Development lessons from the world of Open Source Software

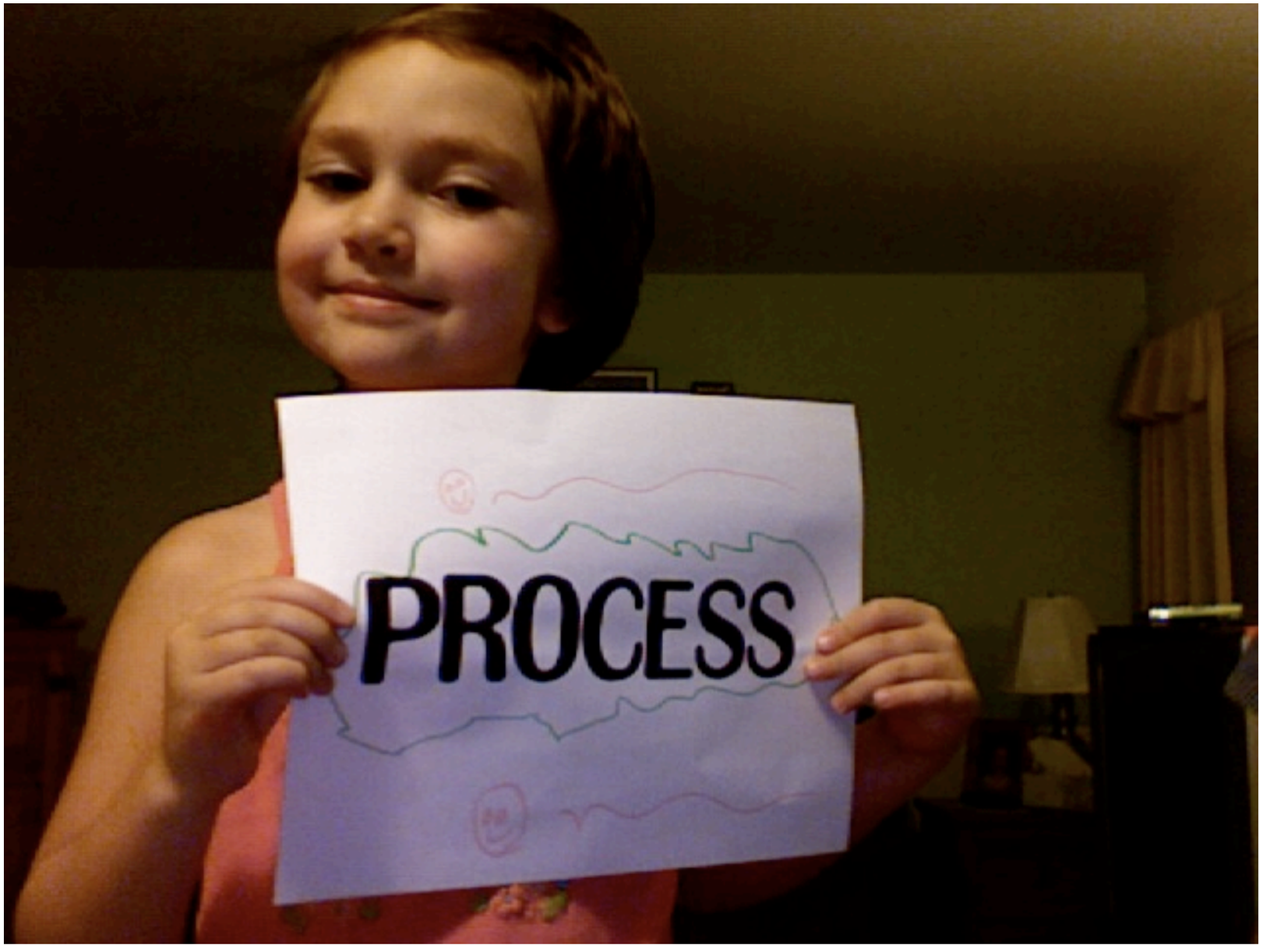
Andy Lester, 9/5/2007

Andy Lester

- 20+ years of software development
- 10+ years of open source development
  - perlbuzz.com
    - My new news site
  - perlfoundation.org
    - PR for the Perl Foundation

Highly successful open source projects

Linux, *BSD	Subversion	Perl, PHP, Python	Ruby + Rails
SpamAssassin	Apache	vim	Emacs
Mozilla/ Firefox	Wikipedia	MediaWiki	Mono
OpenOffice	Eclipse	JBoss	Tomcat


PROCESS

Requirements are fluid.

Think wiki, not Word.

All development must be in the open.

Coding standards are a must.

Automated testing is the only kind that scales.

Release **early**.

Release **often**.

PRODUCT

The software world is market-driven.

Project X is going to replace your project.

Make sure **you** are Project X.

Public perception will make or break your project.

Some projects will fail.

Cut your losses early.

Listen to users, but don't bother with consensus.

Every project needs a strong leader to drive.

PEOPLE

Leadership is earned.

It cannot be assigned.

People work best on what they **love**.

Everyone on a project is a **volunteer**.

Only this guy has employees for life.

Authoritarianism does not work.

Jerks are toxic and must be removed.

No one is irreplaceable.

A **meritocracy** does not see race, color, gender, or religion. It sees **quality**.

Importance of social skills **increases** with physical distance.

People are all that matter.

Always be recruiting.

Your next steps

Join an
open source project.
(Including Wikipedia)

Follow how it works.

Apply it to your shop.

andy@perl.org