Hydra: working together

How the community operates

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The Hydra Project

- Originally a collaboration between
  - The University of Hull
  - Stanford University
  - University of Virginia
  - Fedora Commons (now DuraSpace)
  - (and shortly after) Data Curation Experts (DCE)

- To produce a flexible, configurable repository and scholars workbench around Fedora 3.x, including a search and discovery interface
Hydra Community philosophy

• An open architecture, with many contributors to a common core
• Collaboratively built “solution bundles” that can be adapted and modified to suit local needs
• A community of developers and adopters extending and enhancing the core
• “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”

One body, many heads
Community

- Conceived and executed as a collaborative, open source effort from the start.
- “Easy” when there are five contributing institutions; much more of a challenge as it heads towards 40!

Hydra Partners:
- Stanford University
- DuraSpace
- Northwestern University
- Indiana University
- The Royal Library of Denmark
- Boston Public Library
- Virginia Tech
- Cornell University
- University of Hull
- MediaShelf
- Columbia University
- London School of Economics
- Data Curation Experts
- Duke University
- University of Cincinnati
- University of Virginia
- University of Notre Dame
- Penn State University
- Rock and Roll Hall of Fame
- WGBH
- Yale University
- Princeton University Library

...and there are several other contributors who are not (yet?) formally Partners
We’re on a journey

“The Hydra Project and its Partners are on a journey. The community is headed down a road to sustainability for digital libraries, toward repositories that have good uptime, that have robust communities to draw on for support, and together we are agreeing an active, shared development agenda for new features.”
The Community model...

**Hydra Partners**
- community maintenance & growth
- commission "Heads"
- functional requirements and specs
- UI design and spec
- governance of the "tech core"
- documentation
- training
- data and content models

**Hydra Steering Group**
- small coordinating body
- administration needs
- legal requirements
- resource coordination
- managing governance of the project
- overall quality assurance
- managing the Hydra "brand"

**Hydra Developers**
- define tech architecture
- code development
- integration and release

- Committers
- Contributors
- Tech users
Hydra Partners and users

OR = Open Repositories Conference
Challenges...

From

hydra

to

hydra

Photo: Declan Fleming
Challenges...

• The current challenges include:
  • Growth of numbers
  • Growing geographical spread
  • Fast moving technologies
  • Fast evolving needs
  • Legal requirements round IP

• So how do we stop so many moving parts flying apart?
Communication is the key (#1)

• Meet regularly
  • In the early stages of the Project we all met regularly face-to-face (six-weekly!)
  • As the Project grew this settled down to three or four Partner meetings each year
  • Now an annual conference “Hydra Connect” each autumn
    • + one/two Partner meetings each year
    • + an annual strategy meeting (Steering + advisers) with parallel Developers’ Congress
    • + training meetings (Hydra Camps etc)
    • + (occasional) regional meetings
Communication is the key (#2)

• **Speak regularly**
  - Monthly group Skype call for Partners (second Friday)
    - Time zone spread is at its limit...
  - Monthly group Skype call for Steering (fourth Friday)
  - Weekly committers’ call

• **E-mail regularly**
  - Hydra Partners’ mailing list (closed)
  - Hydra Steering list (closed)
  - Hydra Developers’ list (open)
  - Hydra Users’ list (open)
  - Hydra Announces list (open)
Communication is the key (#3)

Hydra wiki

- Community record keeping and information
- Records of group calls
- High level technical information (detail on Github with code)
- Meeting planning
- Community activity coordination
- etc

https://wiki.duraspace.org/display/hydra
Communication is the key (#4)

- Project Hydra website
- Public information
- http://projecthydra.org
Everybody matters

• Each to his own, but we’re in this together
  • Often appropriate to cater for Developers and Managers separately, but...
  • Take every opportunity to have mixed gatherings
    • Joint events
    • Parallel events
      • Joint sessions
      • Shared social events
• Hydra Connect meetings are open to “adopters” as well as to Partners
The Hydra Way

- Everyone has a voice
  - Anyone and everyone can be involved in planning and enjoying meetings etc
  - Everyone’s opinion is heard
  - We make a deliberate effort to ensure that newcomers get fully involved
  - Decisions affecting the Community are, where possible, discussed (and sometimes taken) via the Partners’ email list
The Hydra Way (#2)

- There’s no such thing as a stupid question
  - We try very hard to make sure that questions to the lists or the IRC get the answers they need
  - “Newcomers” are treated with particular patience!

- The success and growth of the Project is down to its Community
  - Community practice is always under review to try and keep it responsive even as more people get involved
The Partners drive

• Decisions affecting the Community are, where possible, discussed (and sometimes taken) via the Partners’ email list

• Hydra’s development strategy largely comes out of Partner meetings

• Partners are increasingly finding ways to collaborate on joint projects
  • Solution bundles
  • Grant-funded projects
And the Steering Group?

- Members of the Steering Group have no greater voting power than any other Partner.
- Nowadays Steering Group exists largely to fulfil necessary legal and administrative functions...
- ...but also a Stewardship and coordination role to make sure things keep moving along successfully
You still want more?

- There is much more detailed information about “Community Structure and Responsibilities” on the Hydra wiki
Links

- Hydra website: http://projecthydra.org
- Hydra wiki: https://wiki.duraspace.org/display/hydra
- Open mailing lists
  - hydra-announces@googlegroups.com
  - hydra-users@googlegroups.com