Coraline Ada Ehmke

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I am an internationally recognized engineer, speaker, writer, and activist with over 25 years of professional experience in software development. For more than a decade, I have worked to promote the values of diversity, equity, and justice in the technology industry, with a focus on open source.

I have been recognized as a notable woman in computing history and featured on the timeline of women in computing on Wikipedia in recognition of my work in tech justice.

Experience

- **Software Engineering.** My experience as a software engineer includes work in the fields of consulting, advertising, e-commerce, healthcare, open source infrastructure, and education.
- **Open Source.** I've been an active member of the open source community for most of my career, contributing to major projects like Ruby on Rails and authoring over two dozen open source libraries.
- **Organization for Ethical Source.** In 2021 I founded the Organization for Ethical Source, with the mission of empowering open source communities to ensure that their work is used for social good and in service of human rights. I serve as the organization's President and Executive Director.
- **The Tech We Want Luminary Program.** I'm a Luminary of The Omidyar Network's "The Tech We Want" initiative, a community of leaders and technologists working for inclusivity, mutualism, sustainability, accountability, and responsible innovation.
- **Governance Futures Network.** I serve as chair of the Governance Futures Network, a global policy and technology initiative exploring the future of democracy in a fully digital age.
- **BridgeFoundry.** From 2016 to 2018 I served on the board of BridgeFoundry, an early pioneer of the learn-to-code movement, supporting volunteers in over 80 cities around the world to organize and conduct open source workshops.
- **RubyTogether.** From 2015 to 2022 I served on the board of RubyTogether, a nonprofit providing funding to professional software developers to work on shared infrastructure for the Ruby programming language community.

Notable Projects

- **Contributor Covenant.** The first and most popular code of conduct for open source communities. Contributor Covenant transformed open source communities around the world, helping to make open source communities more safe and accessible to underrepresented and marginalized contributors. Contributor Covenant has been translated by volunteers into 35 languages and is

used by thousands of open source projects including Linux, Golang, JRuby, Swift, F#, Rails, and 9 of the 10 largest open source projects in the world. contributor-covenant.org

- **Hippocratic License.** The preeminent ethical source license, which prohibits the use of open source in violation of internationally recognized human rights. firstdonoharm.dev
- **TMI-Web.** An open source toolkit for collecting, analyzing, and visualizing complex, intersectional identity data, developed in collaboration with social science researchers.
- **Collective Futures Generator.** A civic engagement storytelling framework and digital platform designed to facilitate collective future(s) generation through the lens of restorative and de-colonized "future archaeology."
- **Open Source for Women (OS4W).** An online resource that helped women contribute to open source by connecting them with mentors and pair programming partners, and identifying open source projects that welcome diverse contributors.
- **Post-Meritocracy Manifesto.** An indictment of the meritocratic philosophy that underpins open source. The Manifesto defines a set of core principles for a more equitable future for the movement. It has collected over 600 signatures, and has been translated by volunteers into 8 languages. postmeritocracy.org
- **Greater Than Code.** I was a founding panelist on the Greater Than Code podcast, which explored the human side of software development. With over 250 episodes, our topics included imposter syndrome, mental illness, sexuality, unconscious bias, and social justice. greaterthancode.com
- **RubyMe.** While serving on the RubyTogether board, I developed a paid mentorship program for early-career Ruby developers from marginalized communities. Participants gained professional development experience by contributing to open source projects with the help of a mentor. rubyme.org

Public Speaking Highlights

- **"How Ethical Software Licensing Can Combat Human Rights Abuses by Corporations"**, RightsCon, June 2022
- **"The World Set Free: A History of Responsible Technology"**, Los Alamos National Lab Speaker Series, November 2022
- **"Ethics in Open Source"**, Colorado Research Center for Democracy & Technology, February 2021
- **"Anti-Oppression Frameworks in Open Source"**, Code for Science & Society, December 2021
- "**The Future of Open Source: Toward an Ethical Stack"**, UCLA Institute of Technology Law & Practice, October 15, 2021
- **"Emerging Trends in Open"**, Creative Commons Global Summit, September 2021
- **"The Rising Storm of Ethics in Open Source"**, Copyleft Conf, February 2020
- **"Are Tech Companies a Threat to Human Rights?"**, United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights, November 2018
- **"Thomas Edison vs Three Teslas in a Trenchcoat"**, RubyConf, November 2019
- **"Alice's Adventures in AI-Land"**, Strange Loop, September 2017

Select Publications

- "Dimensions of Digital Coercion" (Organization for Ethical Source, February 2023)
- "The Sacred Geometry of Respect, Trust, and Equity" (DWeb Voices, Internet Archive, September 2021)
- "The Social Responsibility of Software Engineers" (The Lead Dev, October 2020)
- "A Six-Month Retrospective on Ethical Open Source" (Model View Culture, April 2020)
- "The Myth of the Lone Genius" (April 2019)
- "Meritocracy in Theory and Practice" (September 2018)
- "Why Hackers Must Welcome Social Justice Advocates" (November 2016)
- "The New Normal: Codes of Conduct in 2015 and Beyond" (Model View Culture, December 2015)
- "The Dehumanizing Myth of Meritocracy" (Model View Culture, May 2015)
- "Technical Decision-Making and Alignment in a Remote Culture" (Stitch Fix blog, December 2020)
- "A Framework for Responsible Innovation" (Stitch Fix blog, August 2019)
- "Not Applicable: What Your Job Description is Really Saying" (Stitch Fix blog, January 2018)

In the Media

- "Open Source and Politics: A Conversation with Coraline Ada Ehmke" (Kernel Magazine, October 2022)
- "Hacks to Help Open Source Leadership Support Inclusion" (The New Stack, October 2022)
- "Open source software: freedom from ethics?" (Engineering & Technology, April 2021)
- "Is Your Open Source Code Fueling Human Rights Abuses?" (BuiltIn, August 2020)
- "Organize for Change or Quit Your Job" (hack_curio, July 2020)
- "The Culture War in Open Source is On" (Model View Culture, April 2020)
- "The Schism at the Heart of the Open-Source Movement" (The Atlantic, January 2020)
- "Software freedom vs human freedom: A surge of activism is rocking open source developers, as programmers fight to stop their software from being used for 'evil'" (Business Insider, December 2019)
- "An Open Source License That Requires Users to Do No Harm" (WIRED, October 2019)
- "The Woman Bringing Civility to Open Source" (WIRED, September 2018)
- "Why sexism has festered for so long in Silicon Valley" (CNN, July 2017)
- "The Year Ahead: Will 2016 Be the Year of IT Diversity?" (The New Stack, January 2016)
- "Your Presence as a Political Statement: The Story of Coraline Ada Ehmke" (GenderIT.org, October 2016)
- "In Wake of GitHub Incident, Coders Launch 'Culture Offset'" (Wall Street Journal, March 2014)

References

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