Learning to let go as an open source maintainer

Alexander Perlman
Distinguished Engineer
CAPITAL ONE

Michael Zazula
Lead Engineer
CAPITAL ONE

The call to action

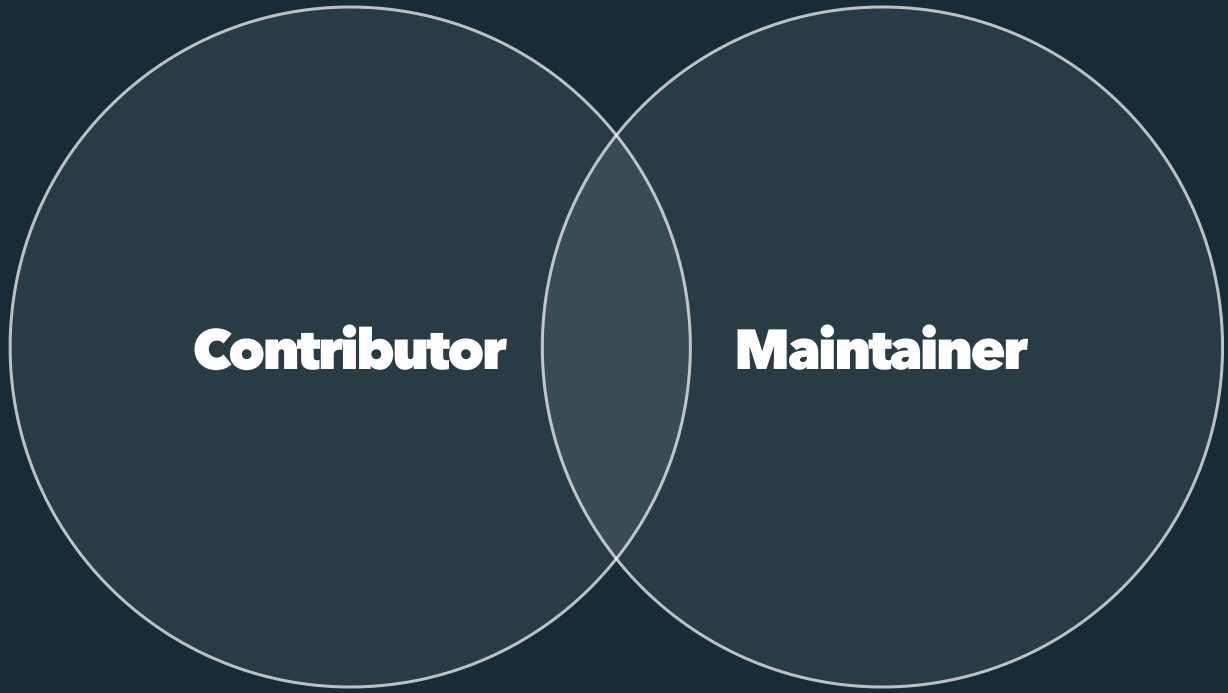
Are you out of your mind?

“I don't care to belong to any club that will have me as a member.”

– Groucho Marx

Feeling unqualified is a qualification.

SAME PROJECT. DIFFERENT JOB.



Who we ~~claim to be~~ are



Alexander Perlman

Distinguished Engineer

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Michael Zazula

Lead Engineer

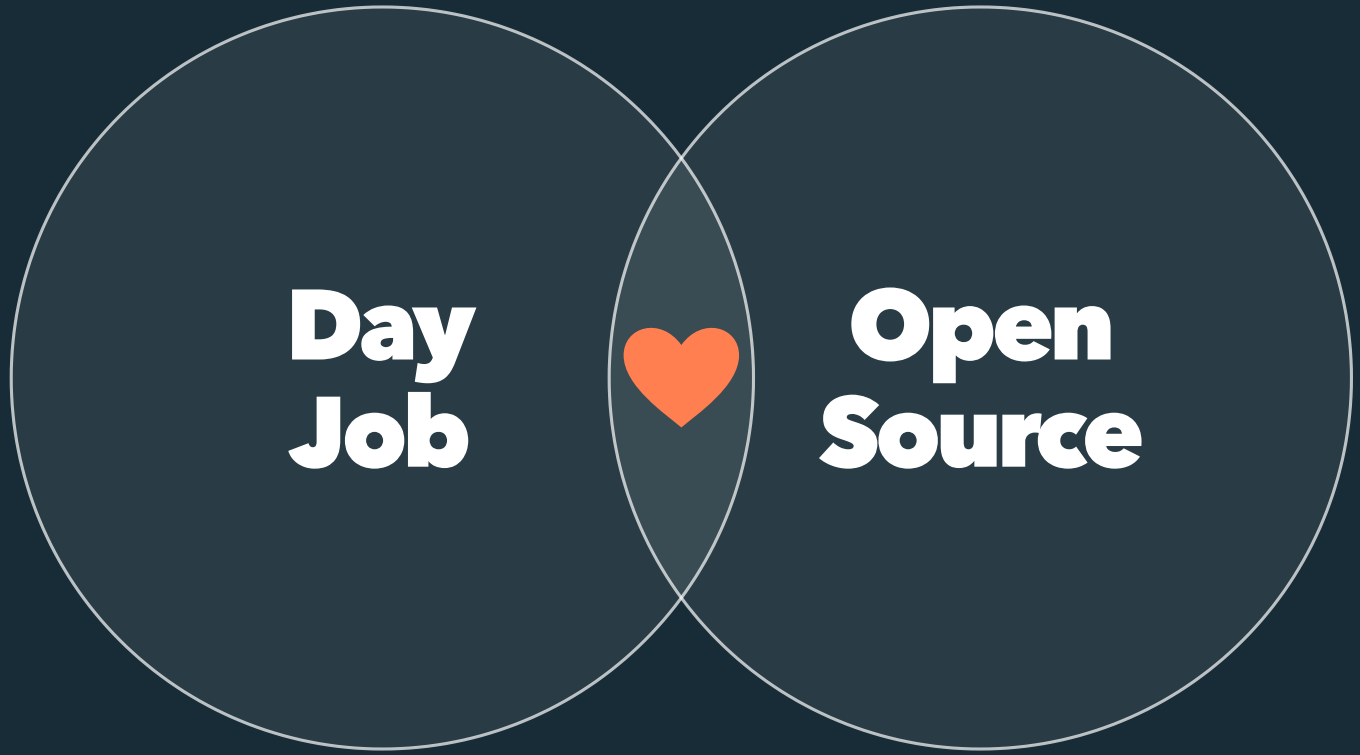
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Dance with the one who brought you.

“You’re either someone who likes to get ~~@#$%~~ stuff done or you’re someone who likes when ~~@#$%~~ stuff gets done.”

– Lea Kissner, CIO @ LinkedIn

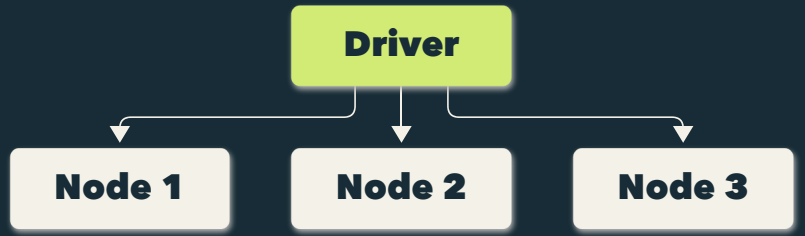
Let interest be your compass.


Day
Job
Open
Source

pods = nodes × 2



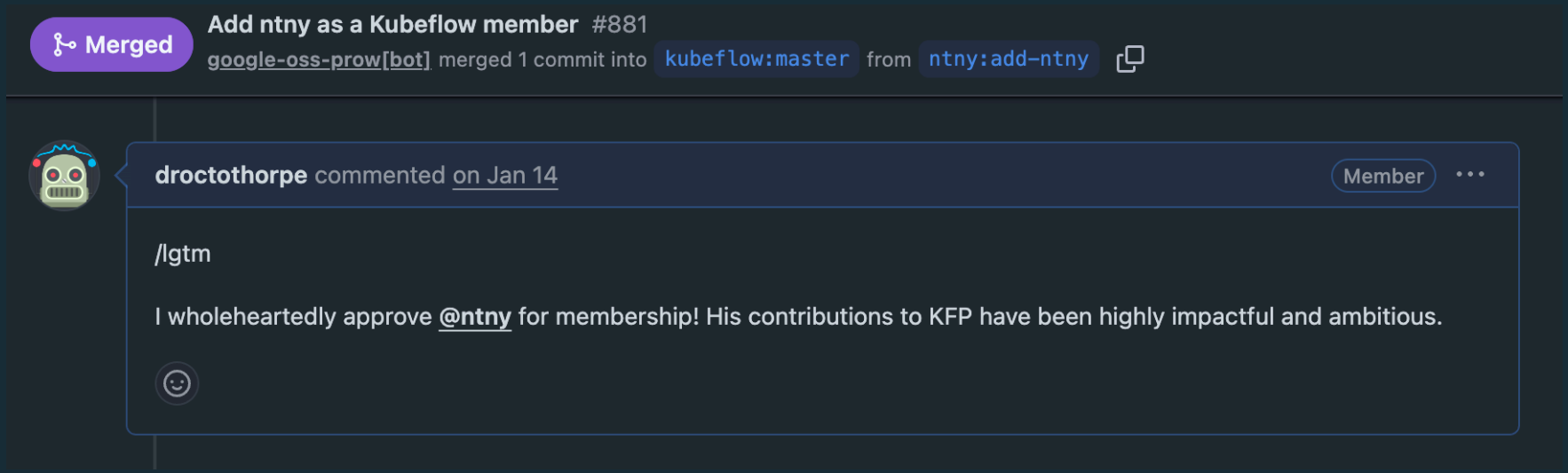
pods = nodes + 1



I closed his PR.

~~Compete~~

Collaborate


Merged
Add ntny as a Kubeflow member #881
google-oss-prow[bot] merged 1 commit into kubeflow:master from ntny:add-ntny
droctothorpe commented on Jan 14
Member
/lgtm
I wholeheartedly approve @ntny for membership! His contributions to KFP have been highly impactful and ambitious.

Different code, same burnout.

“I have delivered value, but at what cost?”

– KRAZAM


Your
Project
Sustainability

I had a great idea.

Shut down.

A few years later.

I became that maintainer.

~~Good for my team~~

~~Good for my team~~

Good for the project

How did you get started?

Eager to help. Not sure where to start.

Not every contribution is a `commit`.

Not every contribution is a `commit`.

01 Blog posts

Not every contribution is a commit.

01 Blog posts

02 Technical videos

Not every contribution is a commit.

01 Blog posts

02 Technical videos

03 Community engagement

Not every contribution is a commit.

01 Blog posts

02 Technical videos

03 Community engagement

04 Raising proposals

Build a better onramp.

Small PRs today.
Big PRs tomorrow.

“Every open source project is looking for more maintainers but if someone asks them what’s the path/criteria to become a maintainer,

“Every open source project is looking for more maintainers but if someone asks them what’s the path/criteria to become a maintainer, they don’t have an answer.”

Publish the path and someone will game it.

A litmus test, not a checklist.

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01 Skin in the game

A litmus test, not a checklist.

01 Skin in the game

02 Engages with the community

A litmus test, not a checklist.

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03 Mentors new contributors

A litmus test, not a checklist.

01 Skin in the game

02 Engages with the community

03 Mentors new contributors

04 Complements the existing maintainers

Broaden the maintainer pool.

What a time to be an engineer.

What a time to be an engineer.
What a horrible time to be a maintainer.

Who wrote this issue?

AI isn't going anywhere.

What LLMs are good at.

What LLMs are good at.

01 Rebasing. REALLY good at rebasing.

What LLMs are good at.

01 Rebasing. REALLY good at rebasing.

02 Dependency upgrades

What LLMs are good at.

01 Rebasing. REALLY good at rebasing.

02 Dependency upgrades

03 Backporting fixes to release branches

An agent wrote this PR.

Fight fire with fire.

One release. A lot of moving parts.

One release. A lot of moving parts.

4

Python packages on PyPI

One release. A lot of moving parts.

4

Python packages on PyPI

24

Images
(12 × amd & arm)

One release. A lot of moving parts.

4

Python packages on PyPI

24

Images
(12 × amd & arm)

2

ReadTheDocs sites

One release. A lot of moving parts.

4

Python packages on PyPI

24

Images
(12 × amd & arm)

2

ReadTheDocs sites

1

Docs repo, somewhere else

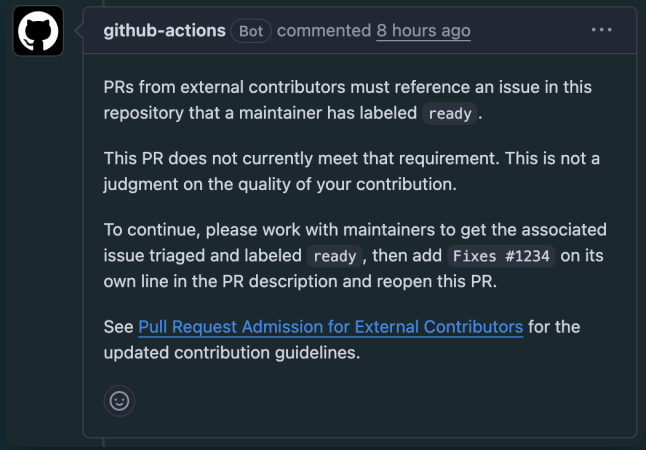
kfpr

Quarterly to same day.

Force real engagement.

Force real engagement.

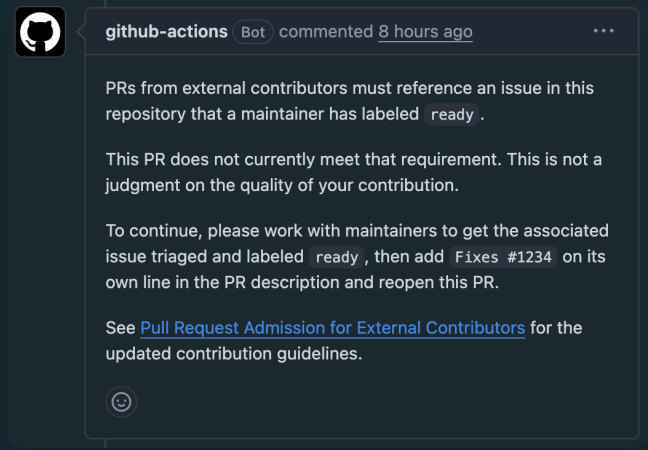
No “ready” issue, no PR.



Kudos to Matt Prahl for this idea, inspo from MLFlow

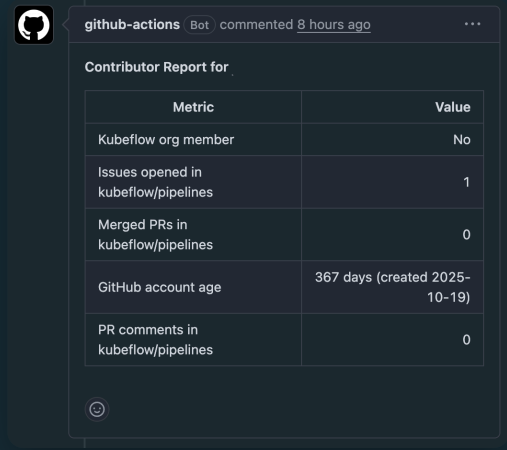
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No “ready” issue, no PR.



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Contributor report.



Not user facing?
LLMs shine.

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01 Migrations

Not user facing? LLMs shine.

01 Migrations

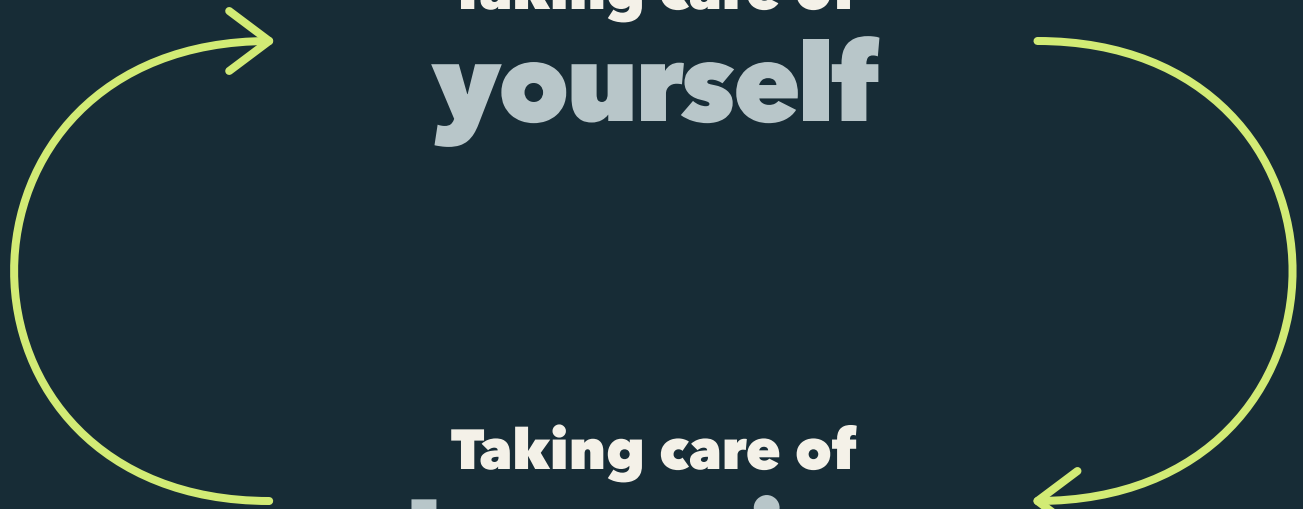
02 Complexity reduction

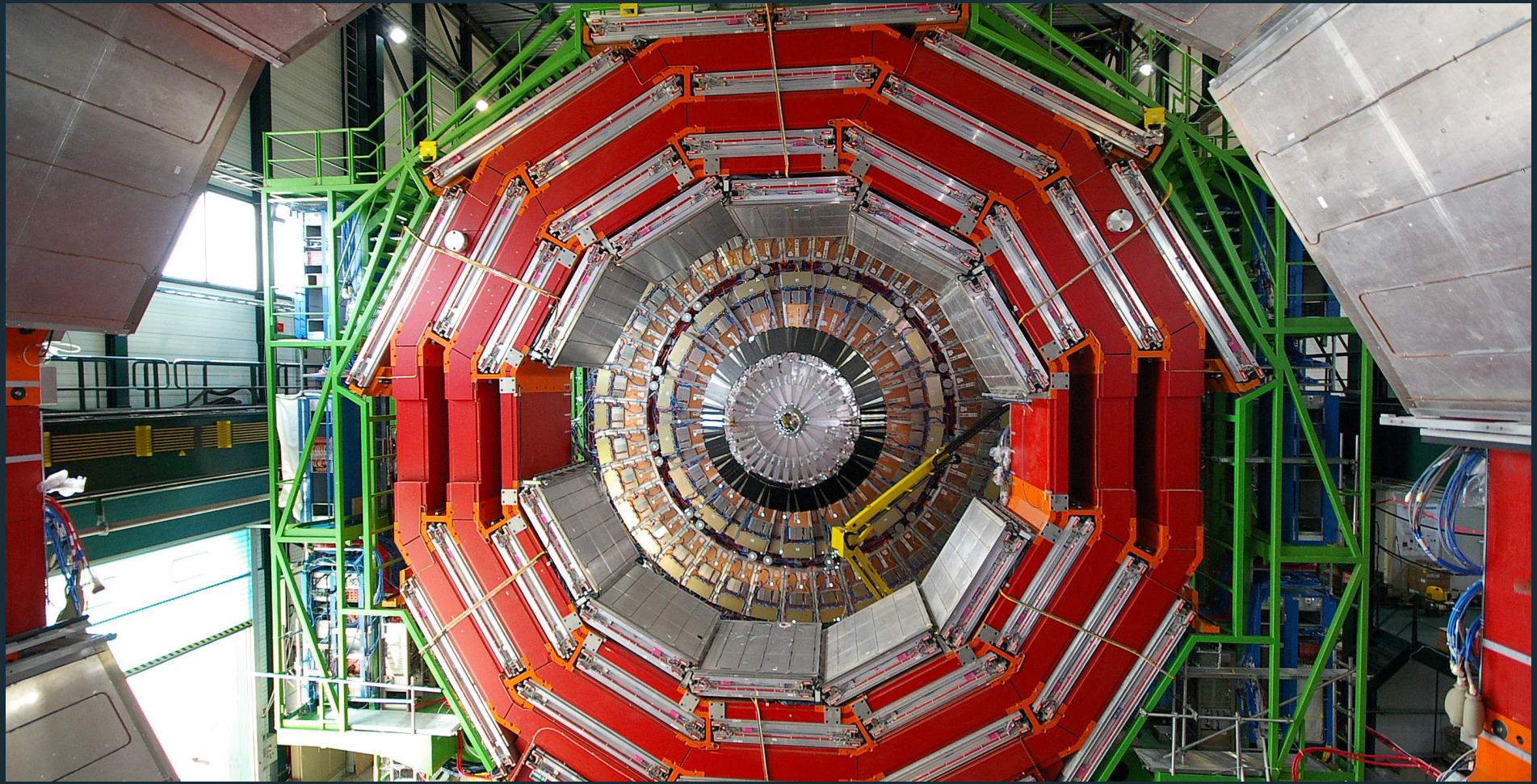
Not user facing? LLMs shine.

01 Migrations

02 Complexity reduction

03 Improved test coverage


Taking care of
yourself
Taking care of
the project



Source: http://hepwww.rl.ac.uk/CMSvpt/bestphotos/CERN%20Pt5%20CMS%20Construction%20June%2006/slides/CERN%20Pt5%20Jun%2006%20CMS%20Constn%20Hall%2005.htm

Celebrate your impact.