

The Pyramids and the Bazaar

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Eric Raymond's software bazaar is a fantasy. What really goes on in open source projects has nothing to do with his "great babbling bazaar of differing agendas and approaches".

In his classic "The Cathedral and the Bazaar", Eric calls us "happy networked hordes of programmer/anarchists". We are hordes alright, but are we anarchists? Workers building pyramids is what we are.

Why do you recognize names such as Linus Torvalds, Miguel de Icaza and Guido van Rossum? Because they are written over the entrance to the Linux, Gnome and Python pyramids respectively. They are charismatic pharaohs' names.

As Eric put it: "In order to build a development community, you need to attract people, interest them in what you're doing, and keep them happy about the amount of work they're doing. Technical sizzle will go a long way towards accomplishing this, but it's far from the whole story. The personality you project matters, too."

And why does nobody know your name? Because nobody knows the name of a pyramid worker.

We are lucky that, according to Eric, the fear of having their pyramids forked by dissenting princes keeps these dictators "benevolent". They let us play inside their pyramids for free, after we build them. That is cool. We are happy, voluntary workers in a win-win situation.

What Eric describes is tremendous improvement, no doubt, over our previous condition of pilgrims paying to pray at Redmond Cathedral.

[But it is still not the bazaar.](#) [2]

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