

Building the Metadeck, a Fresh Take on Managing OSS Communities using Pokemon-style Personas

- **Speaker:** Edward Cable
- **Room:** HC 204
- **Time:** Sat 10:30 am – 11:00 am
- **Format:** Lecture (30 Min + Q&A)
- **Difficulty:** Introductory / Some experience required / Expert
- **Track:** Licensing & Governance
- **Additional Tags:** Sustainability & Funding
- **Presenter Location:** In-person
- **Experience:** several-th time speaking / umpteenth time speaking
- **At:** anywhere, at lfnw

Description:

Managing the dynamics of an open source community is a challenging but fulfilling undertaking that requires balancing personalities, skill levels, cultural backgrounds, and motivations. As AI reshapes the tech sector, interpersonal skills—trust, empathy, relationship-building—are more critical than ever for sustaining healthy OSS communities.

The Mifos community sits at the intersection of open source, fintech, and financial inclusion, bringing together a diverse mix of contributors: technical developers, non-technical enterprise users, junior and senior contributors, and globally distributed participants. This blend creates a unique dynamic that, when orchestrated well, yields powerful innovation and long-term contribution.

This talk offers a fresh take on OSS community personas through the lens of **Pokemon-style characters**, each representing different contributor “species” with their own strengths, weaknesses, and motivations. Attendees will learn how “Trainers” (community managers and leaders) can build a **metadeck** of contributors who thrive together.

Drawing on decades of experience guiding the cross-cultural Mifos community—which has enabled hundreds of contributors across sectors to deliver financial services to millions—the session covers:

- Building trusted relationships and loyal community bonds
- Managing conflict and dealing with difficult personalities
- Designing strong internship and mentoring programs
- Unlocking long-lasting volunteer contribution
- Encouraging upstream commercial participation
- Identifying and mitigating burnout
- Motivating and incentivizing contributors
- Balancing egos and uniting technical + non-technical contributors

This session is valuable both for community managers seeking to cultivate meaningful contribution and for open source contributors wanting to maximize their impact.

Target Audience:

- OSS Community Managers
- Open source contributors
- Anyone seeking to improve community health and contributor engagement

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