

President Manifesto 2021

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It is amazing to me how quickly time moves forward within the Open Source Matters community. While my first term as President of Open Source Matters was shortened on the front-end with transitional issues, the approximately 9 months I have been in the position passed very quickly.

While running for my first term I placed significant emphasis on what I perceived as a need to better live out our core values, especially within leadership. My observation was that we were often so focused on bylaws, procedures, and processes that we lost sight of people and values.

I was concerned that we were working so much on developing rules and how to enforce them that we were forgetting why they existed in the first place. Every policy, every bylaw, every line of code should be a reflection of [our core values and why Joomla exists](#).

If we get this part right, it can create powerful alignment within the community, with all members pulling in the same direction. Conflict will still happen, but a focus on values changes how we handle that conflict. Conflict handled well can be incredibly positive for an organization. Two people may have a disagreement about what to do or how something should be done. If they can handle that tension well, it allows them to discover a solution that might accommodate both of their concerns in a way that neither person considered as a possibility before the disagreement happened.

If one has a situation where there is no mutually satisfactory conclusion, both parties should at least be able to see that they agree on the values of the organization. The disagreement becomes less about presumed bad intentions and more about understanding a difference of opinion. In sharing common values, they both still desire the same “big picture”.

What I described above was not what I experienced when I first joined the OSM Board in late 2019. I believe that this dynamic has improved significantly over the course of 2020. This improvement was absolutely a group effort and I don't take singular credit. I am grateful to my

colleagues on the Board and in leadership roles across the community for supporting this focus and this effort.

On what basis can I claim improvement? I do not want to speak on behalf of other Board members, but when conflict arises within the Board, it is now handled directly and professionally. From a public perspective, there is a noticeable absence of vacant board positions and votes of no confidence.

Naturally, conflict still happens in the broader community. We are beginning to see issues handled more often through informal means that actually resolve the conflict. This is in stark contrast to adjudicating a formal punishment process that tends to create more problems and conflict than it resolves.

The Joomla community has always had a rather vocal presence on social media. Disagreement is public and often heated. The nature of those online disputes feels less frequent and less personal in recent months. I have always been surprised when volunteers share countless hours of their lives and then post publicly about Joomla in ways that are clearly destructive of the project. Again, I feel that we are moving toward a culture where challenging others' ideas is taking precedence over attacking people. Expressions of gratitude and sincere apologies are more often entering our conversations.

[What I am describing is a shift in culture](#). It does not happen overnight, and it is not a straight line. There are setbacks. Also, if you are currently involved in a situation that is counter to what I am describing above, these comments are sure to ring hollow. There is more work to be done, but I want to acknowledge that this is the foundation upon which Joomla can assert itself as a leader in how source software is created and shared with the world.

[2020 was a crucial year for Joomla](#), but everything described above is prelude.

That prelude has reinvigorated sponsorships, rebooted the Joomla Magazine, launched new initiatives in education and volunteer engagement, and brought us to the imminent release of Joomla 4.

As a community and as a project, our time is now.

The shift is from a conversation that is internal to our community and toward one that lets the world know that Joomla 4 presents a dramatic leap forward in security, functionality, and ease of use for content authors, website builders, and extension developers.

The goal is to move from getting our house in order to letting the world know what our community has accomplished.

On a personal level, I look forward to engaging with our Joomla User Groups to encourage the amazing work that they are doing. I will contribute to our magazine, highlighting the best of what Joomla has to offer and to seek opportunities through outside channels to share with the world what we have to offer. I will work with our events department to see how we can continue to grow our engagements internally and externally. I will support production in anticipating the next generation of Joomla after 4.0 releases. I will collaborate with marketing to broadcast loud and clear that Joomla 4 is here and it is ready to help organizations meet the challenges of our fast changing world.

In short, I look forward to focusing on two items into a second term as President:

1. Continue to foster the environment where our community can bring its best work forward.
2. Be an amplifier for the world outside of our community to let them know everything that we have accomplished and will be accomplishing into the future.

Thank you for the work that you have done to make Joomla what it is today. Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as the President of Open Source Matters for much of the last year.