

Problems and Strategies in Financing Voluntary Free Software Projects



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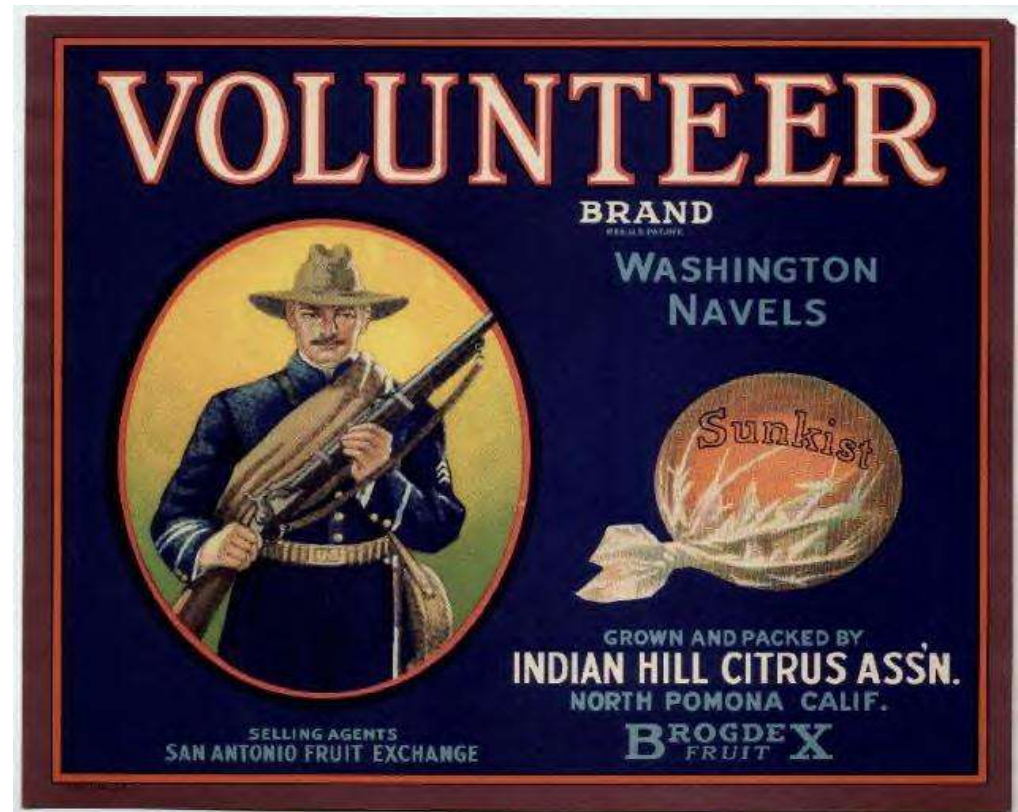
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Debian Project
Software in the Public Interest
Ubuntu Project

Overview

- Which projects are we talking about?
- Volunteerism is great!
- Funding volunteer-based organizations is problematic
- Solving these problems
 - No-Risk solutions
 - Low-Risk solutions
 - Strategic Risk Taking



Volunteer Organizations are Great!

- What I mean by “Volunteer Organization”
- Why volunteer organizations are great:
 - Volunteerism Means Many Participants
 - Institutional independence
 - Limited resources



Dangers of Funding Volunteers

“The love of money is the root of all evil.”

New Testament St. Paul, in 1 Timothy, 6:10

- Paid labor “crowds out” volunteers
- Transparency decreases
- The nature of the product changes



When the volunteer nature goes, so do all the benefits

Dangers of Funding Volunteers (Examples)



- Lessons from athletic Norwegians

- Lessons from less athletic hackers
 - The X Consortium
 - Mozilla



No-Risk Solutions



No-Risk Solutions



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Low-Risk Solutions



Strategic Risks



Transparency

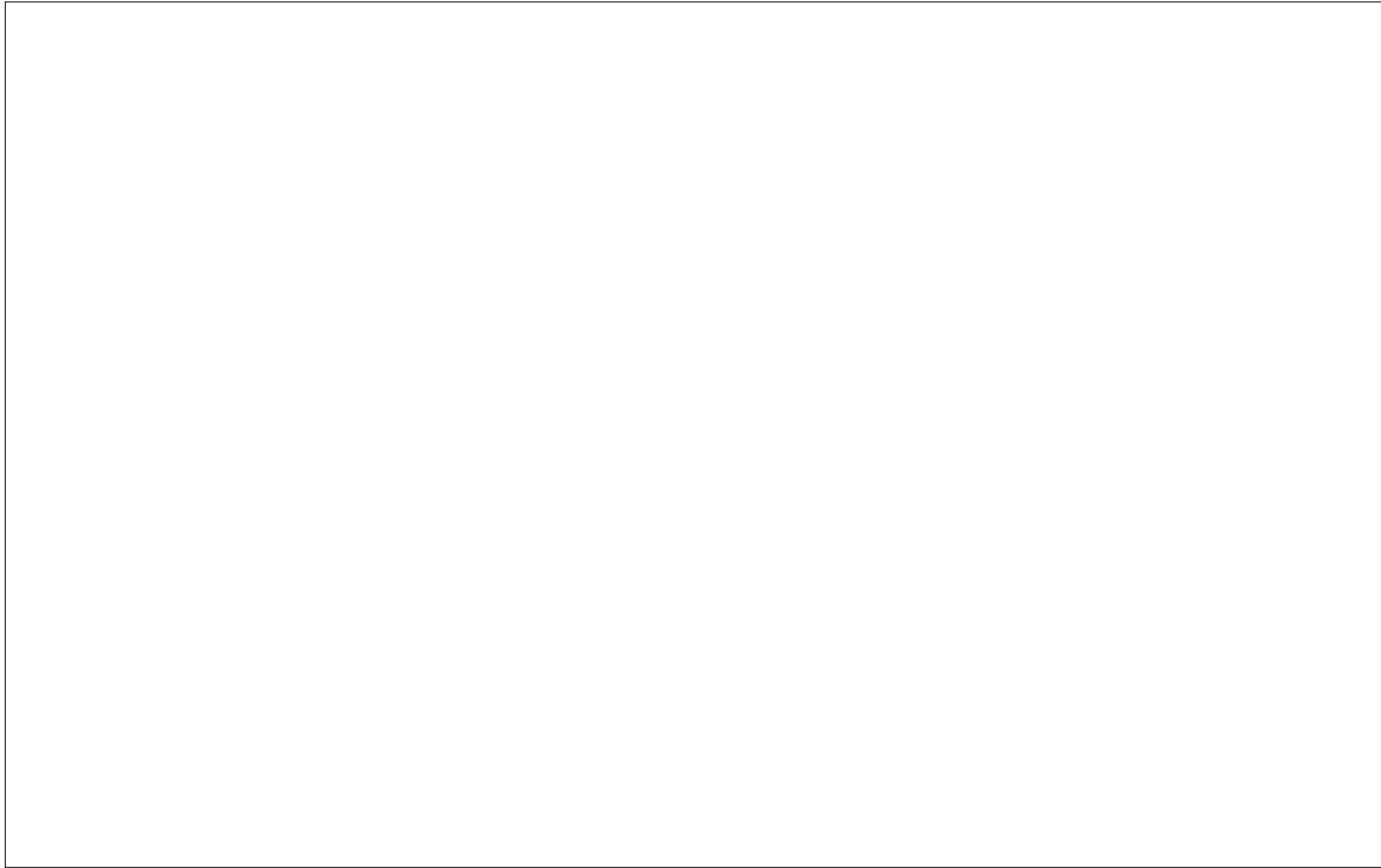


Fig 10.1: Photograph of Transparency

Outside Organizations



Summary^H^H^H Messages to Funders

- Many benefits of the free development model are tied to volunteers
- Think hard before you pay coders
- Always stay critical, stay creative, and stay transparent

