Apache Ant
Community Learnings

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About Me

Open Source Developer since 1994

Ant Committer since June 2000

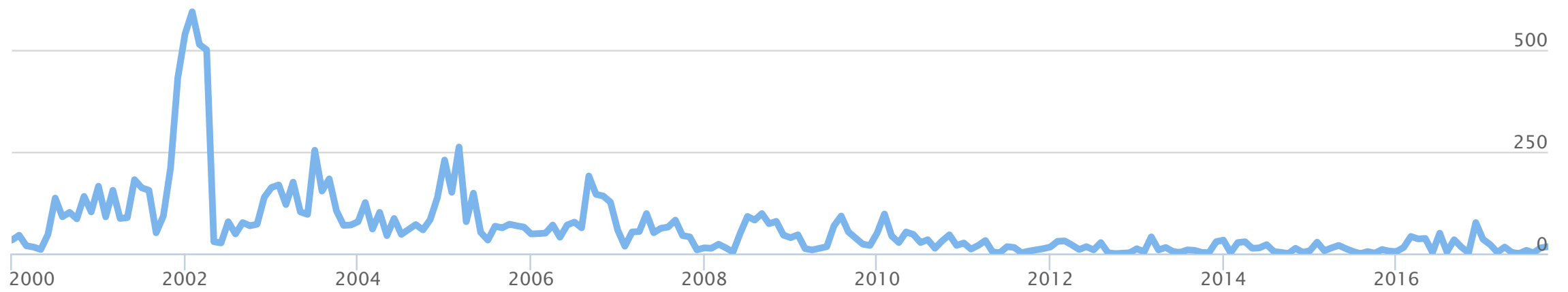Release Manager of Ant 1.1 (July 2000) and 1.10.1 (Feb 2017)

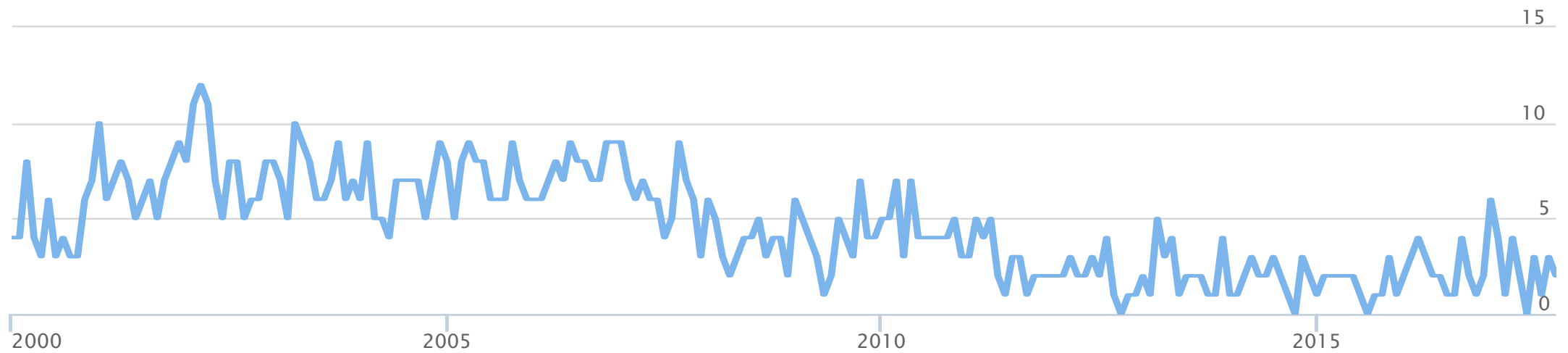Apache Member since October 2000
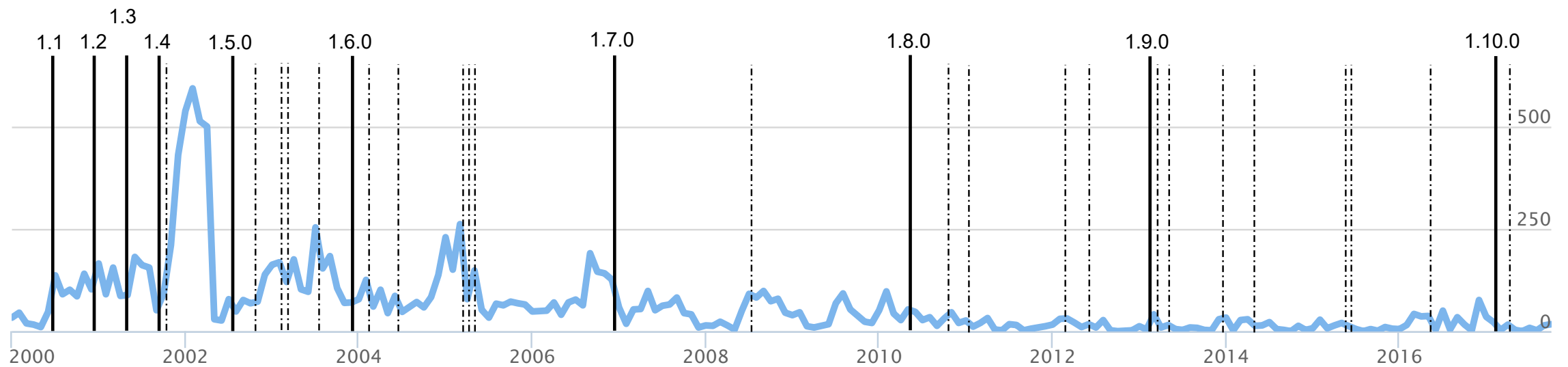
Senior Consultant at innoQ

Apache Ant

Commits

Contributors

Releases
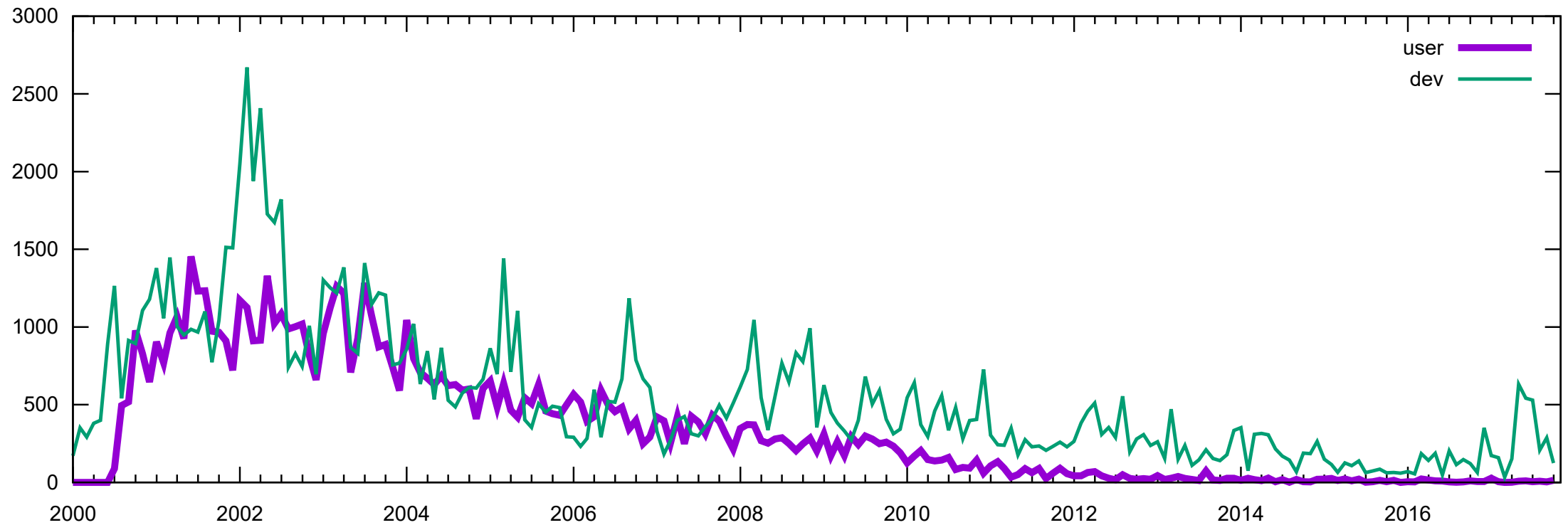
In the Beginning

How to build a community?

no idea, honestly

the right idea at the right time

Small Units of Autonomous Work

User Mailing Lists
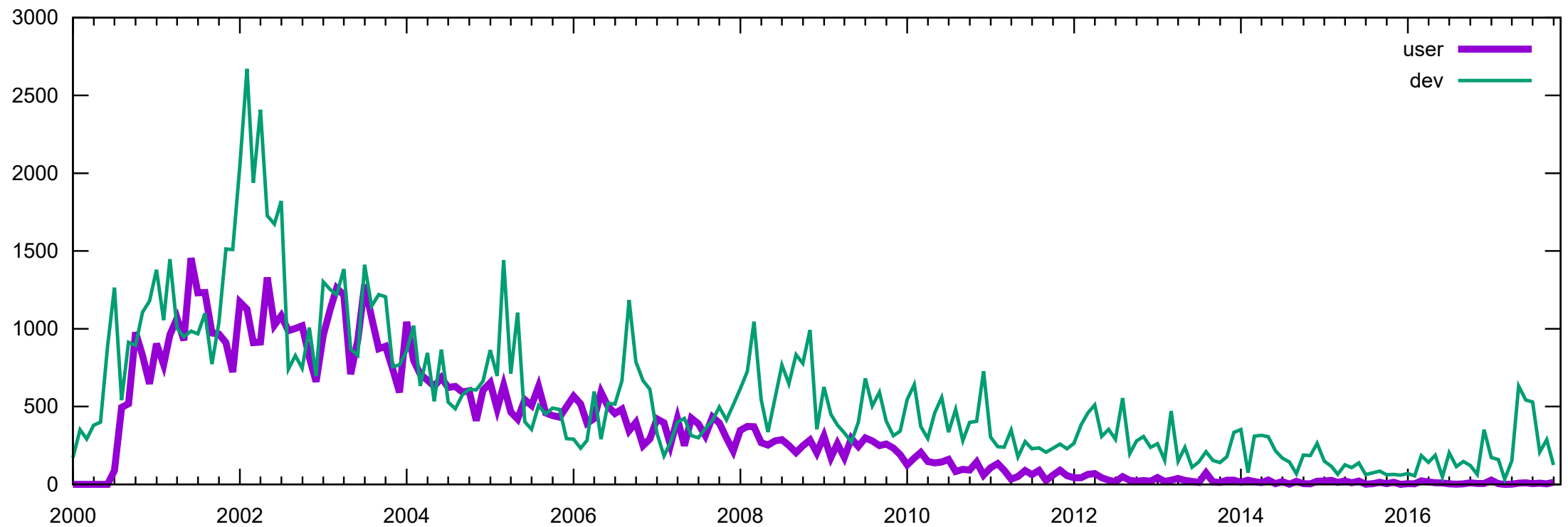
Non-Coding Contributors

Advice

a place for non-devs is essential

you don't need to answer everything yourself

but show presence

User Mailing Lists

But

hard to replicate in today's Stack Overflow world

I'd love to understand what can take it's place

Ant 2

Backwards Compatibility

Every new release of Ant breaks my build

— often stated around Ant 1.2

Discussion

> ... aim is that we are going to break them no more than **once** more. I.e. we should try to get a clear vision of what we want to achieve with Ant 2.0, **document** it and then stick to it, at least for the near future.
>
> — https://lists.apache.org/thread.html/678451aa08b8911fa5

Rules for Revolutionaries

https://marc.info/?l=jakarta-general&m=869519093307230&w=2

In short:

1. everybody can propose a "revolution" in a subdir

2. when ready propose merge

3. when accepted replace original

Problems Faced

too many revolutionaries

what if the revolution is not accepted?

mere announcement of revolution stalls evolution

Design By Committee

takes ages

even more so when you strive for consensus

still doesn't guarantee to make everybody happy

Result

lot's of feelings hurt

fork of the community - twice

"Ant2" is burnt forever

Advice

avoid multiple simultaneous revolutions

be aware that proposed revolutions may fork the community

don't try to force a revolution

Drive-by Contributions

Advice

embrace Drive-by Contributions

but you don't have to accept everything

celebrate every contribution in public

accept some contributors are only interested in small parts

don't let code ownership get into the way

Integrating new Communities

Advice

don't put a barrier between old and new community

collective code ownership

Aging Project

Running Out Of Itches

Dangers

no easy tasks left to do

"we've already discussed that"

"backwards incompatible"

Advice

try to not fix easy bugs (immediately)

set time aside for mentoring

better start doing so before it's too late

Thank You

Contact

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