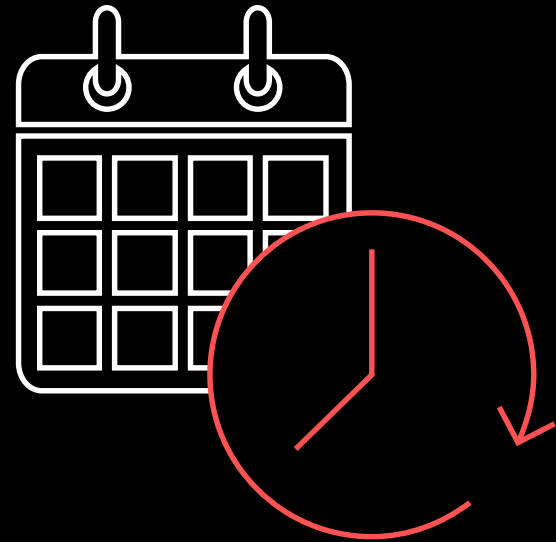




Education

- Tutorials
- Workshops
- Classes
- Certifications
- Conferences

Time needed to create different kinds of content:



Informal talk (video it!): **10 mins–1 hour**
Not counting video edit time

One blog post: **1–10 hours**

Managing a whole blog: **full-time job**

Formal presentation: **3–10 hours**

Published article: **3–30 hours**

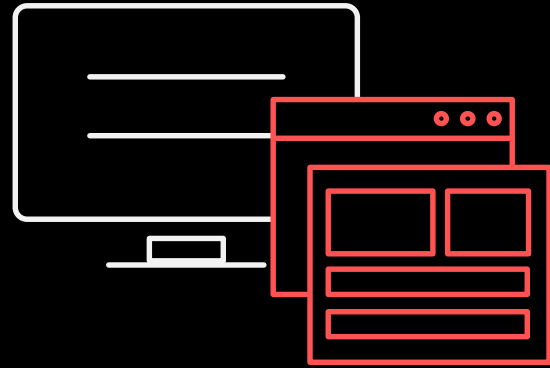
Technical paper: **5–50 hours**

Book: **2,000 hours**

Conference: **Many days**

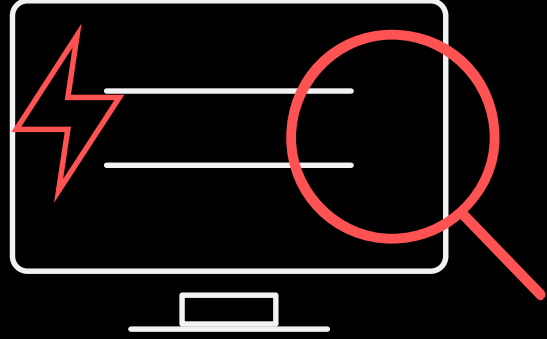
Shortcuts to developing content

- Bug database
- Email threads
- IRC/Slack discussions
- Code comments
- Rule of thumb: if you have to answer the same question more than 3 times, put the answer somewhere easy to find (FAQ, blog post, Wiki)



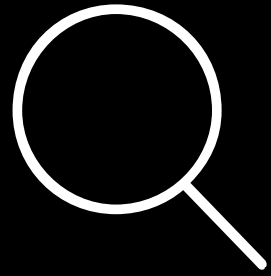
Places to put content

- GitHub repo (necessary, but not sufficient)
- GitHub pages
- Other website and/or Wiki
- Blog
- YouTube



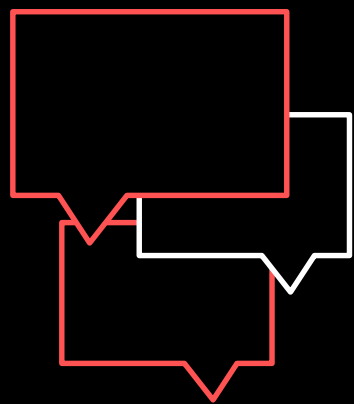
Search engine optimization

Content, content, content!
...and keep it fresh!



Discoverability

- Use keywords, tags and categories
- GitHub topics
- Blog tags and categories
- YouTube tags
- SEO keywords



Meetups, talks, and conferences

- Are a source of content
- Help with community building
- Some tips:
 - Earned speaking slots > paid ones
 - Start small/local, work your way up
 - Devs can't do them all? Have technical evangelists
 - Maybe run your own conference?



Social media

- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Facebook?
- Whatever else comes along



Discussion

- Mailing lists
- IRC
- Slack
- Stack Overflow

This one marketing secret will
change your life...

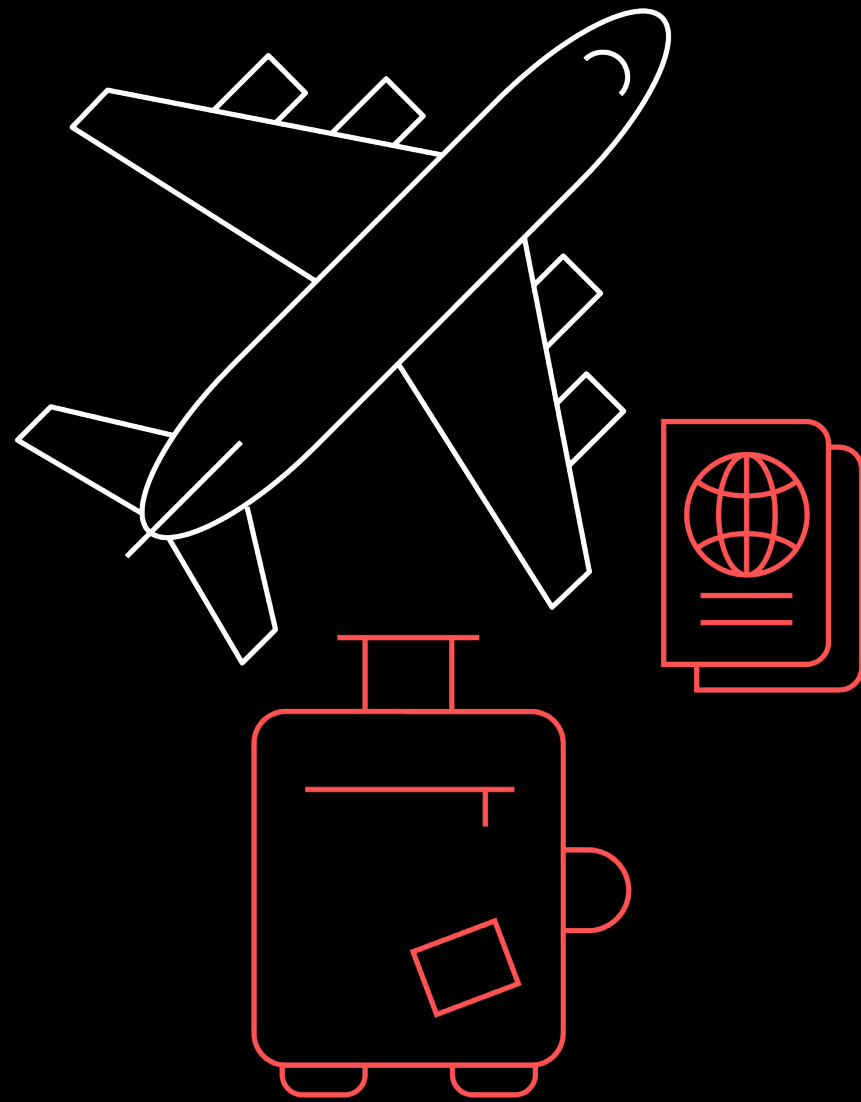


What is marketing?

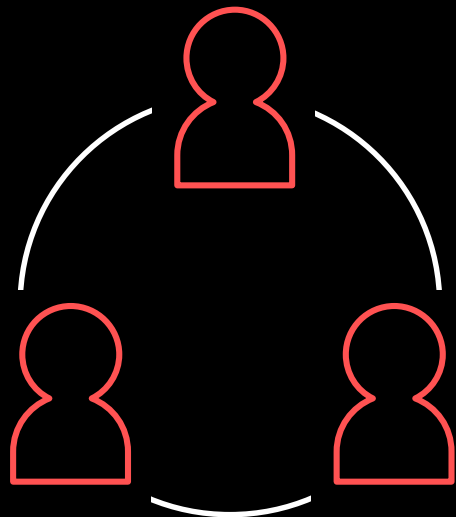
Everything that touches the customer
is marketing.

EVERYTHING

The air travel experience



Community



- Culture
- Code of conduct
- Diversity
 - Of the community
 - Of contribution
- Responsiveness
- Kindness



Brilliant jerks

“Around 50 percent of respondents had *witnessed* bad behavior in open source, and they said that’s often enough to keep them away from a particular project or community.”

[Wired](#) on the [GitHub Open Source Survey](#)



What is marketing?

Everything that touches the customer is marketing.

You are already doing marketing

Are you doing it well?

Thanks to:

- Charles Dorner
- Brendan Gregg
- Laura Ramsey
- Participants in the Marketing Open Source discussion session at the Community Leadership Summit who shared many ideas and helped refine mine

References & further reading

Diversity in Open Source Is Even Worse Than in Tech Overall: [wired.com/2017/06/diversity-open-source-even-worse-tech-overall/](https://www.wired.com/2017/06/diversity-open-source-even-worse-tech-overall/)

GitHub Open Source Survey: opensourcesurvey.org/2017/

Building Compassionate Communities in Tech, Isaac Schleuter @izs [youtube.com/watch?v=8kLlonLrKdQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kLlonLrKdQ)

Kathy Sierra's old "Creating Passionate Users" blog headrush.typepad.com/creating_passionate_users/

Kathy Sierra: Badass—Making Users Awesome amzn.to/2J7xed3

Popularity

 Watch ▾	259	 Star	3,293	 Fork	329
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Activity

Latest commit 1bdd60b 9 days ago

<> Code ⓘ Issues 34 🔗 Pull requests 4 📁 Projects 2 📖 Wiki 📊 Insights ⚙ Settings

- Pulse
- Contributors
- Community
- Traffic
- Commits
- Code frequency
- Dependency graph
- Network
- Forks

July 30, 2018 – August 30, 2018 Period: 1 month ▾

Overview

5 Active Pull Requests 8 Active Issues

🔗 2 Merged Pull Requests	🔗 3 Proposed Pull Requests	🔒 3 Closed Issues	🔔 5 New Issues
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Excluding merges, **6 authors** have pushed **7 commits** to master and **15 commits** to all branches. On master, **28 files** have changed and there have been **3,351 additions** and **434 deletions**.

7	1	2	2	1	1	1
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aws SUMMIT

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Thank you!

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