

# UNLEASH THE POWER OF ASYNCHRONOUS DECISION MAKING



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*images from Adobe Stock, Express & Firefly,  
unless otherwise noted  
slides revision 2024-06-03*



COMMUNITY  
OVER CODE

*slides revision 2023-05-10c*

# nothing new....



2008

ApacheCon

# Open Source collaboration tools are good for you!

Bertrand Delacrétaz, Senior Developer

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ApacheCon EU 2008, Amsterdam, April 9th

slides revision: 2008-08-09



Leading the Wave  
of Open Source

● Day

tools?

I will NOT attend  
your meeting  
I'm an Open Source person!

**Bertrand Delacrétaz**  
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Principal Scientist, Adobe, Basel  
Apache Software Foundation Member and Director

ApacheCon Séville, November 2016  
slides revision 2016-11-14

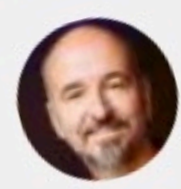


2016



# Asynchronous decision-making: Helping remote teams succeed

Better communication with fewer meetings isn't a pipe dream. Here's how asynchronous decision-making can make it happen.



12 Dec 2017 | Bertrand Delacretaz | 21 likes | 2 comments



2017

# The Apache Software Foundation Blog

MONDAY FEBRUARY 06, 2017

« The Apache News... | Main | The Apache Software... »

## Success at Apache: Asynchronous Decision Making

by Bertrand Delacretaz

Asynchronous decision making is a key enabler of our geographically and culturally distributed Open source teams. In this post I'll explain the ingredients that make it work the ASF.

I became active in the ASF in 2001 via Gianugo Rabellino - he was the one who started the discussions with Apache Fop about me donating the jfor XLS-FO to RTF converter that I had developed earlier. It was already too late to uninvent RTF which is a terrible format, but I digress. I am currently a member of the Board of Directors of the ASF and have been doing a lot of thinking (and presentations) about what makes the ASF tick in terms of collaboration and Shared Neurons.

2018

# They don't understand me! Tales from the multi-cultural trenches



**Bertrand Delacretaz**  
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slides revision 2018-09-27 - ApacheCon North America 2018, Montréal

**BETTA**

**PACHECON**  
North America  
Montréal, Canada  
7 September, 2018



# Surviving large online communities with conciseness and clarity

FOSS Backstage, March 2022 - Bertrand Delacour  
& Board Member, Apache Software Foundation

2022



Shared Neurons: The Secret Sauce of Open Source?

Many brains getting together to create a Greater Whole

Bertrand Delacour, Adobe - @bertranddelacour  
AFAC-EECON Europe, October 2017

cultures

shared neurons

concision & clarity

channels

meetings

language

async decisions

communication

timezones

# challenges

of remote collaboration







apologies

if you've seen this already!

# meetings



A close-up, sepia-toned photograph of a man with a full beard and mustache, wearing a dark apron over a dark t-shirt. He is looking intently at a piece of wood he is working on. He has a pencil in his mouth and is holding a wooden mallet in his right hand. The background is a workshop with various tools and materials.

On a maker's schedule:  
meeting ruins half a day?

Blog post by Paul Graham: <https://s.apache.org/ms>

meetings  
are  
VERY  
expensive

MELIÀ  
HOTELS & RESORTS

4 ENGINEERS	\$ 640
2 MANAGERS	\$ 370
MANAGERS' lost PRODUCTIVITY	\$ 1280
ROOM	\$ 50
Δ 66 Δ VATION	\$ \$

LOTS  
OF \$





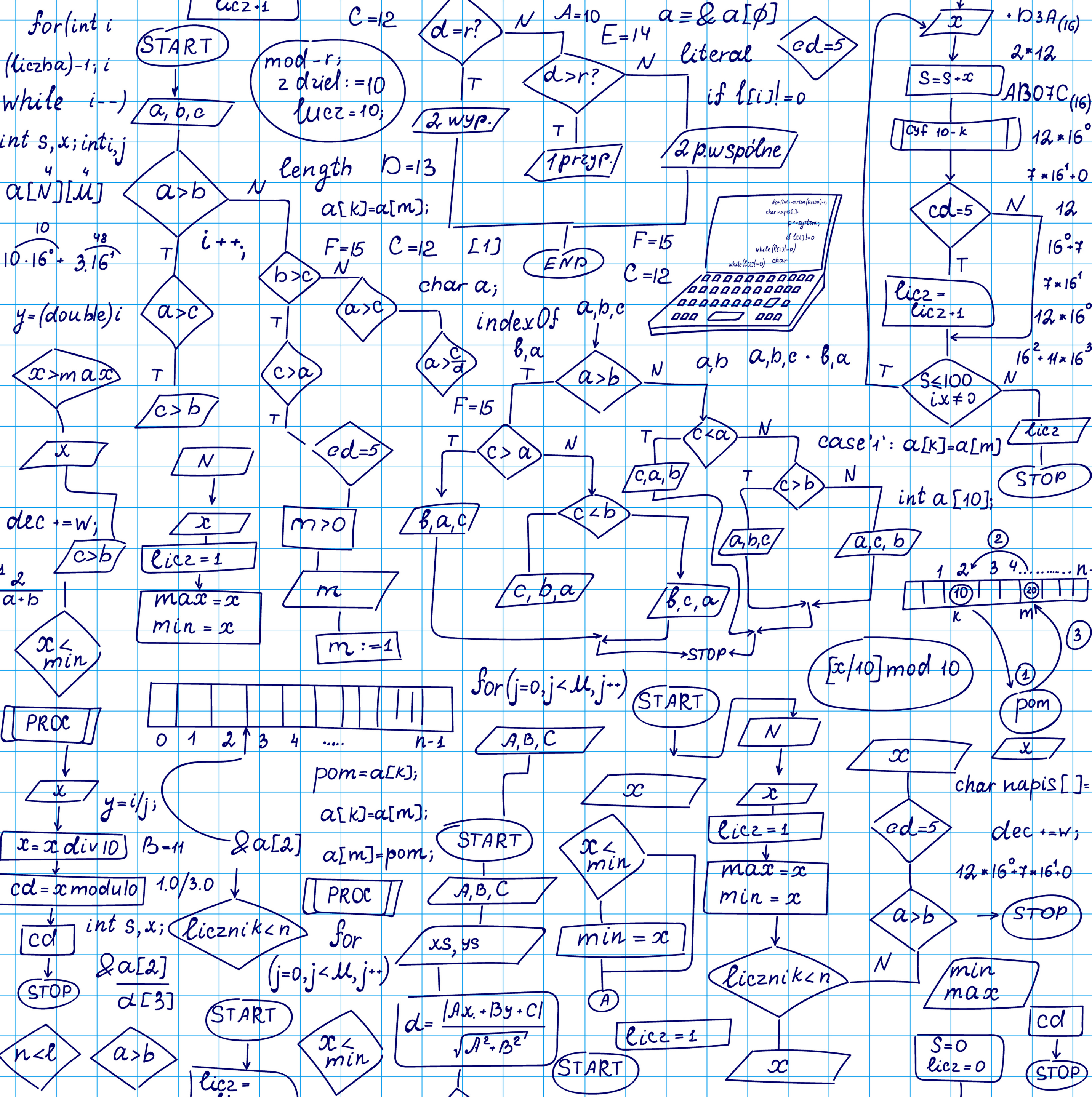
**meetings**

**fail**

**the bad ones, at least...**

# asynchronous decisions





software is made of  
decisions



ASYNCR



brainstorm

define options

build consensus

decide

four phases of a decision



ASYNC



**broadcast channel**  
to advertise upcoming decisions



**case management tool**  
to manage each decision

**key tools for async decision making**


Orange list:  
uncontested

Blue list:  
respond to Parliament

White list:  
important, complex

Green list:  
confidential, complex



 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

~70 decisions in a weekly 4 hours meeting  
LOTS of async preparatory work



ASF Board:  
similar principles,  
different tools

# Swiss Federal Council: Hybrid Meetings

picture: <https://www.admin.ch/gov/en/start/federal-council/tasks/decision-making.html>

# communications tools



# [openstack-dev] [neutron][kuryr][zun] python-neutronclient 6.3.0 broke the gate of kuryr-libnetwork and zun

Hongbin Lu [hongbin.lu at huawei.com](mailto:hongbin.lu@huawei.com)

*Thu Jun 1 05:09:58 UTC 2017*

- Previous message: [\[openstack-dev\]\[nova\]\[cinder\]\[barbican\] Why is Cinder creating symmetric keys in Barbican for use with encrypted volumes?](#)
- Next message: [\[openstack-dev\]\[Nova\]\[Scheduler\]](#)
- Messages sorted by: [\[\\_date\\_\]](#) [\[\\_thread\\_\]](#) [\[\\_subject\\_\]](#) [\[\\_author\\_\]](#)

async, threaded channel with tagged subject lines

# apache.org should use tag-based navigation #196

**Open** bdelacretaz opened this issue 2 weeks ago · 9 comments

navigation website proposal

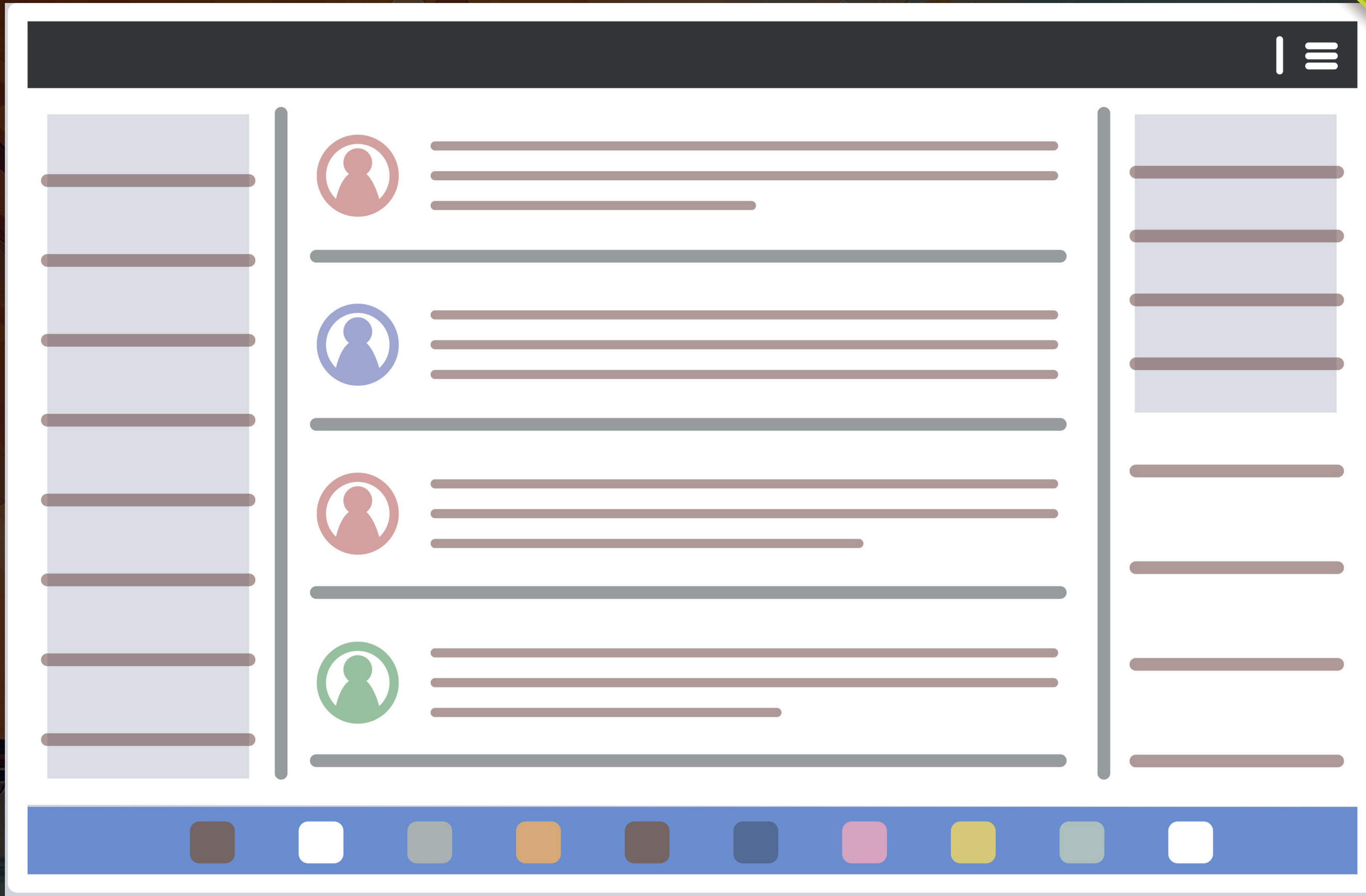
**bdelacretaz** commented 2 weeks ago

Member ...

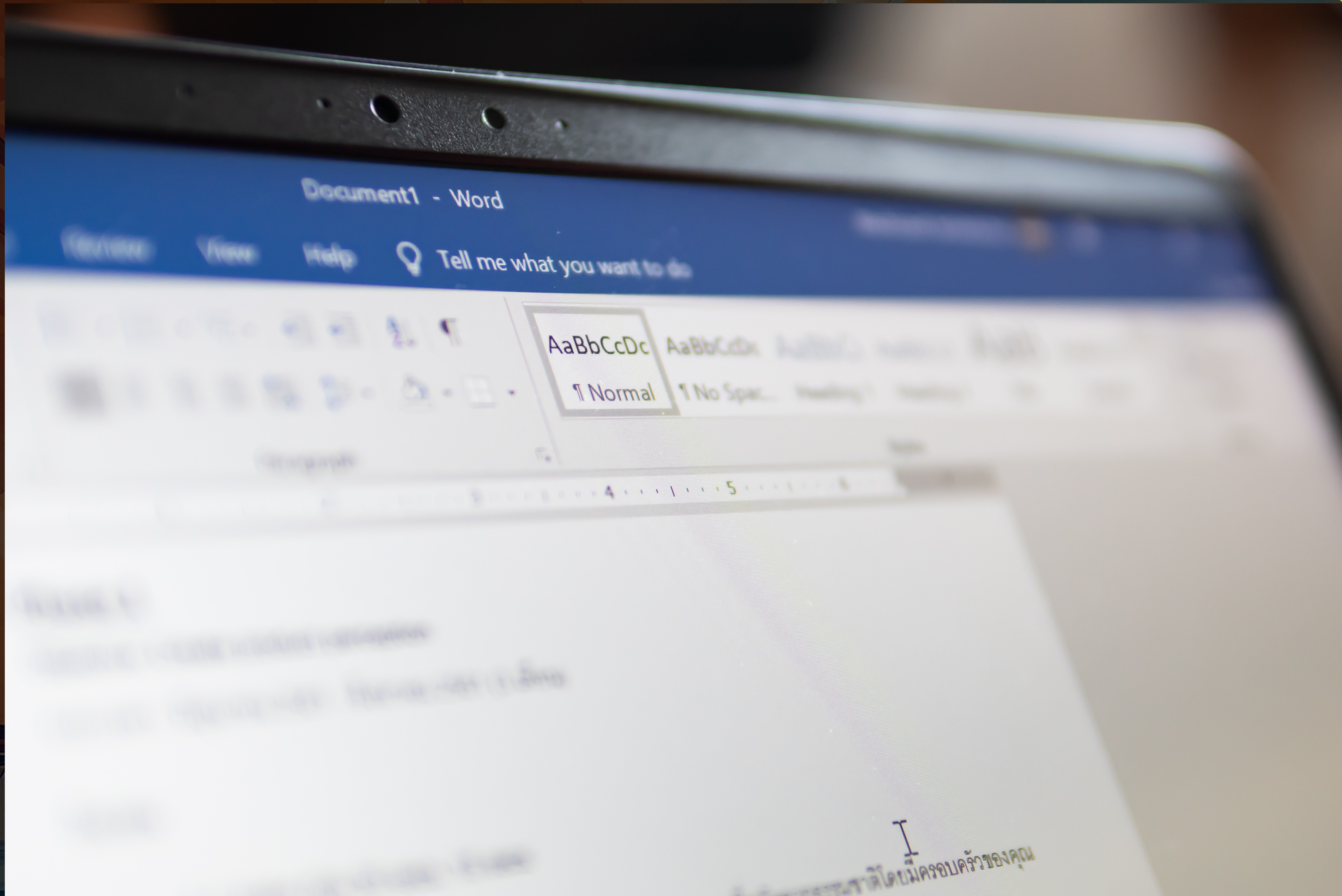
With more than 200 pages and a suboptimal organization, it's often hard to find pages on the apache.org website.

I think adding tag-based navigation, like we have on the Sling website (see

issue tracker for decisions, tagged



chat is mostly *here and now*...



*central* shared documents can work



**broadcast channel**  
to advertise upcoming decisions

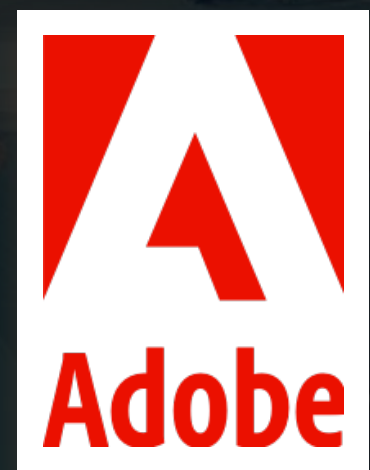


**case management tool**  
to manage each decision

what you actually need



# concision & clarity





you are writing  
for an audience

The screenshot shows the IMDb page for the movie 'Whatever Works'. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the IMDb logo, a search bar, and links for 'Sign In' and 'EN'. The main title 'Whatever Works' is prominently displayed, followed by the year '2009', rating 'PG-13', and runtime '1h 33m'. Below the title, there is a section for the movie poster and a video player. The poster features the main character, a middle-aged man, with the title 'Whatever Works a new comedy' and the names of the cast members: Patricia Clarkson, Jerry David, Gwyneth Hill, Michael McElroy, and Evan Rachel Wood. The video player shows a scene from the movie with a play button and the text 'Play trailer 2:18'. Below the video player, there are buttons for '1 VIDEO' and '68 PHOTOS'. At the bottom, there are genre tags for 'Comedy' and 'Romance', and a synopsis: 'A middle-aged, misanthropic divorcé from New York City surprisingly enters a fulfilling, Pygmalion-type relationship with a much younger, unsophisticated Southern girl.'

excerpt from imdb.com

CLARITY

Title,  
Abstract,  
Trailer  
help make a  
decision in  
stages

...more effort for you, less for them!

[WEBSITE] please review the staged /board content

Bertrand Delacretaz <bdelacretaz@apache.org>

Hi

That section of the website is currently built from its own svn repository, for historical reasons, and it makes sense today to move it under the main www-site repository.

For now I have moved the content to a preview branch, see <https://issues.apache.org/jira/browse/INFRA-22772> for details.

Please review that staged content at <https://www-board-site-migration.staged.apache.org/board/> and comment, or feel free to fix things directly in the <https://github.com/apache/www-site/tree/preview/board-site-migration/content/board> branch . Updates to that branch go live within a few minutes,

I'll wait for the discussion (if any) to settle down before letting infra activate this new setup to serve <https://www.apache.org/board/>

-Bertrand

Subject line

Introduction

Body & References

What's next?

CLARITY

Provide readers with **multiple decision points** to stop reading, if not interested in the next level of detail.

self-contained message, multi-level reading

*Last slide's text:*

Provide readers with **multiple decision points** to stop reading if not interested in the next level of detail.

*Could have been:*

It is often a good idea to make sure people who are reading your message have multiple options (shall we say "decision points"?) where they can opt to stop reading the rest of your message. If they are not interested in more than the current level of detail, they can then stop reading to avoid using more energy and time than strictly needed. I hope I'm being clear.

work on your concise writing!

# Don't ask forgiveness, radiate intent

<https://bit.ly/3VX1k8F>

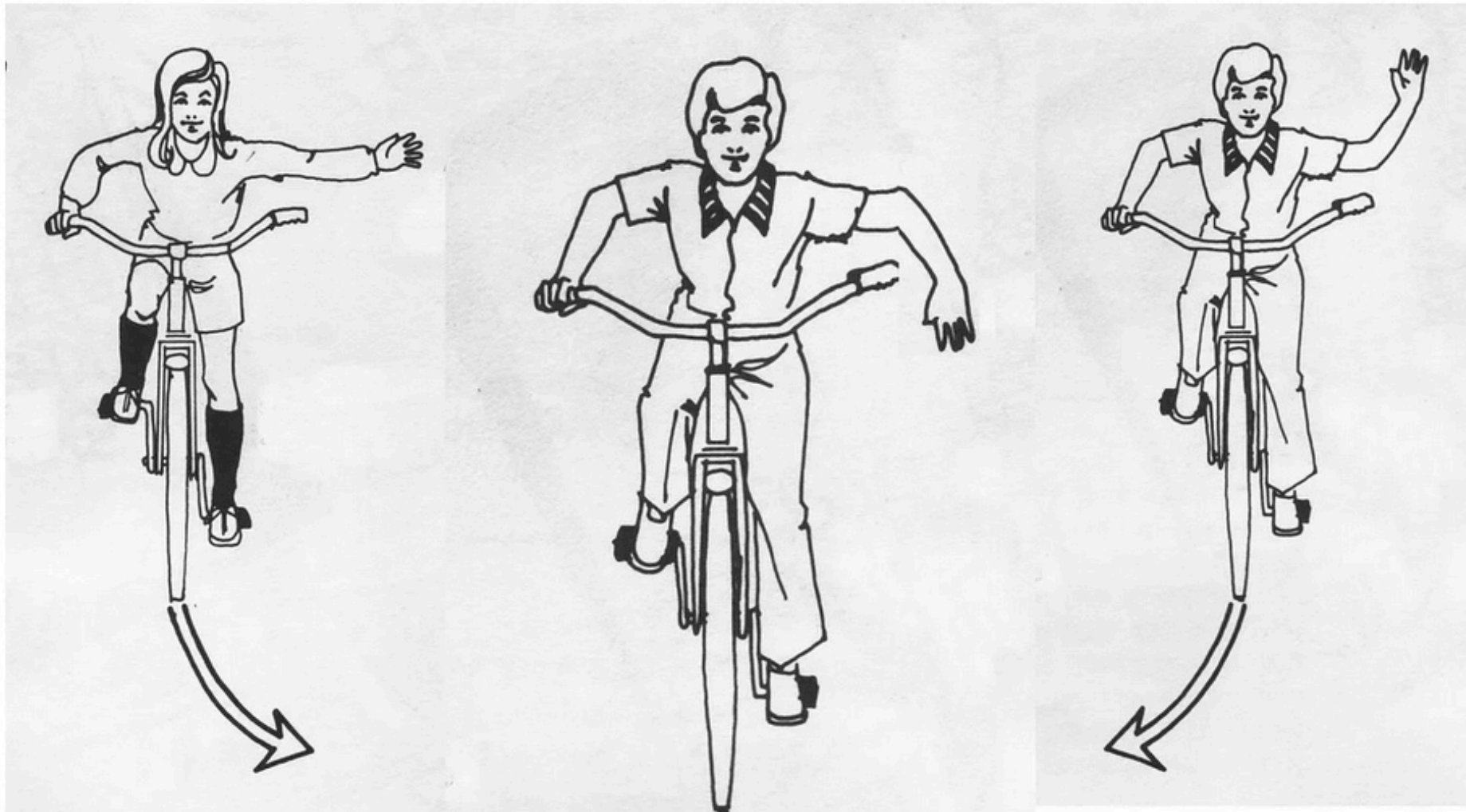


Elizabeth Ayer · Follow

3 min read · Jun 27, 2019



10



Images from [Hand Signals](#) on Wikipedia

unless someone objects, I intend to ...

radiate intent!

L. DAVID MARQUET

CAPTAIN, U.S. NAVY (RETIRED)

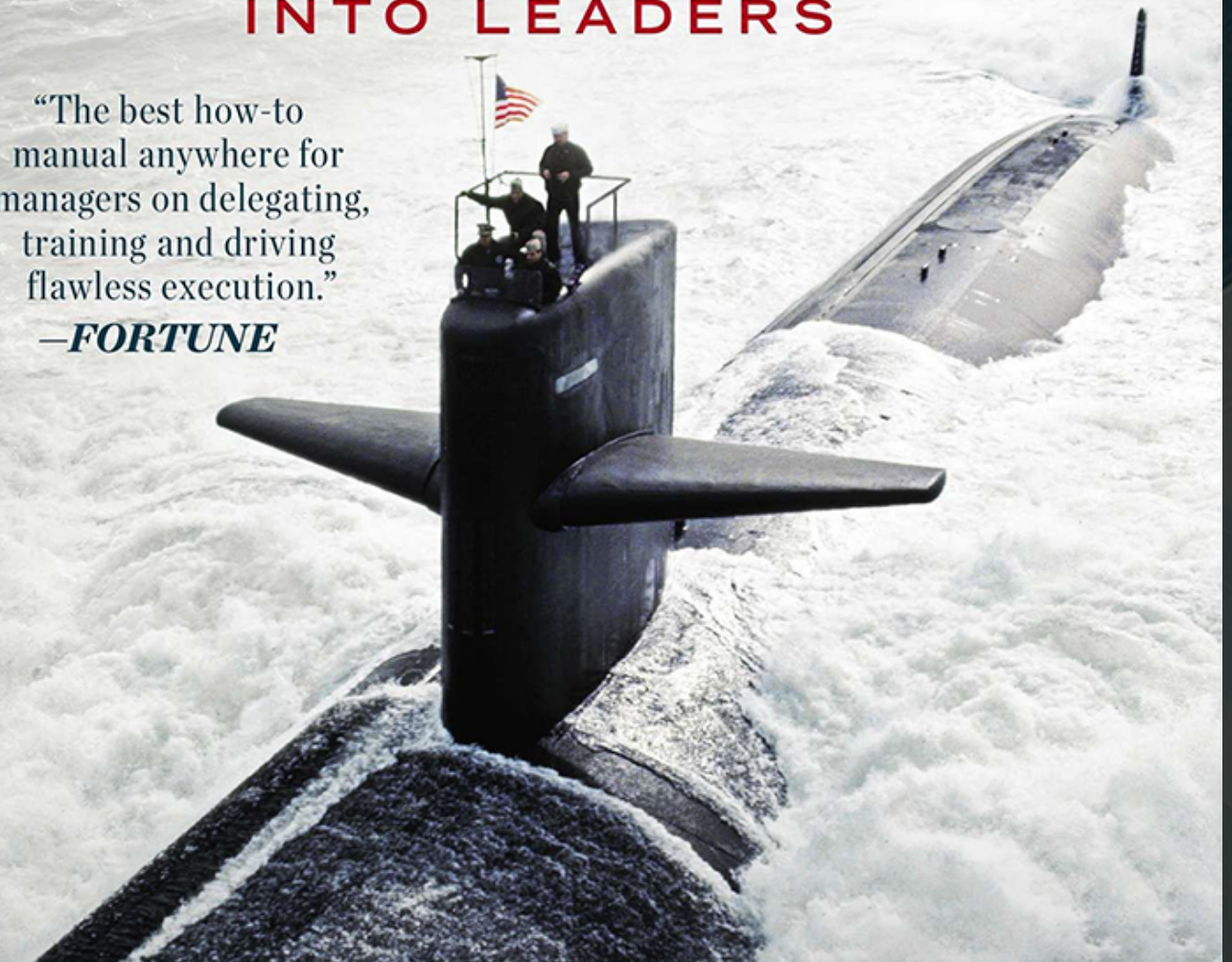
FOREWORD BY STEPHEN R. COVEY

# Turn the Ship Around!

A TRUE STORY OF  
TURNING FOLLOWERS  
INTO LEADERS

"The best how-to manual anywhere for managers on delegating, training and driving flawless execution."

—*FORTUNE*



[davidmarquet.com](http://davidmarquet.com)

CLARITY

# multi-cultural teams



RAISE  
YOUR  
HAND



what's YOUR culture?



# a multi-cultural disaster

Costa Concordia: 38 nationalities, official working language Italian, crew testifies not understanding orders given in English



Complicated English → ASD-STE100

All valves must be turned slowly in order to prevent strong steam jets which can damage both hose lines and components.

**Turn all valves slowly to prevent strong jets of steam.**  
**Steam can damage hose lines and components.**



# ASD-STE100

ASD SIMPLIFIED TECHNICAL ENGLISH  
SPECIFICATION ASD-STE100  
EUROPEAN COMMUNITY TRADE MARK NO.  
004901195  
INTERNATIONAL SPECIFICATION FOR THE  
PREPARATION OF TECHNICAL DOCUMENTATION  
IN A CONTROLLED LANGUAGE

ISSUE 7 - JANUARY 2017  
<http://www.asd-ste100.org/>

## use simple language

example from <https://robertobertuol.com/simplified-technical-english/>



Assume  
Good Intentions

Ask for  
Clarification

Reformulate

avoid misunderstandings

# coda



00



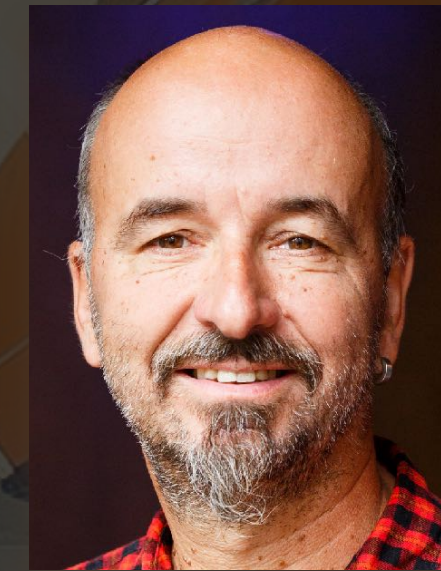
cultures  
decisions all the way down  
channels  
meetings  
timezones  
language  
four phases  
communication  
concision & clarity

Asynchronous Decisions

are key

for efficient remote collaboration

focus on principles, not tools!



Bratislava, June 2024

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pinboard.in/u:bdelacretaz/t:pressbook