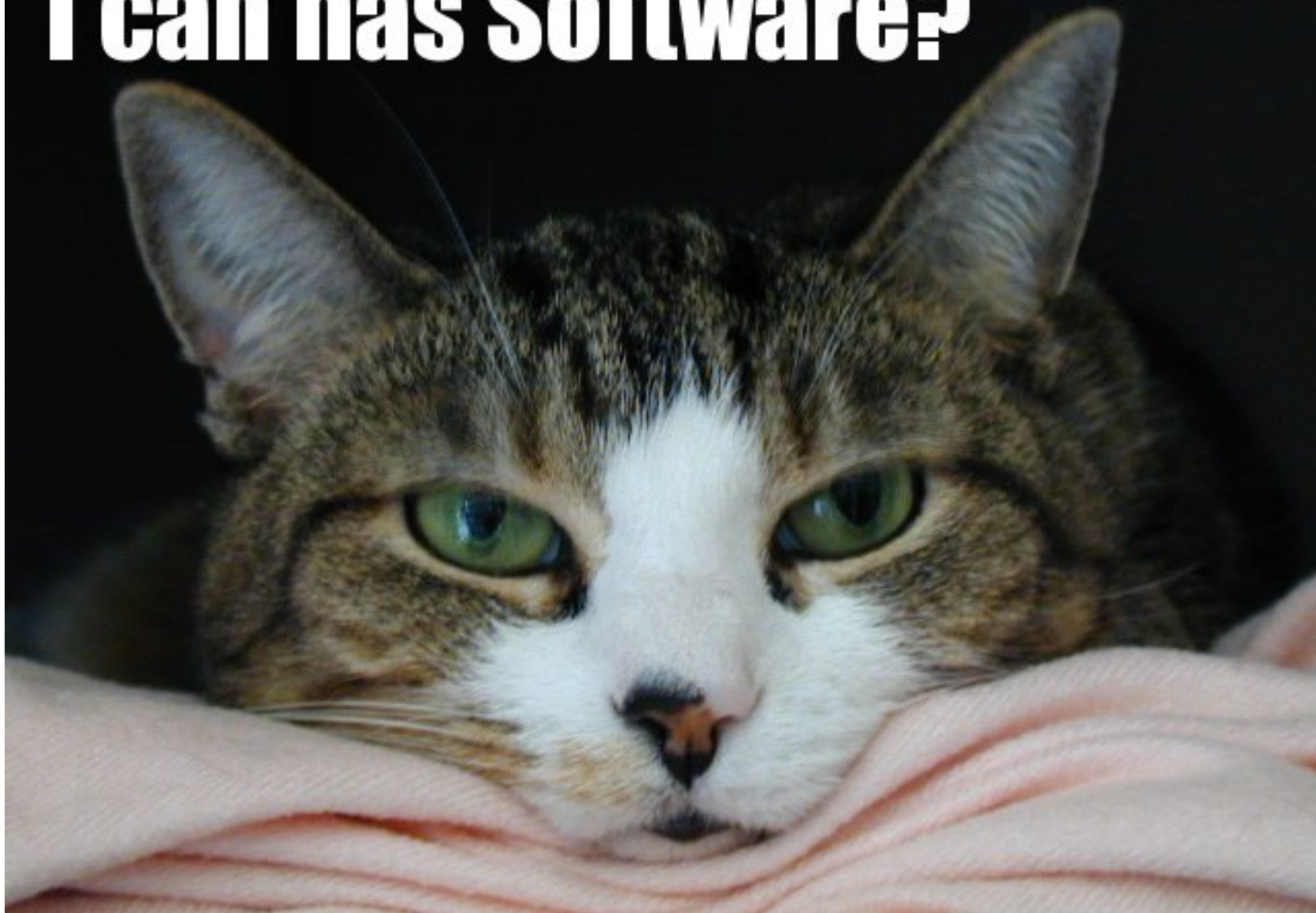


Open Software: For the Public Good

Ken Coar

I can has Software?



Benefits of Open Software

- Low cost of acquisition
- Accessibility
 - By definition, you can access it
- Longevity
 - Even if it isn't used much – or maintained – there's bound to always be a copy somewhere online
- *Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera*



Free as in Cheezburger

Open \approx Sharing

- If it's open, people can see it
- If they can see it, you're sharing it with them
- Thematically, sharing is what Europeana is all about

Europeana: Living Art

- “[*Europeana*] promotes discovery and networking opportunities in a multilingual space where users can engage, share in and be inspired by the rich diversity of Europe's cultural and scientific heritage.” -- (from the 'about' page)
- The software used to *implement* this vision is itself a living, growing heritage – so it's appropriate that *it* is being shared as well!

Key Point!

- The software infrastructure supporting the Europeana project is itself a tangible heritage in the making
- The process of its creation – the growing network of contacts, the intercultural cooperation toward a common goal – is an *intangible* heritage

Setting Examples

- Collating and indexing information from numerous diverse sources, in equally numerous and diverse languages, is a Heracleian task
- I predict that Europeana's work in this regard can be of immense value to those who face similar challenges
- The cooperation mechanisms that Europeana evolves will likewise be valuable

Openness

- Openness is not just about software – it's about outlook
- Keeping an open mind to new ideas – ***and*** to criticism of our own ideas and convictions! – is an essential part of the process
- 'Traditional' software shops often have tremendous difficulty making the adaptation
- If you *start* open, it's easier to *stay* open

Those who have gone before?

- Yes, there is an excellent chance that what you want to do has been done before, and you can borrow/learn from it – but it's also possible that *you* will be setting the example that others will seek out
- Respect others and their achievements – but remember that *they* were not born experts! They too had to learn!

Open is Attractive

- Something that's accessible tends to be more interesting
 - Would you be more interested in looking at a pocketwatch, or a pocketwatch with a transparent case and the moving parts visible?
- If person *A* finds something interesting, there's a good chance she will *share* it with others
- Specifically, someone attracted to the Europeana *content* may become interested in the *software* – and *vice versa*

Openness as Responsibility

- Legal precedents: “...not merely that justice shall be done, but that it shall be seen to be done.” ¹
- A number of organisations are devoted to the concept of openness/transparency as a high form of public responsibility
- Software-related organisations include
 - Software in the Public Interest
 - The Apache Software Foundation

Software in the Public Interest

from the Articles of Incorporation

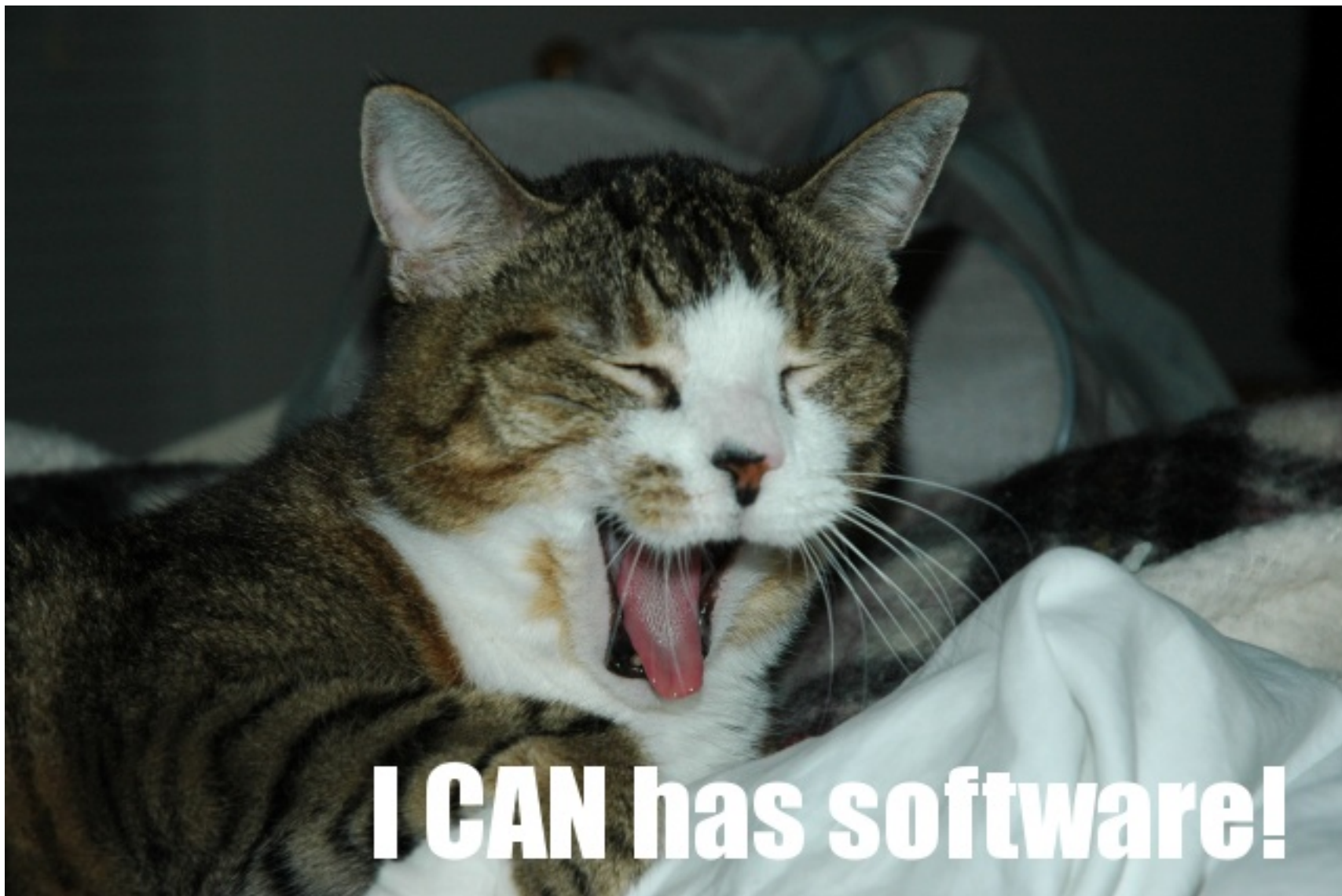
The purpose or purposes for which the corporation is formed are as follows:

- To create, form and establish an organization to formulate and provide software systems **for use by the general public without charge**;
 - :
- **to support, educate and promote the creation and development of software available to the general public**;
 - :
- **to foster, promote and increase access to software systems available to the general public**;
 - :

Apache Software Foundation

from the Articles of Incorporation

3. The purpose of the Corporation is to engage in any lawful act or activity for which corporations which are organized not for profit may be organized under the General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware, **including the creation and maintenance of "open source" software distributed by the Corporation to the public at no charge.**



I CAN has software!

Notes

1. Rosenne, Shabtai. *An International Law Miscellany*. Page 122, regarding the International Court of Justice. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1993.