



# INSIDE OUT: [MY JOURNEY OF] UNDERSTANDING INCLUSION

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DJANGOCON 2023  
DURHAM - NC - USA

# WHOAMI

- Django Fellow since April 2023
- Licentiate in Computer Science
- Python and Django expert
  - Passionate about tests
- Very expressive speaker
  - “Gesturing enthusiast”
  - Extensive experience presenting in Spanish
- First time presenting in English to a large audience!



# ARGENTINIAN LIVING IN URUGUAY



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# WHOAMI

- Fan of drinking mate
- First **PyCon AR** in 2009
- First **PyCon US** in 2010
  - And first Django Sprint!
- First **DjangoCon** in 2023!



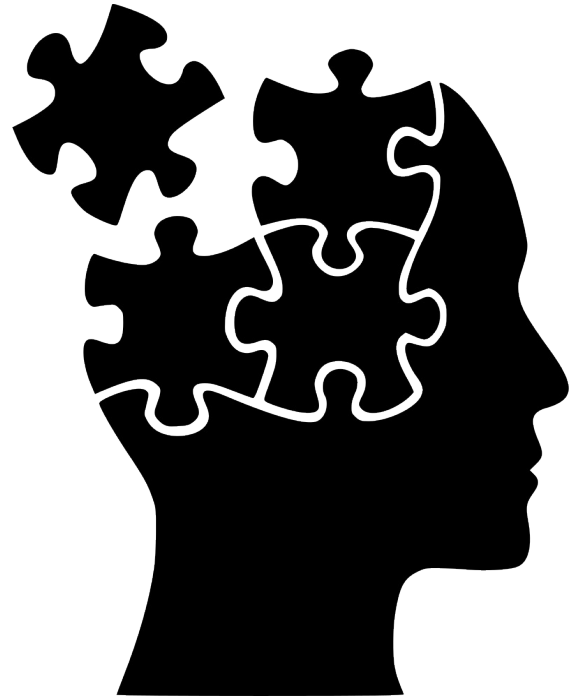
# WHOWASI

- University Teacher assistant
- Zope/Plone/Twisted/Flask
- Eiffel/C programmer
- First “industry” job in 2005
- Then Canonical for 13 years!
  - Snap Store (web services and APIs)
  - Ubuntu One (filesync and SSO)



# WHAT THIS TALK IS NOT ABOUT

- Hard rules
- One-fit-all recipes
- Absolute truths
- Mandates
- Definitive answers



# WHAT THIS TALK IS ABOUT

- Personal experiences
- Not-so-random pointers
- Questions
- Reflections
- Also more questions





# SOME RECENT EXPERIENCES



# THE LAWN MOWING CATASTROPHE

- We hired an arborist to trim towering trees and overgrown bushes.

*Arborist: It's a shame your trees got so out of control!*

Me: Well, yeah, but we are fixing this now

*Arborist: But, who mows your lawn?*

Me: “María <Last Name>”

*Arborist: ... a **woman**?*

Me: But she works with her husband



# THE HARDWARE STORE DEBACLE

- I went to the hardware store with my partner and child (on Mother's Day). I love woodwork!

*Clerk: Hi!*

Me: Hi, I'm buying my own mother's day present. I would like an electric sander to fix jigsaw cut errors. Which one do you recommend?

*Clerk: Ok, is that for when he (points at male partner) cuts the wood?*



# UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- The arborist was shocked that a woman mows my lawn
- The clerk assumed I'm not operating the jigsaw
- Sometimes concepts are **locked down** in our minds
  - Some since upbringing! More on this later on.
- An individual is honestly **unaware** of a prejudice
- It's a **twofold effort**: to notice it, and then to shape it

# UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- Source of **bias** can be stereotypes, preconceived notions, past experiences, or even gut instinct
  - Appearance (age, [dis]abilities, gender, race, body size, etc)
  - Data (title, education, language, name, religion, etc)
  - Opinion (attribution, confirmation, conformity, contrast)
- We can **reflect** on our own unconscious biases to improve the Django community as a whole



# THE WORK CHAT FACEPALM

- As tech lead of the Ubuntu One Client team (edited IRC chat follows):

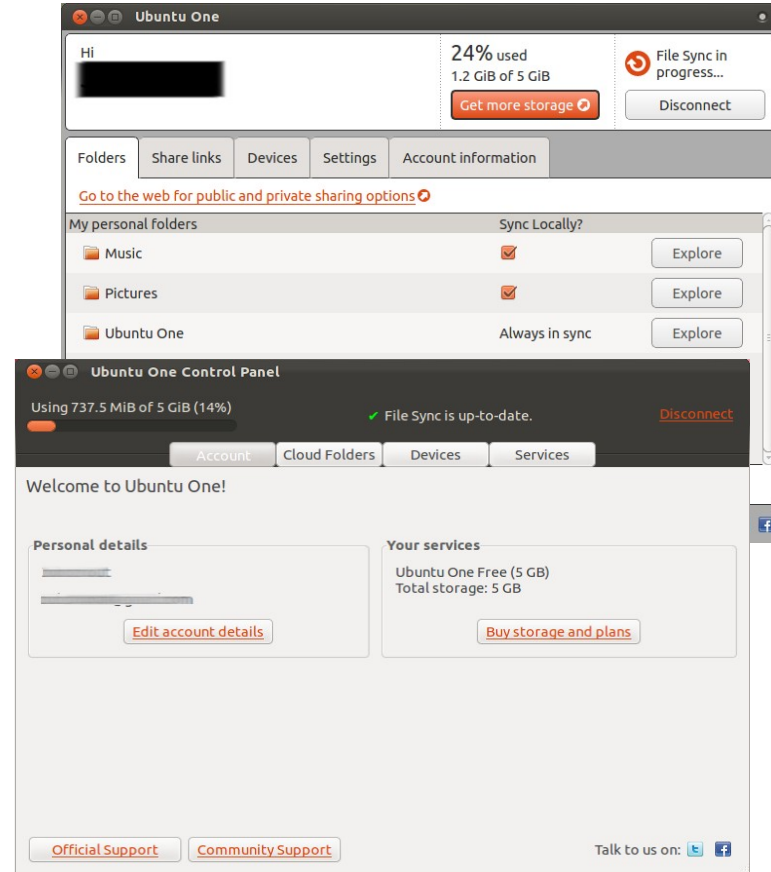
teammate: I did <X thing>

nessita: but that's not what we discussed

teammate: but I like <X thing> better

nessita: we agreed on <Y thing> so please change it

teammate: you sound like my mom



# THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW FIASCO

- “360s” reviews include your manager’s, your peers’, your direct reports’, and you own evaluation
- Allows for a free form text to provide extra feedback
- I was the technical lead
- I was 7 months pregnant
- “You’ll be a great mother”

|  |                   |  |
|--|-------------------|--|
|  | <b>Great Mom!</b> |  |
|  | ○                 |  |
|  |                   |  |

# DOUBLE BIND

- Conflicting expectations or stereotypes
- Challenging to meet both **career advancement** and **likability** criteria
- Women sometimes have to choose between being liked but not respected, or being respected but not liked

# DOUBLE BIND PARADOXES

- Maintaining distance yet being approachable
- Advocating for oneself yet serving others
- Authoritative yet participative
- Demanding yet caring

# Double Bind

“

*You have to be a boss, but you can't be mean.*

*You have to lead, but you can't squash other people's ideas.*

*You're supposed to love being a mother, but don't talk about your kids all the damn time.*

*You have to be a career woman but also always be looking out for other people.*

*You have to answer for men's bad behavior, which is insane, but if you point that out, you're accused of complaining.*

”



# THE MEXICAN DILEMMA

- We went to a Mexican resort and I needed to order some custom gluten free food

*Waiter: Sure, I'll get that for you right now!*

[...25 mins later...]

Me: hello, any updates on the order?

*Waiter: yes, it's coming right away!*

[...15 mins later, no food, I was upset...]

Repeats on every meal



# THE MATE SHARING SHOCK

- In Argentina (and Uruguay) is very common to drink **and** share mate
- It's a social norm and cultural tradition
- Involves sipping from the same metal straw others have used already
- We had Jacob trying mate for the first time during Pycon AR 2009



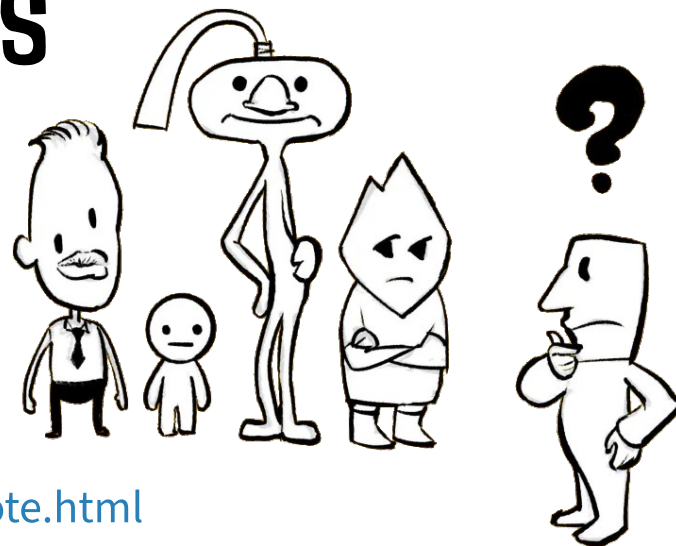
# CULTURAL ASPECTS

- I never questioned sharing the mate until the pandemic
  - How much of an imposition is it to have someone sharing mate?
- I later learned that Mexicans prioritize being polite and attentive
  - They want the guests to feel completely satisfied
  - But I didn't, actually the opposite!
  - I felt neglected and treated with contempt

# CULTURAL ASPECTS

- Ned Batchelder's PyCon 2023 keynote

- *People: The API User's Guide*
- A remarkable analysis of human behavior
- [https://nedbatchelder.com/blog/202305/pycon\\_2023\\_keynote.html](https://nedbatchelder.com/blog/202305/pycon_2023_keynote.html)



- We can further explore how **cultural** factors influences:

- being a **good person**
- being a **good communicator**

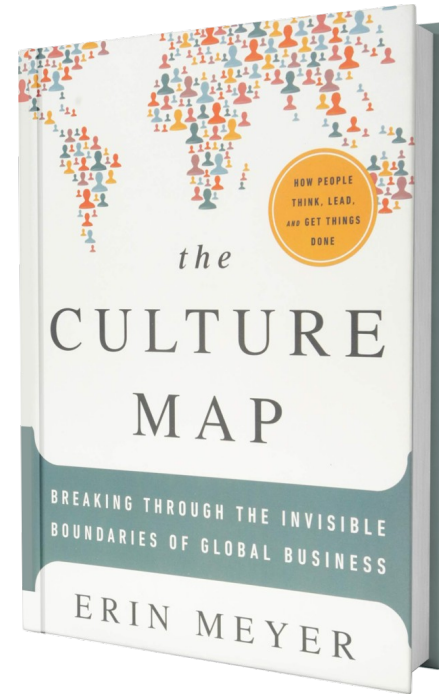
# THE CULTURE MAP





# THE CULTURE MAP

- *The Culture Map* written by Erin Meyer
  - <https://erinmeyer.com/books/the-culture-map/>
- Presents an eight-scale model
- I'll focus on two that I think are relevant for the Django Community
  - Communicating
  - Persuading



# COMMUNICATION CONTEXT

- High-context (**indirect**, contextual)
- Low-context (**direct**, explicit)
- What's desired in one style can be seen as negative in the other
  - High context could be seen as **not trustworthy or liar**
  - Low context could be seen as **condescending or patronizing**

# COMMUNICATION CONTEXT

- Implicit does not (usually) work across cultures
- Perhaps is better to err on the side of verbose
  - Less room for misinterpretation
  - Less effort to parse from the recipient
- Also important to make explicit why we are being explicit!

# BEING CONVINCING

- A.K.A. Persuasive, in a good way!
- Principle-first (**Why**, deductive reasoning)
- Application-first (**How**, inductive reasoning)

## Why the code-shuffle?

Generally, when writing a Django app, you'll evaluate whether generic views are a good fit for your problem, and you'll use them from the beginning, rather than refactoring your code halfway through. But this tutorial intentionally has focused on writing the views "the hard way" until now, to focus on core concepts.

You should know basic math before you start using a calculator.

# BEING CONVINCING

- My former manager often told me “less is more”
  - Which often felt “too little” for me!
- Even if we can adapt to one way or another...
  - What happens in a global community, like Django’s?
- “tl;dr” seems like a good idea!
- Balance: alternate top-bottom and bottom-up



# LANGUAGE CHALLENGES



# LANGUAGE [IN]FLEXIBILITY

- It's easy (at least possible!) to speak neutrally in English
- It's not in other languages, like in Spanish, French, Hindi, or Arabic
- The “Royal Spanish Academy” prescribes that nouns are masculine in the plural form
  - “...male students is the only correct way of referring to a mixed group...”

<https://www.rae.es/espanol-al-dia/los-ciudadanos-y-las-ciudadanas-los-ninos-y-las-ninas>

# CONDITIONING SINCE BIRTH

- In Spanish, the masculine form is used to refer to these groups of people:
  - Medical doctors, Construction workers, Butchers
  - Sport players (has anyone seen the Orange Football Advert?)
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVNZRHIZVL8>
  - Engineers (all sort of, including Software Engineers)
  - Presidents, VPs, senators, bosses, managers, etc.

# CONDITIONING SINCE BIRTH

- But, despite the documented “rules”, people refers to:
  - Nurses
  - Secretaries
  - Teachers
  - Cooks
  - Parents
  - Domestic workers
- In feminine. **Even in the plural form!**

# INCLUSIVE NAMING

- How much does the language conditions our brain, expectations, values?
  - *“male bias is so firmly embedded in our psyche that even genuinely gender-neutral words [like doctor or actor] are read as male”*
  - <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20201006-are-some-languages-more-sexist-than-others>
- How we can make Spanish (and other languages) more inclusive?
- Inclusive naming initiatives at various levels are important.

# INCLUSIVE NAMING IN TECH

- Gender (“man-in-the-middle”)
- Disabilities (“crippled”)
- Neurodiversities (“dumb”, “crazy”, “sanity-check”)
- Groups that historically have suffered oppression (“master”, “slave”)
- Denoting negative connotations (“whitelist”, “blacklist”)
- Violent (“abort”, “kill”)
- Check your code/project/docs if you can!

# INCLUSIVE CONTEXT

- “Next spring” applies only to half of the world!
  - Or “Summer” in Google Summer of Code
- Abbreviations/acronyms are used for the sake of brevity or practicality but could impact new contributors

– CRUD

Search for: [¿Qué es DDL en Argentina?](#)

– MTI

¿Cómo le dicen al dulce de leche en Uruguay?

Mismo dulce, diferentes nombres

– DDL

Se lo llama [dulce de leche](#) en Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, Paraguay, Puerto Rico, República Dominicana, Ecuador y algunas partes de Colombia y Venezuela. Pero también recibe el nombre de arequipe en otras partes de Colombia y Venezuela y Guatemala. Sep 26, 2016





# ALLIES

- **Supportive Advocate:** Actively supports marginalized groups and role models for inclusive policies/practices
- **Empathetic:** Understands diverse experiences and challenges, and listens without judgment
- **Confronts Bias:** Challenges discrimination using their privilege and influence, and amplify underrepresented voices
- **Self-Educates:** Learns about diversity and inclusion and continuously improves as an ally
- **Not self-appointed:** Recognized as such by the minorities

# CONCLUSIONS

- **Varied Factors:** it's a balancing act, but it's worth the effort
- **No Magic Formula:** no guaranteed recipe or procedure exists
- **Acknowledge Challenges:** the first step toward resolution
- **Reflect and Act:** introspect as individuals and as a group
- **Pursue Equity:** evaluate opportunities for change and improve
- **Provide support:** allies are key in the process of change

# THANK YOU!

- All images are of my creation or free domain, except for those explicitly credited
- Erin Meyer and Ned Batchelder granted me permissions to reference their work
- Jacob Kaplan Moss allowed to share his photo from PyCon AR 2009

