What's in a name?
A WG Naming deep dive

Celeste Horgan, Linux Foundation

Who are we?

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VMWare

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Apple

Our mission

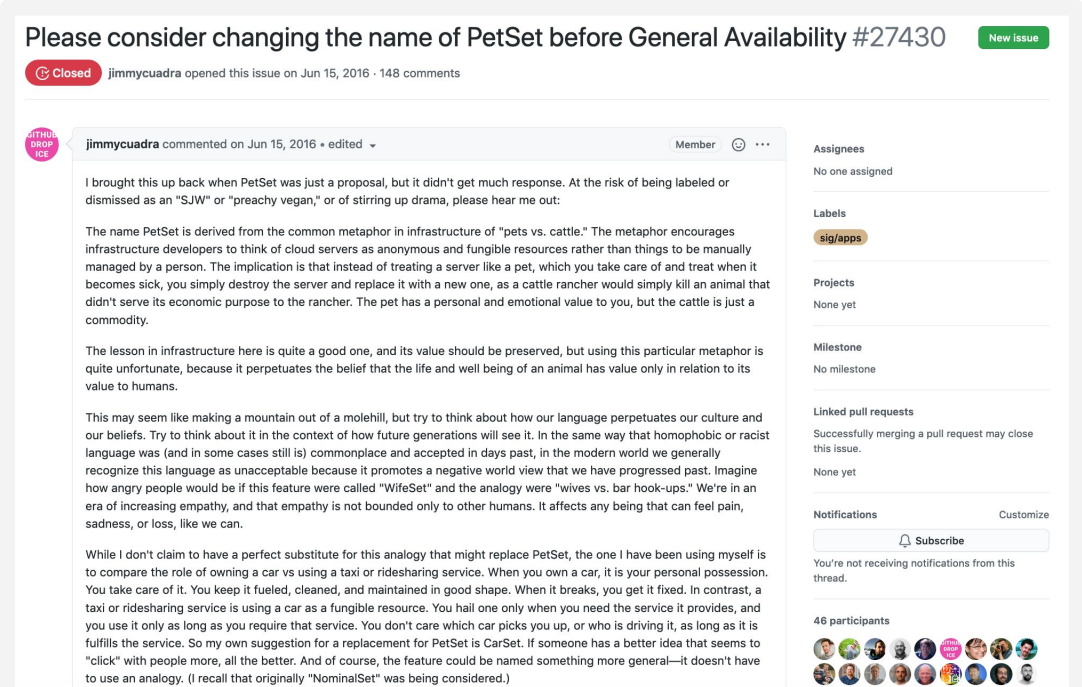
WG Naming is evaluating **language and naming choices** within the Kubernetes project, with a specific initial focus of replacing harmful language with neutral terms whenever possible.

Racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, or discrimination against any protected or historically underrepresented group.

Our mission

An example

The year is 2016. Once upon a time there was a feature called PetSet:



Please consider changing the name of PetSet before General Availability #27430

New issue

Closed jimmycuadra opened this issue on Jun 15, 2016 · 148 comments

jimmycuadra commented on Jun 15, 2016 • edited — Member

I brought this up back when PetSet was just a proposal, but it didn't get much response. At the risk of being labeled or dismissed as an "SJW" or "preachy vegan," or of stirring up drama, please hear me out:

The name PetSet is derived from the common metaphor in infrastructure of "pets vs. cattle." The metaphor encourages infrastructure developers to think of cloud servers as anonymous and fungible resources rather than things to be manually managed by a person. The implication is that instead of treating a server like a pet, which you take care of and treat when it becomes sick, you simply destroy the server and replace it with a new one, as a cattle rancher would simply kill an animal that didn't serve its economic purpose to the rancher. The pet has a personal and emotional value to you, but the cattle is just a commodity.

The lesson in infrastructure here is quite a good one, and its value should be preserved, but using this particular metaphor is quite unfortunate, because it perpetuates the belief that the life and well being of an animal has value only in relation to its value to humans.

This may seem like making a mountain out of a molehill, but try to think about how our language perpetuates our culture and our beliefs. Try to think about it in the context of how future generations will see it. In the same way that homophobic or racist language was (and in some cases still is) commonplace and accepted in days past, in the modern world we generally recognize this language as unacceptable because it promotes a negative world view that we have progressed past. Imagine how angry people would be if this feature were called "WifeSet" and the analogy were "wives vs. bar hook-ups." We're in an era of increasing empathy, and that empathy is not bounded only to other humans. It affects any being that can feel pain, sadness, or loss, like we can.

While I don't claim to have a perfect substitute for this analogy that might replace PetSet, the one I have been using myself is to compare the role of owning a car vs using a taxi or ridesharing service. When you own a car, it is your personal possession. You take care of it. You keep it fueled, cleaned, and maintained in good shape. When it breaks, you get it fixed. In contrast, a taxi or ridesharing service is using a car as a fungible resource. You hail one only when you need the service it provides, and you use it only as long as you require that service. You don't care which car picks you up, or who is driving it, as long as it is fulfills the service. So my own suggestion for a replacement for PetSet is CarSet. If someone has a better idea that seems to "click" with people more, all the better. And of course, the feature could be named something more general—it doesn't have to use an analogy. (I recall that originally "NominalSet" was being considered.)

Assignees
No one assigned

Labels
sig/apps

Projects
None yet

Milestone
No milestone

Linked pull requests
Successfully merging a pull request may close this issue.
None yet

Notifications Customize
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46 participants

From k/k issue #27430

"

The name PetSet is derived from the common **metaphor** in infrastructure of "pets vs. cattle." … The pet has a personal and emotional value to you, but the cattle is just a commodity.

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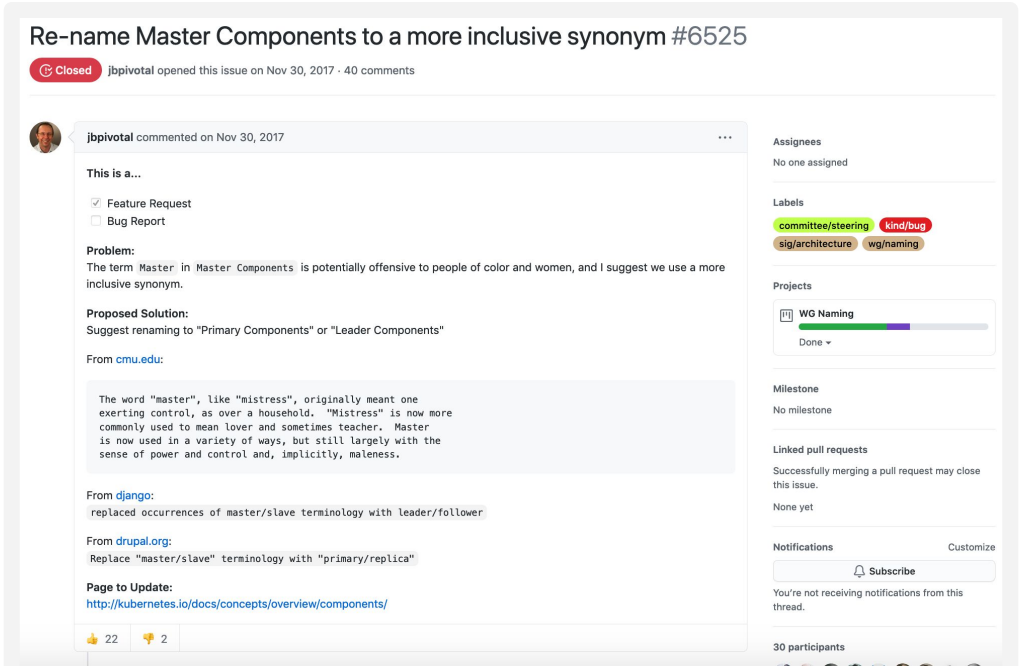
"

… Another example

The year is 2017, in kubernetes/website:



Re-name Master Components to a more inclusive synonym #6525

Closed jbpivotal opened this issue on Nov 30, 2017 · 40 comments

jbpivotal commented on Nov 30, 2017

This is a...

- [x] Feature Request
- [ ] Bug Report

Problem:
The term `Master` in `Master Components` is potentially offensive to people of color and women, and I suggest we use a more inclusive synonym.

Proposed Solution:
Suggest renaming to "Primary Components" or "Leader Components"

From cmu.edu:

> The word "master", like "mistress", originally meant one exerting control, as over a household. "Mistress" is now more commonly used to mean lover and sometimes teacher. Master is now used in a variety of ways, but still largely with the sense of power and control and, implicitly, maleness.

From django:
`replaced occurrences of master/slave terminology with leader/follower`

From drupal.org:
`Replace "master/slave" terminology with "primary/replica"`

Page to Update:
http://kubernetes.io/docs/concepts/overview/components/

22 2

Assignees
No one assigned

Labels
committee/steering kind/bug sig/architecture wg/naming

Projects
WG Naming
Done

Milestone
No milestone

Linked pull requests
Successfully merging a pull request may close this issue.
None yet

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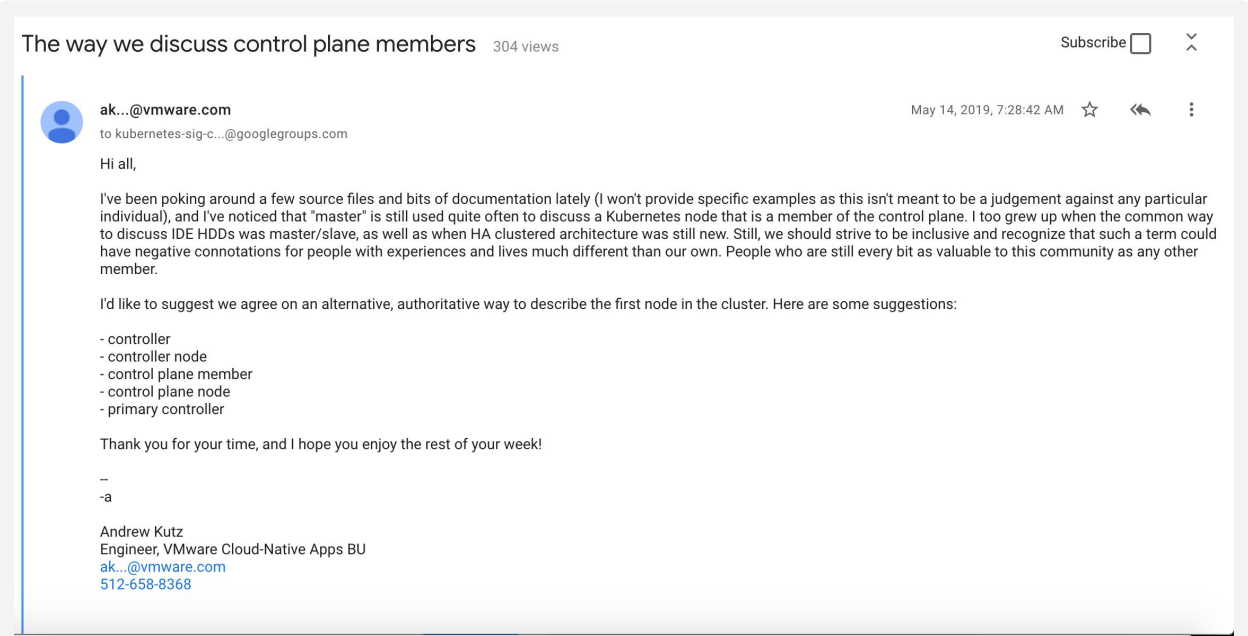
30 participants

… And another

2019, on the SIG Cluster Lifecycle mailing list:



The way we discuss control plane members 304 views

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ak...@vmware.com

to kubernetes-sig-c...@googlegroups.com

May 14, 2019, 7:28:42 AM

Hi all,

I've been poking around a few source files and bits of documentation lately (I won't provide specific examples as this isn't meant to be a judgement against any particular individual), and I've noticed that "master" is still used quite often to discuss a Kubernetes node that is a member of the control plane. I too grew up when the common way to discuss IDE HDDs was master/slave, as well as when HA clustered architecture was still new. Still, we should strive to be inclusive and recognize that such a term could have negative connotations for people with experiences and lives much different than our own. People who are still every bit as valuable to this community as any other member.

I'd like to suggest we agree on an alternative, authoritative way to describe the first node in the cluster. Here are some suggestions:

- controller
- controller node
- control plane member
- control plane node
- primary controller

Thank you for your time, and I hope you enjoy the rest of your week!

--
-a

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When an issue comes up again and again, do something about it.

What we're doing

- WG Naming formalizes **recommendations** for replacing problematic language in the Kubernetes project
- From there, recommendations are handed to Steering & other SIGs to implement over time
- A **language evaluation framework**, to provide ongoing process for the community

The guidelines

First-order concerns:
language where harm is egregious, overt, and clearly problematic

Second-order concerns:
language which is problematic but with a less definite impact

Third-order concerns:
language that could use improvement but does no demonstrable harm

First-order concerns

First-order concerns are characterized by:

- **Overtness:** regardless of its use in the context of code or technology, there is little to no ambiguity outside of technology as to whether the language in question indicates harm
- **Identity-specificity:** language in question unambiguously identifies a group of people

- Is the term overtly racist?
- Is the term overtly sexist, transphobic, or pejorative about a gender identity?
- Is the term overtly ableist, or pejorative to neurodiverse or disabled people
- Is the term overtly homophobic?

Second-order concerns

Second-order concerns are characterized by:

- **Ambiguity:** outside the context of code or technology, language might have connotations related to harmful but the etymology of the term is not related to harm of a specific identity
- **Lack of specific identity:** concerns in this category do not target specific identities, or do so in a non-overt way

- Is the term violent?
- Is the term militaristic?

Third-order concerns

Third-order concerns are characterized by:

- **Clarity:** is the language in use a metaphor that could be described more precisely using different words?
- **Anthropomorphism:** does language unnecessarily humanize components or processes?
- **Idiomatic:** Is language unclear to someone outside a specific culture?

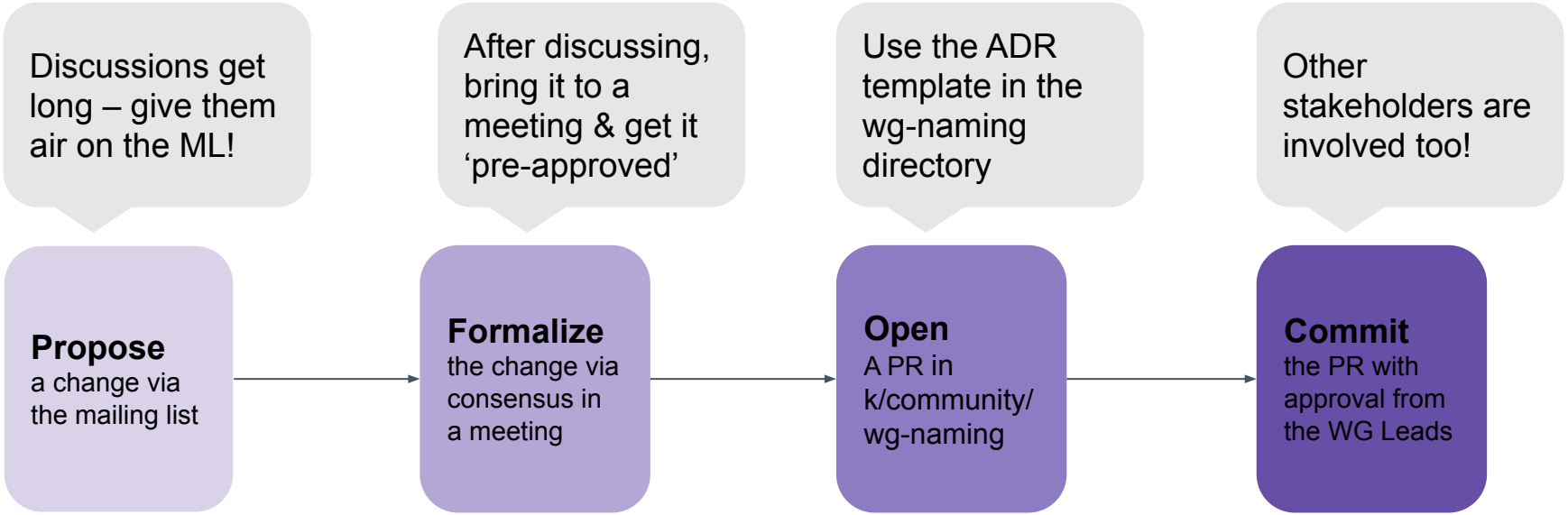
- Is the term evocative instead of descriptive?
- Is the term ambiguous?

Our first recommendation!

Thanks Aaron Crickenberger!

```
+ # Recommendation: master -> control plane
+
+ **Last Updated**: 2020-10-16
+
+ **Status**: Draft
+
+ ## Recommendation
+
+ Within the Kubernetes codebase, the term “master” is often used in reference to
+ [the kubernetes control plane][architecture], either as a whole or to some
+ subset of the components within.  We recommend **control plane** to refer to the
+ set of components as a whole.  We recommend **context-specific alternatives**
+ when talking about individual components or the roles they serve.
+
+ ## Suggested Alternatives
+
+ ### Control Plane
+ - e.g. "The control plane is the set of all components responsible for
+   controlling a kubernetes cluster"
+ - e.g. "The control plane is the thing that can be communicated with in order to
+   control a kubernetes cluster"
+ - If it matters which specific component(s) or component instance is being
+   communicated with, be specific:
+   - endpoint, e.g. "we don't care whether a load balancer, apiserver, or other
+     component is behind this endpoint; we will talk only to this endpoint and no
+ other"
```

Approval workflow



Why?

Intentionally inclusive communities

Get involved!

1. Join us:
   - Slack k8s.slack.io: #wg-naming
   - Mailing list: kubernetes-wg-naming@googlegroups.com
2. Meetings:
   - Mailing list will give you the invite
   - 2nd Monday of every month at 10:30 Pacific Time
3. Take the work in kubernetes/community/wg-naming and use it in your own orgs!

KEEP CLOUD NATIVE
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North America 2020
Virtual
HELM
KV