Postgres Core Team

History and Functions

Tom Lane 28-May-2024

In the Beginning

- Berkeley POSTGRES, and later Postgres95, had outside users

- There was a mailing list about it, but once Berkeley stopped support, no place to collect code fixes/improvements

- Marc Fournier volunteered to run a CVS server, which he started up in July 1996

- Marc also started our present mailing lists on his server, although we lack archives before 1998, so this early history is poorly attested

Early Core Membership

- 1996:

  - Marc Fournier

  - Bruce Momjian

  - Bryan Henderson (dropped out ~1997)

- Added 1997:

  - Thomas Lockhart

  - Vadim Mikheev

- Added 2000:

  - Jan Wieck

  - Tom Lane

Why These Guys?
Because they were the ones doing the work

```
$ git log '--pretty=format:%as %an' \
  | sed -n 's/^199[6-8]-..-.. //p' \
  | sort | uniq -c | sort -nr

  1627 Bruce Momjian
  1381 Marc G. Fournier
   630 Thomas G. Lockhart
   402 Vadim B. Mikheev
   157 Bryan Henderson
    83 Tom Lane
    16 Edmund Mergl
    10 Byron Nikolaidis
     6 Julian Assange
     5 Jan Wieck
     1 PostgreSQL Daemon
```

Early Core Responsibilities
or, what did they do besides commit patches?

- Original concept:

  - Release scheduling, release go/no-go decisions, tarball creation

  - CVS and mail infrastructure (mostly Marc)

  - Committer selection (came with the territory of running the CVS server)

- Over time that grew to include:

  - Liaison with outside companies

  - Security report handling

  - Trademark concerns (stemming from Marc's having acquired a Canadian trademark for PostgreSQL)

- But not:

  - Website

  - Advocacy

  - Funds-raising (that was PG Foundation, SPI, ...)

A Watershed Moment

Landmark/Great Bridge business forced changes

- In early 2000, Landmark Communications approached core about wanting to start a Postgres-based company (later called Great Bridge), and how could they be on good terms with the community

- Immediate result: Jan and I were added to core to have a bigger chunk of the active community

- Longer term: it became obvious that the project was getting too big for the original core members to run

- Josh Berkus was added in 2003 as the first (but not the last) non-committer core member

- Still, there was stuff core wasn't good at

Let's delegate stuff!

Let's delegate security problems!

Separate pgsql-security list established Dec 2007

Let's delegate infrastructure!

There had already been a pginfra team running the website, I believe, but after Marc resigned from core in 2011, they took over running the CVS and mailing list servers too

Let's delegate trademark worries!

- PgCAC (Community Association of Canada) established in early 2012 to hold and manage community-owned trademarks, including Marc's original one

- Formally incorporated NPO

- Steve Singer will have an update on this later

Let's delegate release decisions!

pgsql-release list established June 2015

Process was the same as before — largely ad-hoc "do we need a release now?" decisions — with a slightly larger group of people

By about 2017 we'd switched to the current system of predetermined release dates, although decisions about emergency releases, and about release content, still belong to pgsql-release

RMT instituted 2016

Let's delegate committer selection!

Decided at the 2015 dev meeting: new committers to be chosen by existing ones

pgsql-private-committers list established for those discussions, June 2015

Let's delegate disciplinary problems!

Core had dealt with interpersonal problems before, but not often or well

Code of Conduct public discussion started early 2016

Initial idea was that core would be the enforcement committee, but we soon said "no, let's spin that off"

Code of Conduct Committee launched July 2018

So, what does core still do?

… um, not much?

… it's still kind of time-consuming, actually

Current Core Responsibilities
(aside from, you know, doing actual work)

- Ride herd on all the various subcommittees we've started, make sure things don't go off the rails

- Make "hard decisions" that others don't want to touch

- Current project management sub-groups (most include some core members):

  - pgsql-private-committers

  - pgsql-release

  - pgsql-security

  - pginfra

  - PgCAC

  - CoCC

- Still basically separate:

  - Advocacy

  - Funds management (nominally reports to us, but it's not a day-to-day concern)