

**Rescue and renew:
How to get
legacy open source projects
unstuck**

Sumana Harihareswara, @brainwane
Perl & Raku Conference in the Cloud 2021

Overview

- **Who I am, who you are**
- **Stories: WisCon, Autoconf, pipenv**
- **How projects get stuck & unstuck**
- **Join me**

Overview

- **Who I am, who you are**
- Stories: WisCon, Autoconf, pipenv
- How projects get stuck & unstuck
- Join me

Overview

- Who I am, who you are
- **Stories: WisCon, Autoconf, pipenv**
- How projects get stuck & unstuck
- Join me

[Project](#)

[Source](#)

[Issues](#)

[Wikis](#)

[Downloads](#)



wiscondb

Convention Programming Database

A database and web application for convention programming, originally developed for WisCon. It handles registration of users, suggesting of panels or other program items, scheduling, and assignment.

WisCon

Project



wiscondb

Source

Issues

Wikis

Downloads

Page 1 of 2

1 2 Next >

ID	Status	Summary
152	Accepted	Remove inline CSS, also remove deprecated html e.g. Type-Defect Priority-Medium
151	Accepted	Issues when no data for next years convention Type-Defect Priority-Medium
150	Fixed	Patch for /trunk/web/boilerplate/program-chair-sig.minc Type-Patch
149	Accepted	Failure to create distribution records Type-Defect Priority-Medium areareg
148	Accepted	Multiple donation types Type-Enhancement Priority-Medium Area-RegDesk Area-Registration
147	Accepted	Add order status to the treasury/countorders display Type-Enhancement Priority-Low Area-Treasury
146	Done	/admin/people still shows WisCon 36 Type-Defect Priority-Medium
145	Fixed	Treasury/Finance pages still using WisCon 36 Type-Defect Priority-Medium
144	New	Treasury links don't work on prod Type-Defect Priority-Medium
143	Accepted	debug 'Reset password' -> "contact site administrator" path Type-Defect Priority-Medium
142	Accepted	Setting idPersons when inserting into ItemRanking Type-Defect Priority-Medium
141	New	Error message whenever setting a status or signup flag Type-Defect Priority-Medium
140	Accepted	dealer room applications manager Type-Defect Priority-Medium
139	Accepted	SF3 Directory specs Type-Enhancement Priority-Medium Area-SF3

WisCon: Lessons

- **Look under the couch beyond 'should'**
- **Consolidate on what contributors use**
- **Can be better if you aren't lead dev**

Autoconf

[\[Date Prev\]](#)[\[Date Next\]](#)[\[Thread Prev\]](#)[\[Thread Next\]](#)[\[Date Index\]](#)[\[Thread Index\]](#)

Re: Autoconf Digest, Vol 187, Issue 4

From: Keith Bostic

Subject: Re: Autoconf Digest, Vol 187, Issue 4

Date: Sat, 25 Jan 2020 10:32:44 -0800

>
> *Unfortunately, the improved AC_PROG_CC has not yet made it into an*
> *Autoconf release, primarily due to a lack of volunteers willing to*
> *invest the time to help with the process.*

Nick, is there someone we could pay to do a new release of the autoconf toolset?

--
--keith

=====
Keith Bostic
address@hidden

Autoconf

Autoconf 2.70 release long TODO

- Find not-yet-merged patches
 - Develop list of "downstream" redistributors of Autoconf to check for desirable patches, starting with:
 - Debian
 - Fedora
 - Ubuntu
 - Arch
 - OpenEmbedded
 - Yocto
 - <https://lists.gnu.org/archive/html/autoconf/2020-03/msg00070.html>
 - OpenBSD
 - FreeBSD
 - NetBSD
 - Inventory and copy patches from distributions' patched builds into Savannah (estimate: 5-10 patches per downstream, many duplicates) [this + above: about 2 days of work]
 - Inventory and migrate patches from mailing list into Savannah (estimate: 300-500 patches)
 - can be parallelized, might take a week or 2
- Prioritize, review, and merge patches (1 person-month + MongoDB high-priority work parallelizable)
 - Deduplicate patches and match to bug reports
 - estimate: 2-3 full-time weeks. parallelizable
 - Prioritize patches to merge, minimizing disruptive changes
 - Patches that can be merged as-is with low risk - merge during beta
 - Patches needing significant additional work - consult MongoDB for desirability
 - if low-priority: defer to 2.71
 - if high-priority: rework and merge
 - Bugs with no patch - consult MongoDB again, but defer if possible
 - estimate: < 1 week
 - Merge fixed bugs
 - estimate: 1 week if no problems discovered in the process
- Find regressions
 - Recruit testers
 - Maintainers of closely related projects (a few hours)
 - Automake
 - Libtool
 - Gnulib

Autoconf



That's true, but I'm sure
it's the last real problem.

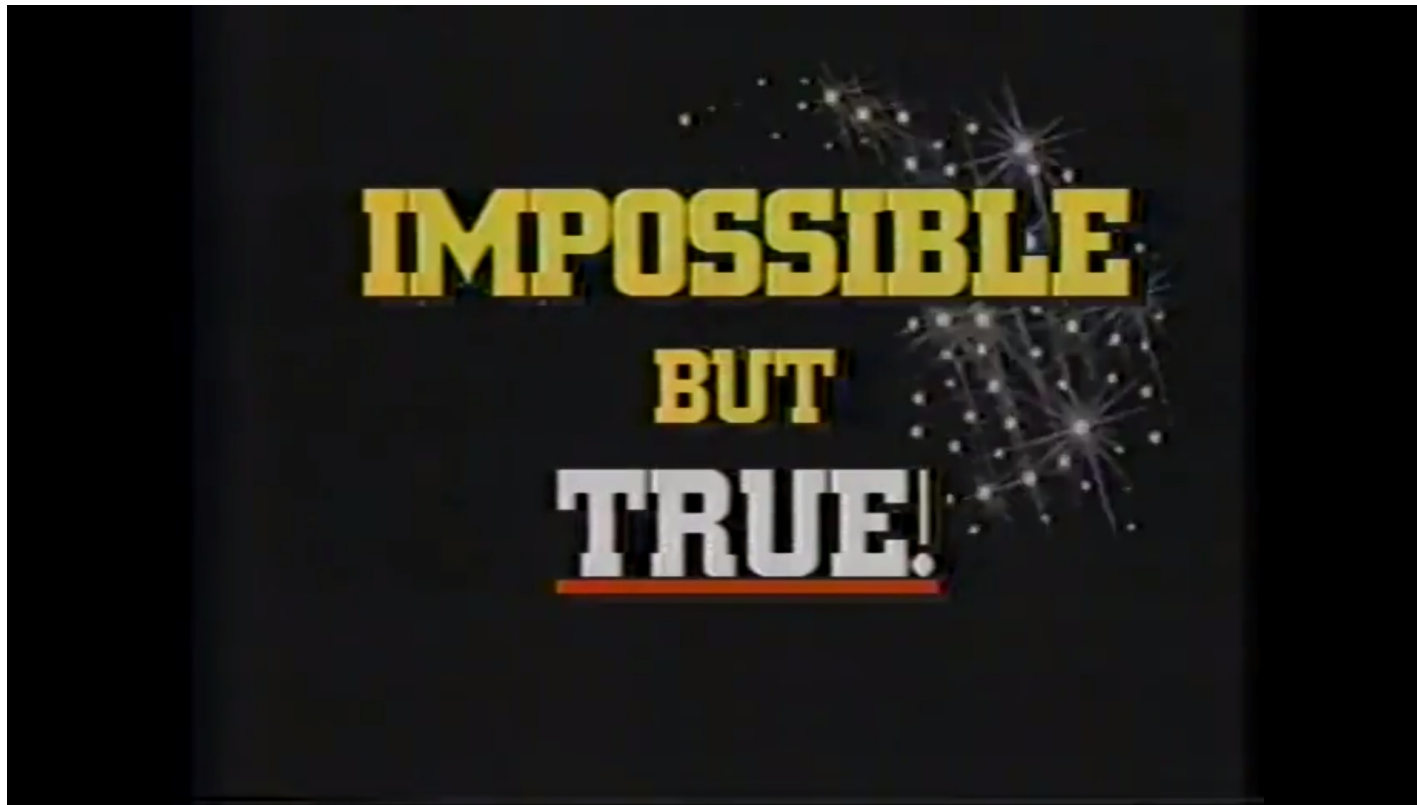
Autoconf: Lessons

- **Look for existing contributors & funders**
- **Watch out for fixed-price**
- **Headache if you don't have CI**

Pipenv



Pipenv



Pipenv: Lessons

- **You can do a lot with a little**
- **Complement what's missing**

Overview

- Who I am, who you are
- Stories: WisCon, Autoconf, pipenv
- **How projects get stuck & unstuck**
- Join me

Principles

- **No one tech industry or open source “community”**
- **Relative abundance of coders**
- **Skills can be learned**
- **Life cycle**

Stucknesses

- **Strategy**
- **Team**
- **Interface**
- **Workflow**
- **Money**

Sequence

- 1. Settling in**
- 2. Taking charge**
- 3. Making change**
- 4. Passing the baton**

Settling in

- **Initial inventory**
- **Routine responsibilities**
- **Learning the people**
- **Mapping your position & velocity**

Taking charge

- **Release, communication, issue management**
- **Existing budgets**
- **People issues on existing team**
- **Guiding new contributors**

Making change: infrastructure

- **Social**
- **Digital (work capacity)**
- **Financial**
- **Legal**

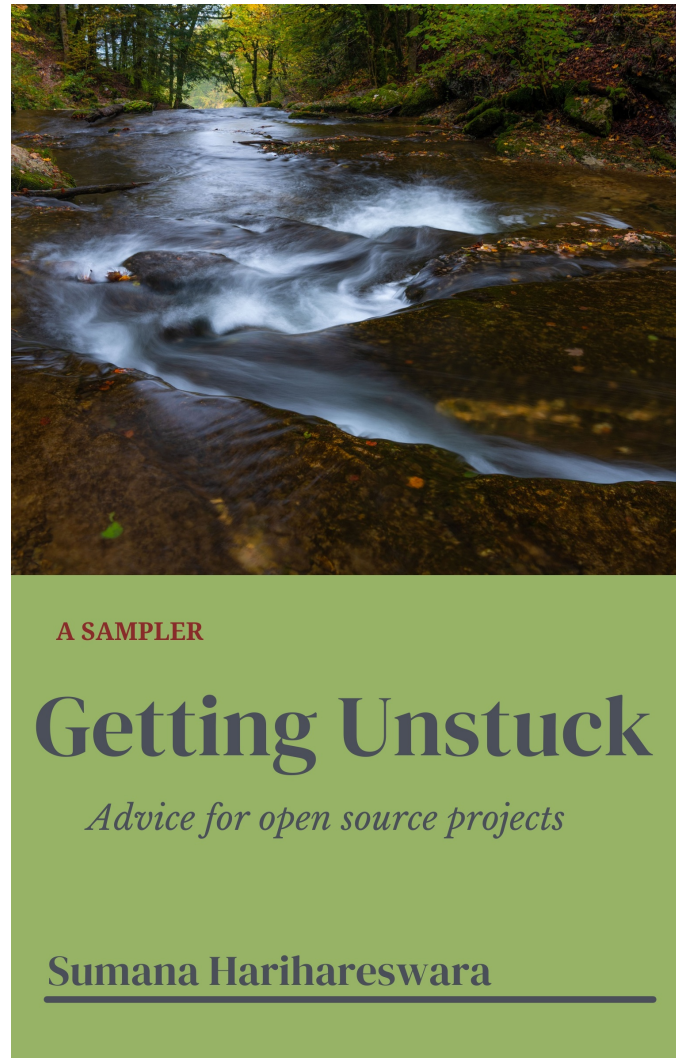
Passing the baton

- **Assessing sustainability**
- **Leaving**

Overview

- Who I am, who you are
- Stories: WisCon, Autoconf, pipenv
- How projects get stuck & unstuck
- **Join me**

My book



sh@changeset.nyc

Sumana Harihareswara

Changeset Consulting

@brainwane@mastodon.social

twitter.com/brainwane