Linux Plumbers 2017

OpenFabrics Alliance - Status and New Directions

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What is the OFA

- 'Alliance' of 27 member companies and organizations

    The OpenFabrics Alliance (OFA) is an open source-based organization that develops, tests, licenses, supports and distributes OpenFabrics Software (OFS). The Alliance's mission is to develop and promote software that enables maximum application efficiency by delivering wire-speed messaging, ultra-low latencies and maximum bandwidth directly to applications with minimal CPU overhead.

Operates as a California 501(c)(6) Corporation.

What it Does Today

- **The Alliance directly manages:**
    - An annual conference: 5 days, 100-150 attendees (OpenFabrics Workshop)
    - An interoperability logo program in partnership with the University of New Hampshire InterOperability Laboratory (IWG)
    - Hosting for some items, mailing lists and web sites
    - Marketing (MWG)
    - RDMA Training materials
- **Staff working for Alliance members work on open source projects within OFA working groups:**
    - OFIWG (libfabric/etc)
    - OFVWG (common verbs APIs/etc)
    - OFED (EWG)

What it Doesn't Do

- **In relation to the RDMA and fabric related open source projects, the OFA does NOT:**
    - Own any source code or hold any copyrights
    - Hold trademarks, logos, domain names, etc related to open source
    - Own accounts (eg github/etc) acting as the home for projects
    - Provide respected technical dispute resolution mechanism
    - Enforce copyright licensing policies for non-members
      OFA expects members to follow their membership agreement when contributing to 'some' software.

Change is in the Air

The OFA board is revisiting its bylaws and re-evaluating its purpose:

- The board has been trying to determine what open source software the OFA is connected to
- There is a desire from some members and the current board to increase the support the OFA provides the open source software stack, and transition to more like a modern open source non-profit

Some members are talking about:

- Revising/re-purposing the Logo events at UNH-IOL
- Only manage the yearly workshop
- Directly fund development and/or shared cloud resources

Change has Already Happened

- Modern OFA OFED is officially a 'backport only' and 'upstream first' development. Changed from an experimental fork serving new development a long time ago.
  This rule has not always been rigidly followed, but is agreed up on by the board
  NOTE: Vendor OFED is not under the control of the OFA and the OFA does not enforce a trademark on 'OFED'.
- libfabric is a new project built inside the OFA following an informal collaborative model
- OFA Workshop talk selection is now done by a selection committee, instead of by the board
- The OFA Board and Membership has a much better understanding of how licensing works in Open Source, and their role in the process

What is possible?

At this point, there is a chance to shape a new direction:
- Discuss ideas during this time slot
- If your organization is a member, contact your OFA representative and discuss
- Speak to Susan Coulter or myself privately

The Board has a mission statement under discussion:

Provide a neutral environment for community assets and infrastructure in support of highly performant networking software development, enhancement, and integration of that software with new and emerging technologies.

Typical Modern Open Source Non-Profit

Developers typically want:

- Make development easier. Lower friction. Grow the developer community.
- Support technical collaboration: conferences, mailing lists, servers, etc
- Neutral forum for technical activities

Members typically want a *reliable* base to build their value-add on top of:

- Safe-guard and maintain shared assets, resources and sometimes IP
  eg continuity of the project(s)
- Confidence in the Legal Status of the shared IP
- Marketing / User / Community Enablement and Growth
- Technical Dispute Resolution (eg avoid a crisis leading to a fork)
- Extra Value for their membership level

Example: Linux Foundation

Typical Linux Foundation Collaborative Project, operating budget ~$300k/year

http://dpdk.org/about/charter

The mission of DPDK is to:

- *Create an open source, production quality, vendor neutral software platform for enabling fast dataplane I/O, upon which users can build and run data plane applications.*
- *Host the infrastructure for the DPDK community, establishing a neutral home for community assets, infrastructure, meetings, events and collaborative discussions.*

Example: OpenStack Foundation

Prominent Open Source organization, operating budget $4-5 million/year

https://www.openstack.org/join/

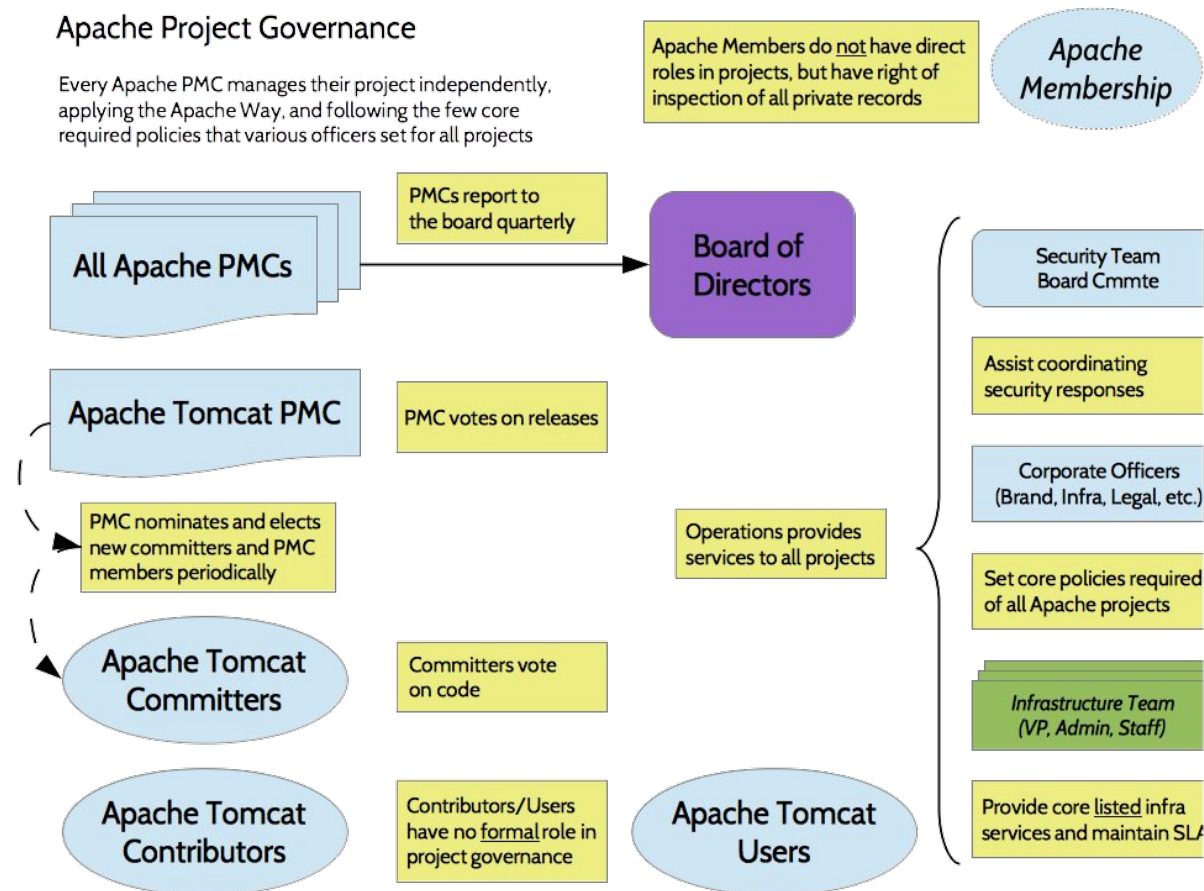**https://www.openstack.org/legal/**

The mission of the Open Stack Foundation is:

- *The OpenStack Foundation is an independent body providing shared resources to help achieve the OpenStack Mission by Protecting, Empowering, and Promoting OpenStack software and the community around it, including users, developers and the entire ecosystem.*

Example: Apache Software Foundation

Stewards Open Source projects using 'The Apache Way':

- High degree of independence from corporate control
- Budget ~$1 million/year, runs about two annual conferences
- Each project has a Project Management Committee overseeing the health of the project
- Holds trademarks, runs infrastructure and provides legal protection for committers and participants

Apache Project Governance

Every Apache PMC manages their project independently, applying the Apache Way, and following the few core required policies that various officers set for all projects

Apache Members do not have direct roles in projects, but have right of inspection of all private records

Apache Membership

All Apache PMCs — PMCs report to the board quarterly → **Board of Directors**

Apache Tomcat PMC — PMC votes on releases

PMC nominates and elects new committers and PMC members periodically

Apache Tomcat Committers — Committers vote on code

Apache Tomcat Contributors — Contributors/Users have no formal role in project governance

Operations provides services to all projects

Apache Tomcat Users

Security Team Board Cmmte

Assist coordinating security responses

Corporate Officers (Brand, Infra, Legal, etc.)

Set core policies required of all Apache projects

Infrastructure Team (VP, Admin, Staff)

Provide core listed infra services and maintain SLA

From Apache.org

Discussion Topics

- OFED backport project
  Continue? Stop?
- Forum for technical decisions related to common APIs
  eg OFVWG / OFIWG
- Logo program
  Continue? Stop? Repurpose?
- Different approach to the Conference?
- End user & developer training?
- Directly fund development?
- Steward 'backup' credentials - eg admin github logins/etc?
  Safeguard overall community from AWOL maintainers.
- Fund Cloud service accounts (eg AWS, GCE, CI, etc)?
- Establish a Technical Board?

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THANK YOU

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