

State of Octave

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- More activity by more people than ever
- The state of Octave is good!
- Challenges for the future

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Challenges

- MATLAB (constantly moving target, not the best language, etc.)
- User expectations
- Maintainer burnout

Why Use Octave?

- **No license manager.** Octave is free software!
- **No black boxes.** The complete source code is available. You are encouraged to look at the internals.
- **Octave is portable** to POSIX systems with a standard C++ compiler. Octave can also be ported to other unusual systems (**you** have the source!).
- **Large support community.** Octave has an active support community with more than 1000 messages per month posted to the mailing lists.

How Many Users?

Because Octave may be freely redistributed, it's impossible to know precisely how many people are using Octave. My guess is in the hundreds of thousands.

- We don't get good download info from the GNU project.

- Mailing list activity seems stable.
- IRC activity seems on the rise, but slowly. People talk a lot when Jordi is around, not as much otherwise.

In the last year and a half:

- about 90 different contributors made 2917 commits
- 57 of them made only 1 or 2 changes
- the top 10 contributors made 2639 commits
- the top 5 contributors made 2377 commits

Missing Features

- Classdef classes (handle and value)
- Packages (+dir names in the load path)
- containers.Map class (handle class)
- InputParser class (handle class)
- MException objects (handle class)
- cdflib interface (package)
- netcdf interface (package)
- hdf (4 and 5) functions (packages)

Missing Features

- Camera viewpoint functions
- Volume visualization
- Foreign function interface
- Java interface
- COM and Active X
- .NET
- Serial port device functions

Newsgroups: gnu.gcc.help

Subject: Re: WorkShop won't work with non-SGI compilers?

From: rms@gnu.ai.mit.edu (Richard Stallman)

Date: 14 Nov 1993 02:00:43 -0500

[...]

If you want to share software with us, you're welcome to--but cooperation is a two-way street. If you want it to be one-way (we give and you take), you have come to the wrong place.

We are getting better at communicating this idea to Octave users.

The Octave Developer Community

- We have a diverse developer community
- Currently growing but still rather small (we'd love to have more participation)
- Most contributors make a few small changes and move on
- We must work to include more people in the community

Needs of the Developer Community

- Bug tracking
- Release management
- Web site hackers
- Mailing list maintenance
- Support via the `help@octave.org` mailing list
- Core language interpreter development
- Domain specialists: signal processing, image processing, control systems design, graphics, GUI development, etc.
- ...

- We have hundreds of thousands of users but very little direct funding. Is that what should be happening?
- Free software is not a charity project.
- Having a large user community expecting to get something for free from a small developer community is not sustainable.

- Independently wealthy developer
- Research project/government grant
- A few large donations from a small number of benefactors
- Many small donations from users
- Selling support contracts
- Selling binary distributions (maybe pay what you want)