

Linux Plumbers 2019 - BOF

**Civil Communication in Practice:
What does it mean to you as an
open source developer?**

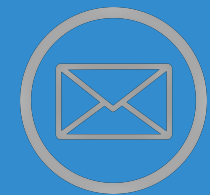
Isabella Ferreira
Polytechnique Montréal

Who am I?

2



PhD student in Computer Engineering
@ Polytechnique Montréal (MCIS Lab)



isabella.ferreira@
polymtl.ca



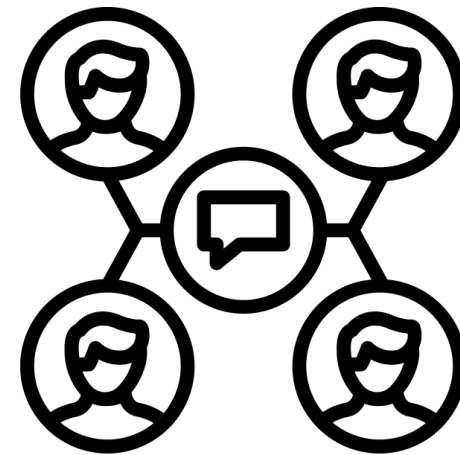
/isabellaferreira



/isabellavieira



@isaferreira_57



Currently working with interaction among software developers in open source communities

- communication style
- developers' behavior
- cross-cultural differences
- impact on code contributions
- ...



Communication and interaction with people is part of our daily life

How does it happen in a large group of people with shared goals (i.e., open source communities)?

Goal of this BOF:

- Raise awareness about civil communication
- Learn from the community how communication happens in practice



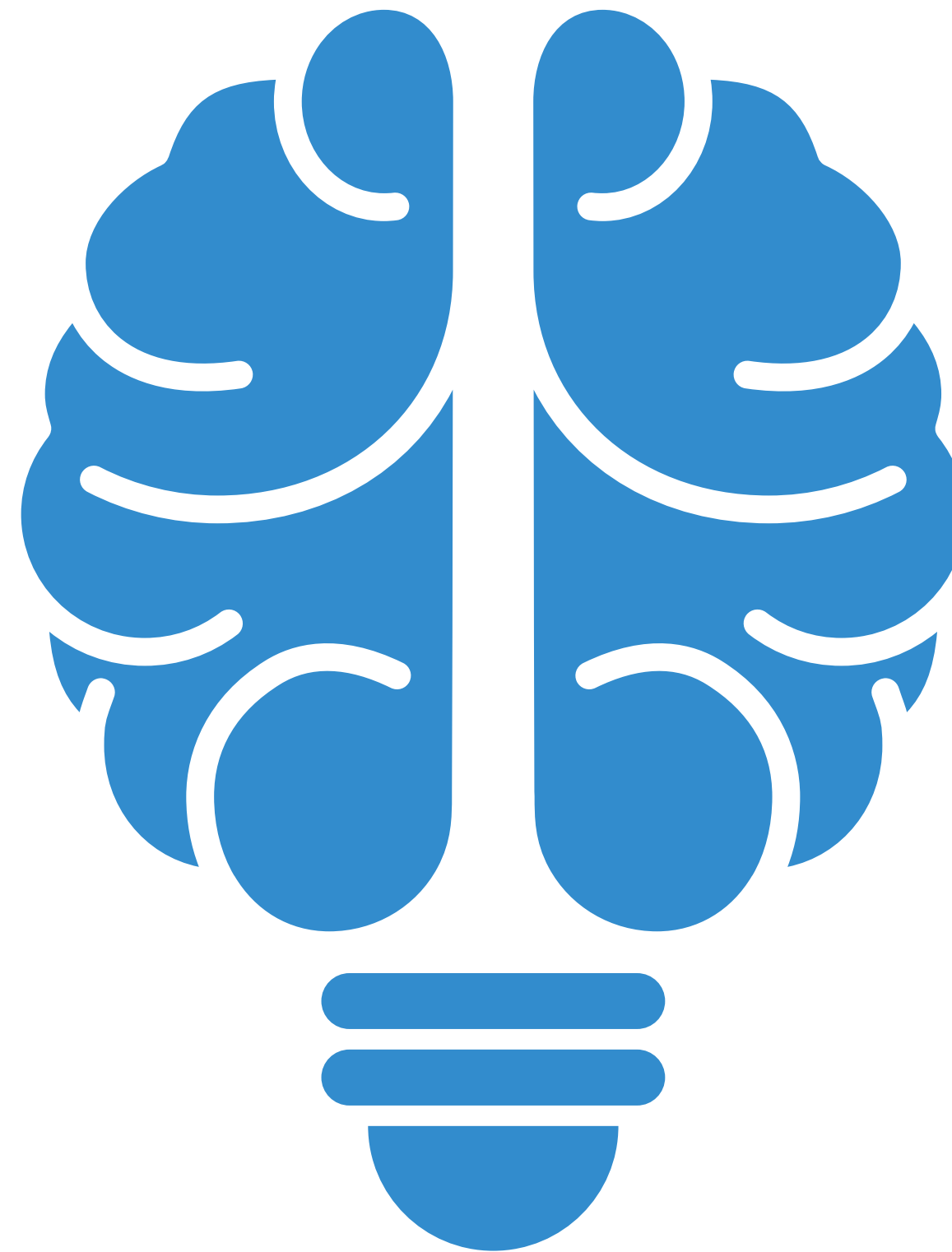
What is this BOF about?

Communication
Examples

Civility in open source
communities

Code of Conduct

Auto Detection of Uncivil
Communication



The discussions are about the communication/message itself, and not about the people involved in the discussions

What is civility?

ci·vil·i·ty

/səˈvilədē/ 

noun

formal politeness and courtesy in behavior or speech.

"I hope we can treat each other with civility and respect"

synonyms: [courtesy](#), courteousness, [politeness](#), [good manners](#), mannerliness, gentlemanliness, [chivalry](#), [gallantry](#), graciousness, [consideration](#), [respect](#), [gentility](#); [More](#)

- polite remarks used in formal conversation.

plural noun: **civilities**

"she was exchanging civilities with his mother"

synonyms: polite remark, [politeness](#), [courtesy](#); [formality](#)

"she didn't waste time on civilities"

**What is civility
to you?**

Live survey

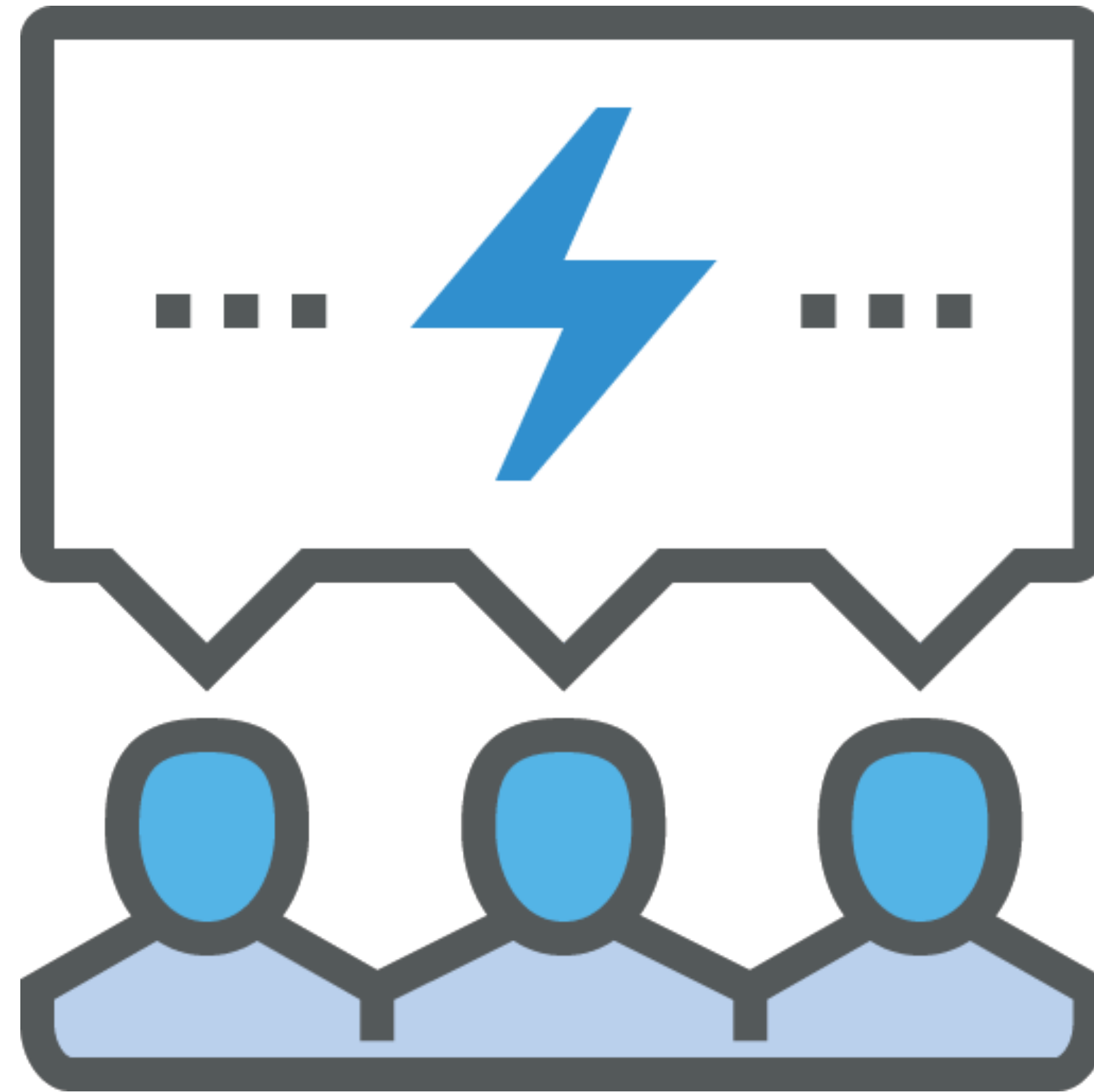
Communication examples

7

http://bit.ly/email_examples



Discussion of survey answers



Live survey

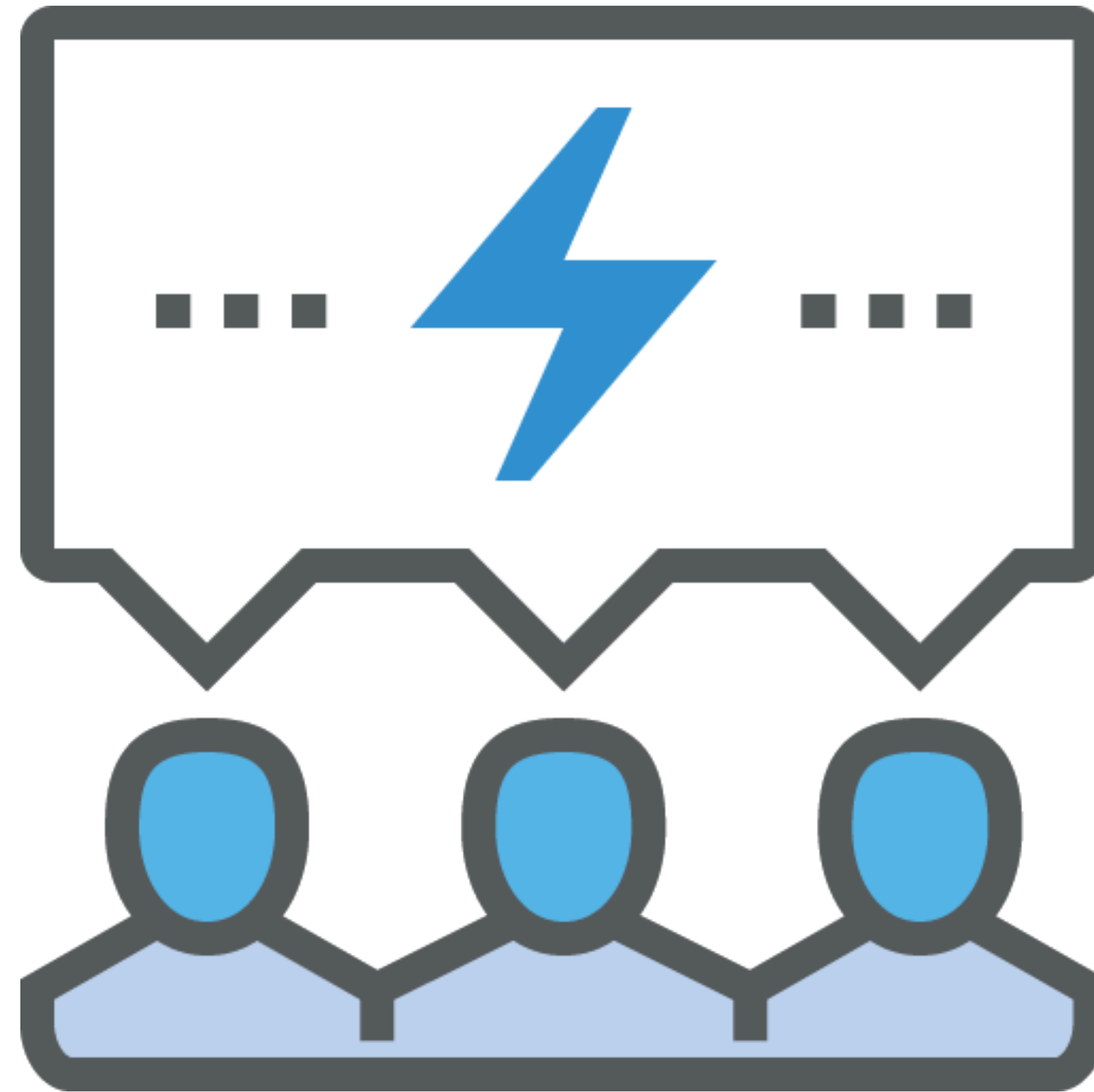
Civility in Open Source Communities

9

http://bit.ly/civil_com



Discussion of survey answers



How to solve the problem?

Code of Conduct establishes positive behaviors

Debian “Code of Conduct”

Debian

1. Be respectful

In a project the size of Debian, inevitably there will be people with whom you may disagree, or find it difficult to cooperate. Accept that, but even so, remain respectful. Disagreement is no excuse for poor behaviour or personal attacks, and a community in which people feel threatened is not a healthy community.

2. Assume good faith

Debian Contributors have many ways of reaching our common goal of a [free](#) operating system which may differ from your ways. Assume that other people are working towards this goal.

Note that many of our Contributors are not native English speakers or may have different cultural backgrounds.

3. Be collaborative

Debian is a large and complex project; there is always more to learn within Debian. It's good to ask for help when you need it. Similarly, offers for help should be seen in the context of our shared goal of improving Debian.

When you make something for the benefit of the project, be willing to explain to others how it works, so that they can build on your work to make it even better.

4. Try to be concise

Keep in mind that what you write once will be read by hundreds of persons. Writing a short email means people can understand the conversation as efficiently as possible. When a long explanation is necessary, consider adding a summary.

Try to bring new arguments to a conversation so that each mail adds something unique to the thread, keeping in mind that the rest of the thread still contains the other messages with arguments that have already been made.

Try to stay on topic, especially in discussions that are already fairly large.

5. Be open

Most ways of communication used within Debian allow for public and private communication. As per paragraph three of the [social contract](#), you should preferably use public methods of communication for Debian-related messages, unless posting something sensitive.

This applies to messages for help or Debian-related support, too; not only is a public support request much more likely to result in an answer to your question, it also makes sure that any inadvertent mistakes made by people answering your question will be more easily detected and corrected.

6. In case of problems

While this code of conduct should be adhered to by participants, we recognize that sometimes people may have a bad day, or be unaware of some of the guidelines in this code of conduct. When that happens, you may reply to them and

Contributor Covenant Code of ConductLinux Kernel

Our Pledge

In the interest of fostering an open and welcoming environment, we as contributors and maintainers pledge to making participation in our project and our community a harassment-free experience for everyone, regardless of age, body size, disability, ethnicity, sex characteristics, gender identity and expression, level of experience, education, socio-economic status, nationality, personal appearance, race, religion, or sexual identity and orientation.

Our Standards

Examples of behavior that contributes to creating a positive environment include:

- Using welcoming and inclusive language
- Being respectful of differing viewpoints and experiences
- Gracefully accepting constructive criticism
- Focusing on what is best for the community
- Showing empathy towards other community members

Examples of unacceptable behavior by participants include:

- The use of sexualized language or imagery and unwelcome sexual attention or advances
- Trolling, insulting/derogatory comments, and personal or political attacks
- Public or private harassment
- Publishing others’ private information, such as a physical or electronic address, without explicit permission
- Other conduct which could reasonably be considered inappropriate in a professional setting

Our Responsibilities

Maintainers are responsible for clarifying the standards of acceptable behavior and are expected to take appropriate and fair corrective action in response to any instances of unacceptable behavior.

Maintainers have the right and responsibility to remove, edit, or reject comments, commits, code, wiki edits, issues, and other contributions that are not aligned to this Code of Conduct, or to ban temporarily or permanently any contributor for other behaviors that they deem inappropriate, threatening, offensive, or harmful.

Scope

This Code of Conduct applies both within project spaces and in public spaces when an individual is representing the project or its community. Examples of representing a project or community include using an official project e-mail address, posting via an official social media account, or acting as an appointed representative at an online or offline event. Representation of a project

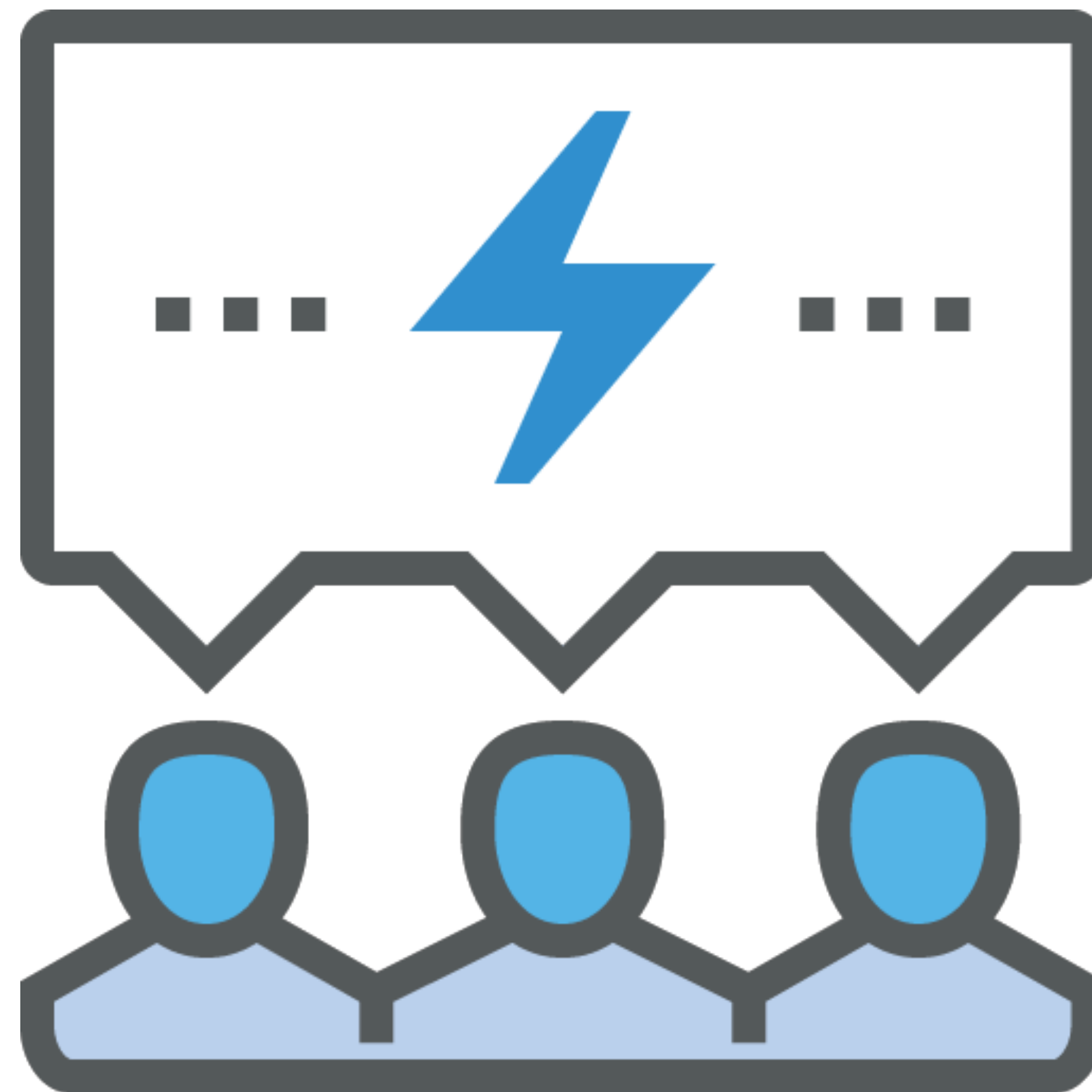
Live survey

Code of Conduct

<http://bit.ly/codecond>



Discussion of survey answers



Initial idea to measure civility

15

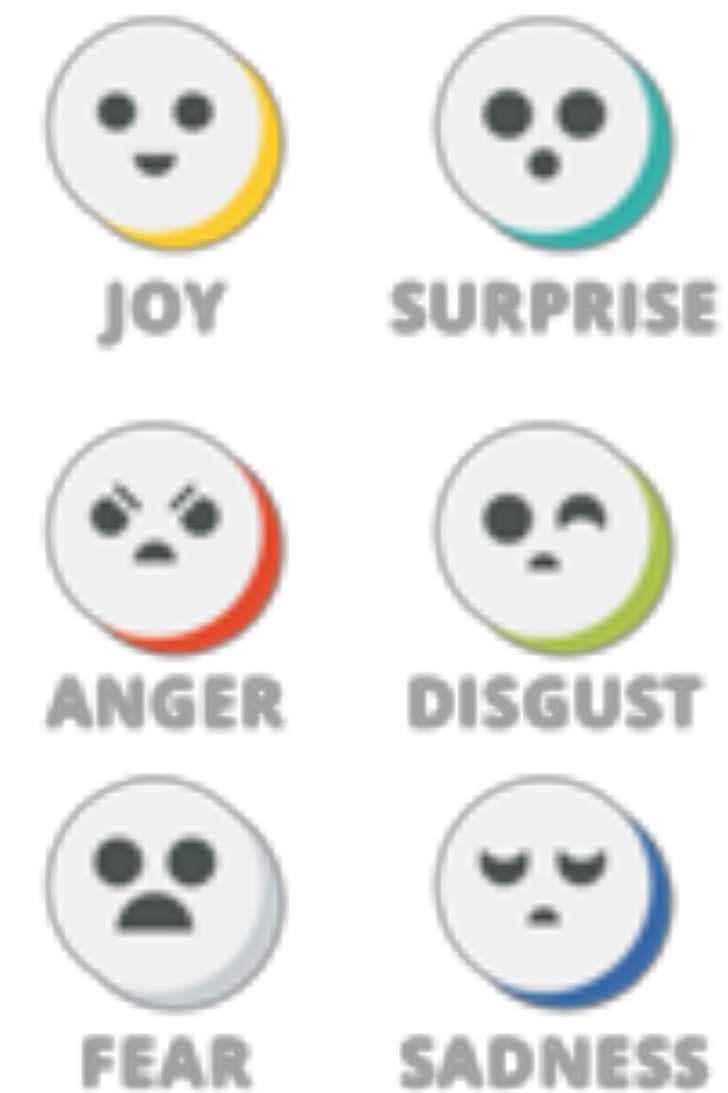
Sentiment analysis



Senti4SD

IBM Watson

Emotion analysis



IBM Watson

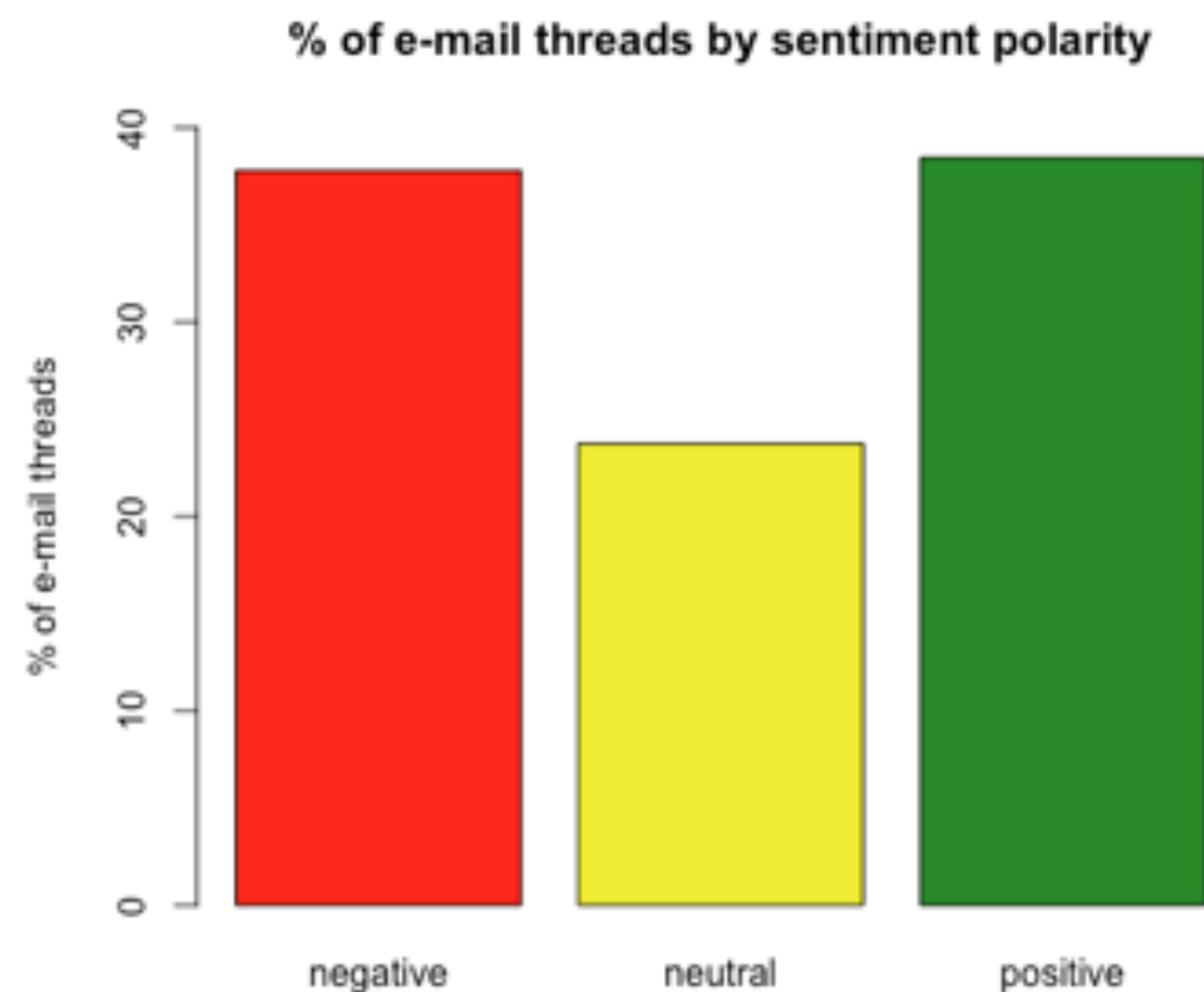
Tools:



LKML Mailing List
Jan 2017 - Jan 2019

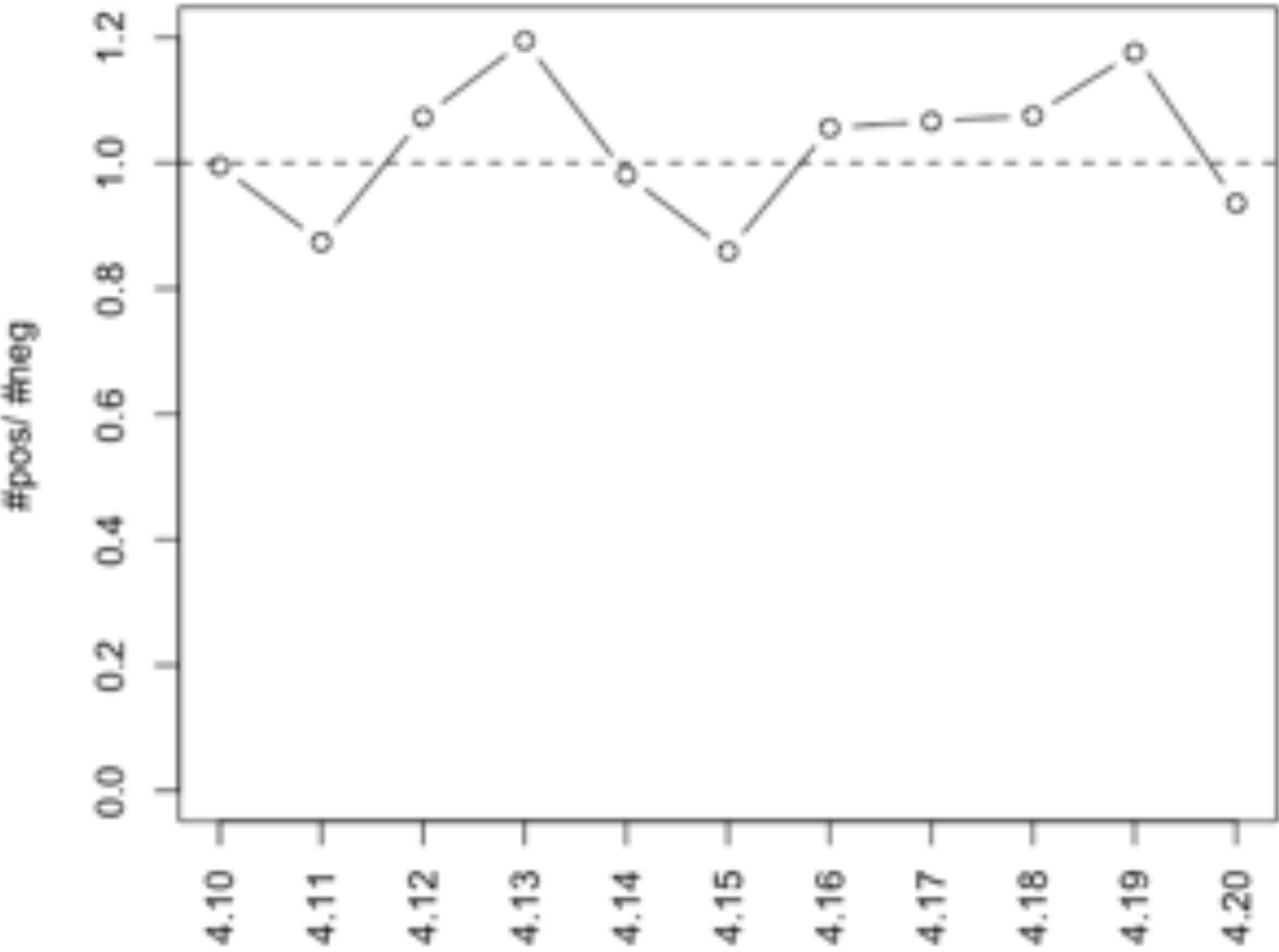
Equal proportion of positive and negative e-mail threads

LKML

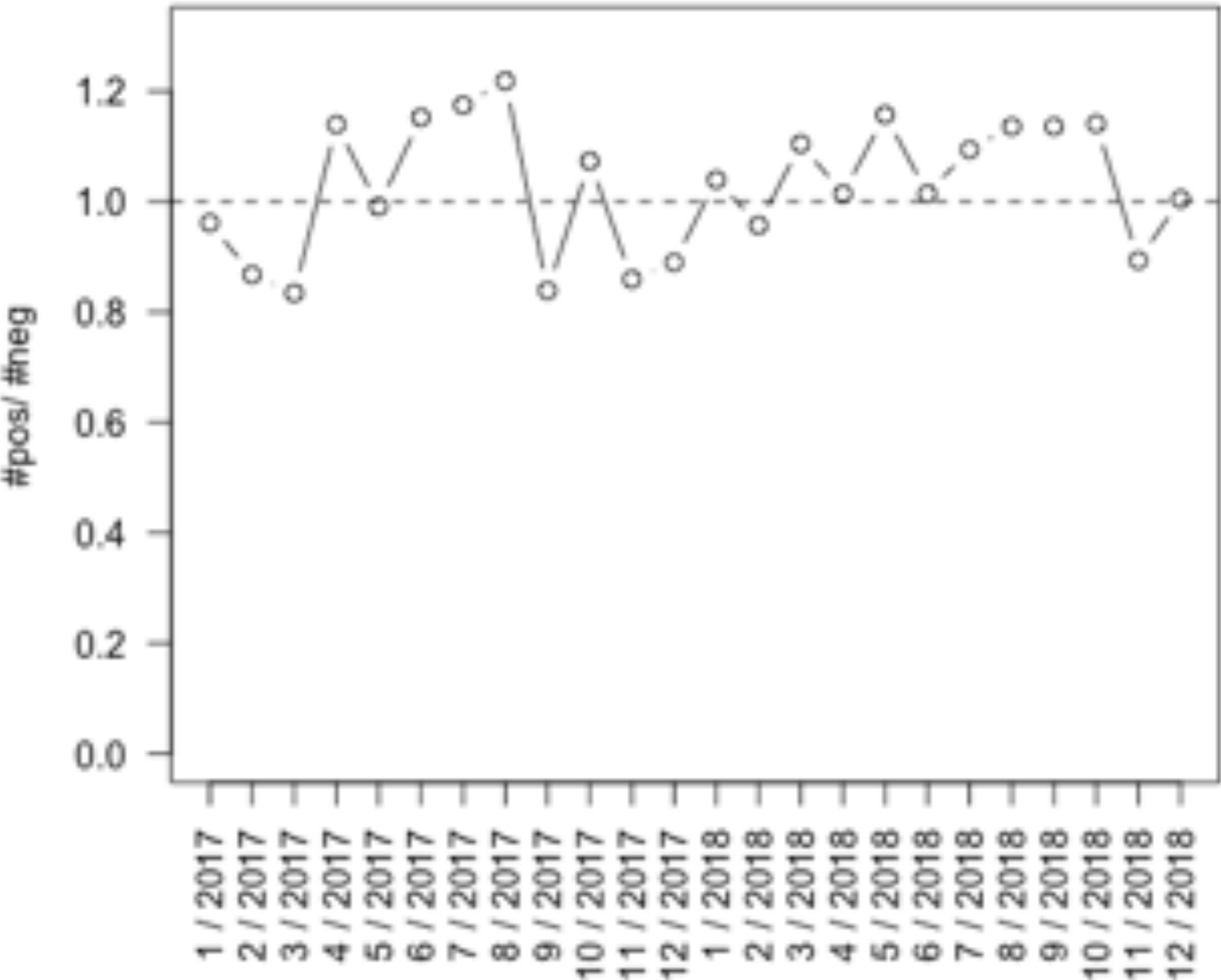


Sentiment changes across releases and months

Variation of sentiment across releases

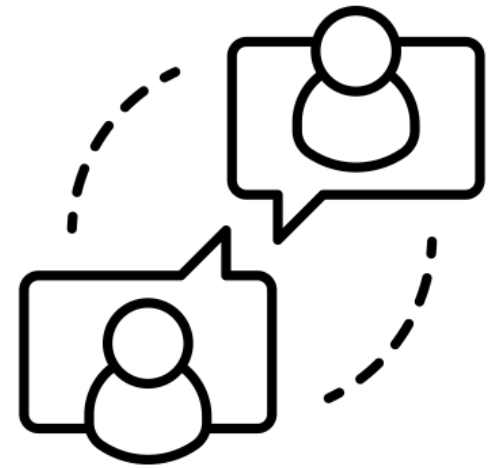


Variation of sentiment across months



Challenges for Auto Detection

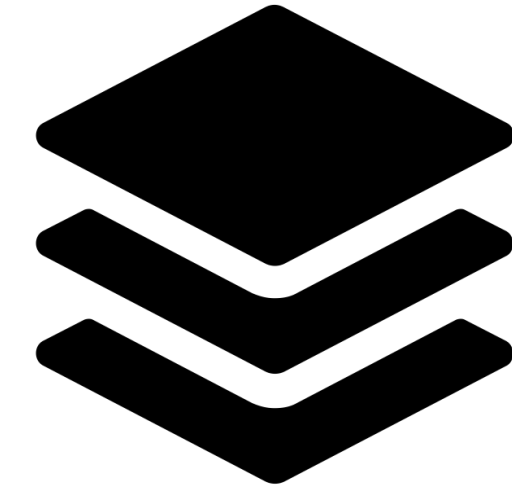
19



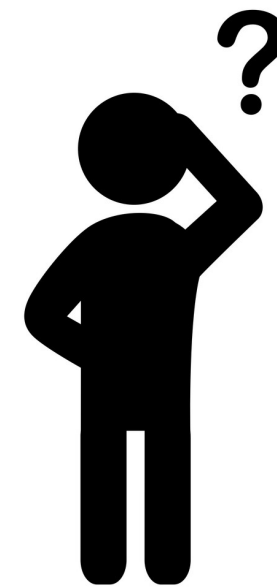
Different conversation styles: sarcasm, irony, frustration



Target and context of the conversation



Granularity of analysis



Is it really civil? uncivil?
What about the perception of
insiders and outsiders?

Didn't we learn this lesson already with "X" ? i.e. that dumping filesystem code in staging on the assumption "the community" will fix it up when nobody in "the community" uses or can even test that filesystem is a broken development model....

Senti4SD: Negative

IBM Watson: Negative

I still don't see the need to re-initialize the input parts of “X” on each loop iteration unless you can show the need for it (e.g. a buggy hypervisor version not conforming to the interface specification). I don't feel really strong about it and let “Y” the maintainer for the “Z” parts decide. I don't feel strongly about this either - I think this patch is good enough. I'll apply to “W”. I think this patch should be backported to stable trees because the issue could appear depending on the compiler.

Senti4SD: Positive

IBM Watson: Negative

Could we just avoid this existing ABC non sense in multiple places by keeping the *abc.de unit consistent with ABC*ABC_DE ? Since we only want to keep ccm size to kb granularity. And while at it, rename @de placeholder in X to Z. Well when I started to look at that I understood that in case of W smallest K is R bytes which won't fit in our F grained solution. So it looks like instead of moving to "abc_de" we have to stay with what we have and moreover add support of that R corner-case because $ABC(K) = 0$.

Senti4SD: Neutral

IBM Watson: Negative

What are the pros and cons of auto detection of uncivil behavior?



What are the pros and cons of auto detection of uncivil behavior?

- Is it censorship?
- Would auto detection discourage you to contribute to this community?
- Does it impact/slow down software development?

Special thanks to

25



Kate Stewart
Linux Foundation



Shuah Khan
Linux Foundation



Daniel German
University of Victoria



Bram Adams
Polytechnique Montréal

What is civility?

ci·vil·i·ty

/səˈvilədē/ 

noun

formal politeness and courtesy in behavior or speech.

"I hope we can treat each other with civility and respect"

synonyms: **courtesy**, courteousness, **politeness**, **good manners**, mannerliness, gentlemanliness, chivalry, gallantry, graciousness, **consideration**, **respect**, **gentility**; [More](#)

- polite remarks used in formal conversation.

plural noun: **civilities**

"she was exchanging civilities with his mother"

synonyms: polite remark, **politeness**, **courtesy**; **formality**

"she didn't waste time on civilities"

What is this BOF about?

Communication
Examples

Code of Conduct



Civility in open source
communities

Auto Detection of Uncivil
Communication

The discussions are about the communication/message itself, and not about the people involved in the discussions

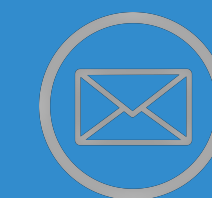


Isabella Ferreira
Polytechnique Montréal
MCIS Lab

If you would like to participate on our research by answering surveys and sharing your experience, please add your email to our mailing list:



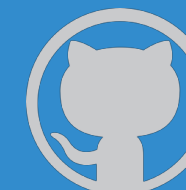
http://bit.ly/emails_research



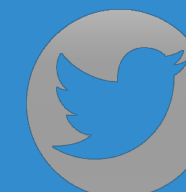
isabella.ferreira@
polymtl.ca



/isabellaferreira



/isabellavieira



@isaferreira_57