

Analyzing conflict and possible solutions around WMF software development

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Technical Collaboration
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WMF Technical Collaboration team

We help developers to build
features in collaboration
with our communities.

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Technical_Collaboration

Software development

Making users happy is hard,
but it should not be as hard
as it is in Wikimedia.

Avoiding polarization

"Community" vs "Foundation"

"Editors" vs "Developers"

"Us" vs "Them"

We are on the same boat, quite mixed.

Understanding our relationship

Not just customer-provider

Not just wiki collaboration

Not classic open source

We are software partners.

Encouraging experimentation

"Here is an idea..."

"This cannot and will not be
ever deployed in Wikimedia"

A series of experiments brought us here.

Understanding free software development

"It's too soon to announce it"

"This is broken; call me when
it's done"

Collaboration starts in the planning phase.

Sharing priorities

"Solution in search of a problem"

"Stop wasting donors' money"

"You should fix *** instead"

Strategy, annual plans, quarterly goals matter.

Defining checkpoints

"We cannot run consultations
for every feature"

"I wasn't asked"

Draft plan, design concept, prototype, beta...

Defining feedback channels

"Not in my wiki"

"Not in Phabricator"

"English only!?"

MediaWiki.org, interwiki notifications, translations

Focusing on positives and blockers

{{support}}

{{oppose}}

What is good? What is unacceptable?

Project information and updates

"Is this project dead?"

"No, we are just very busy"

Consistent project pages pointing to last activity

Checkpoints for specialized contributors

"Where can I help improving
design concepts?"

"We need accessibility testers"

Increase the diversity and focus of reviewers

Flexible deployment waves

"Please enable X in our wiki"

"Keep X away from our wiki"

Satisfy early adopters and skeptical communities

Making decisions for readers

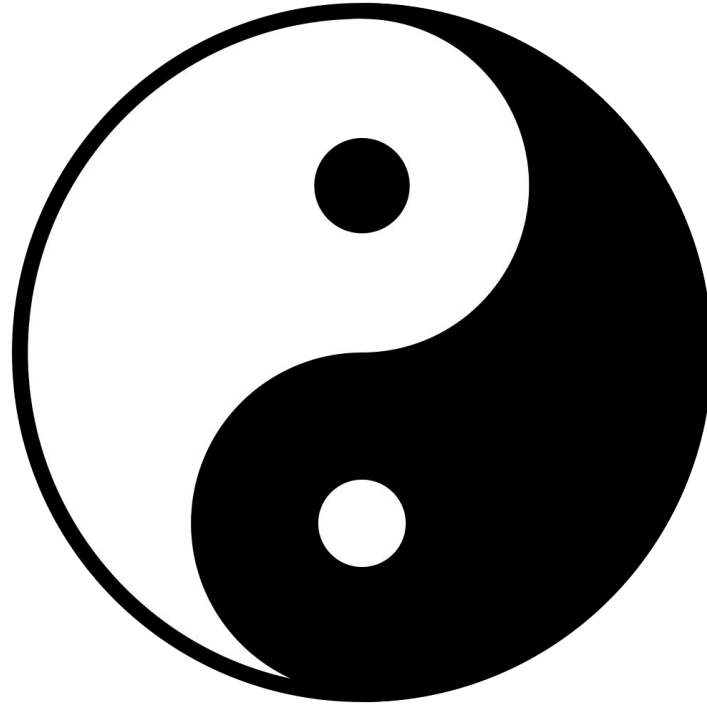
"Disable this feature for IPs"

"But readers want..."

"No, they don't"

Base assumptions on shared user research

It can be done... if everyone improves a bit.



Memorable summary for wiki communities

You are technical contributors

Demand project consistency

Choose your checkpoints

Focus on defining blockers

Memorable summary for development teams

You are community members

Demand early involvement

Use checkpoints consistently

Listen to blockers carefully

Thank you

https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Technical_Collaboration_Guideline