A sustainable model for ICT capacity building in developing countries

Rudy Gevaert

Ghent University

About me

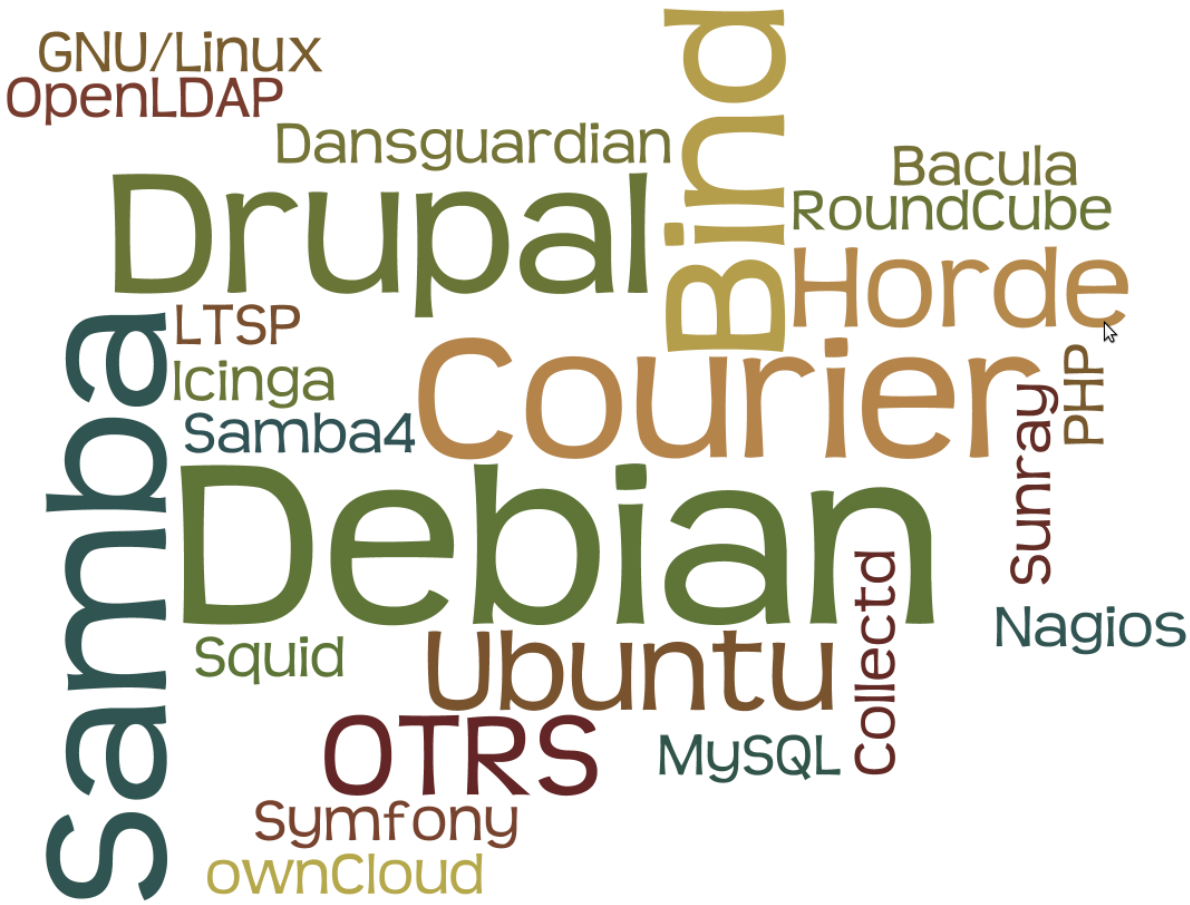
- GNU/Linux sysadmin
- Postmaster
- Devops
- ICT for development in Ethiopia and Cuba
- `http://webworm.org`
- `@rgevaert`



A sustainable model for ICT capacity building in developing countries

- Context and background of our programmes
- Overview of the ICT projects in Cuba and Ethiopia
- What did we learn?

I'm not going to talk about...



Background and Context



Overall objective: academic capacity building in developing countries

Overview of the ICT projects in Cuba and Ethiopia





Cuba

La Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas

`http://www.uclv.edu.cu`



Ethiopia

Mekelle University

`http://www.mu.edu.et`

Jimma University

`http://www.ju.edu.et`



Objectives of the ICT projects

Help the local university expand and professionalize their ICT services

Accomplishments

- Establishment of a solid network infrastructure and associated services
- E-administration system developed
- Internet access improved and managed
- Establishment of a central data center
- Human capacity building in software engineering, system and network administration
- Apply bandwidth management and optimization techniques
- University e-mail system created
- Capacity building in Free Software technologies

What did we learn?

Bandwidth is limited, manage it!

Improve and manage Internet access by applying bandwidth management and optimization techniques



Capacity building is more important than infrastructure building

- Iterative *train the trainer* process
- Be prepared for high staff turnover

The level of knowledge is limited, but the people aren't!

- Level of education is different
- Adapt to local cultures
- Failures happen due to external circumstances



Establish a good relationship with local management

- Otherwise they won't use the systems you helped with
- Development cooperation is big business
- Selection of trainees is tricky

Purchase of IT equipment is difficult

- Purchasing procedure:
  - Locally? Painful procurement
  - Abroad? Painful shipment and customs clearance
- Add spare equipment
- Choose Free Software

Small is beautiful

- Don't over engineer!
- KISS
- Don't become a dependency

How to handle project follow up

- Two visits a year are the minimum
- This is when you get things implemented
- Experience conditions where you partners work in

Conclusions

Model: keep sustainability in mind

Projects: Variable success

For myself: Don't panic: Rome wasn't built in a day!

What's next?

- Ethiopia
  - Mekelle: programme finishes March '13, after that ?
  - Jimma: half way the programme, 5 years to come
- Cuba: from April '13, two new 10-year programmes:
  - University of Oriente (Santiago De Cuba)
  - ICT network Cuba

Thank you

Gracias

አመሰግናለሁ

Questions?