

The Value of an Open-Source Community to a PhD Student

A PyData Lightning Talk

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Read more here: larrydong.com/posts/2022-06-18-value-oss/

The “Burnside” Analogy

- ▶ During my BSc and MSc, I primarily studied in a building called Burnside.
- ▶ Despite its unappealing look, there was a vibrant community.
- ▶ Writing a thesis can be a lonely experience.

Starting a PhD during a pandemic is difficult...



Figure 1: Gorgeous view of Burnside.

My Journey into Open-Source

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- February 2019: first use of PyMC3
 - PyMC is a probabilistic programming framework for fitting Bayesian models.
- July 2020: Summer school of Dirichlet Processes (DP)
 - DPs are a family of non-parametric methods to the estimation of probability densities.
- October 2020: Asking what Bayesian package should I use?
- April 2021: I came across the Tweet for GSoC @ PyMC!
 - My project entailed creating a submodule for DP methods.
- Today: I still contribute to PyMC and am diving deeper into its computational backend, Aesara.

To PhD Students

Why get involved? As PhD students, our ticket to graduation is to write a 100+ page dissertation.

- ▶ Learning
 - Git, OOP, unit testing, etc.
 - Even better when OS aligns with your studies
- ▶ Tangible goals and inertia to learn via small issues
- ▶ Networking
 - A nice network of professionals outside of academia
 - Open-source opens doors to tools and communities

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Don't be shy! Find a project in which you're passionate.

To Seasoned Open-Source Maintainers...

- ▶ Your passion can positively impact graduate students.
 - Your community can bring students yearning for development.
- ▶ Graduate students are employable after their studies.

Thanks for listening!

