RENATER
CONNECTEUR DE SAVOIRS

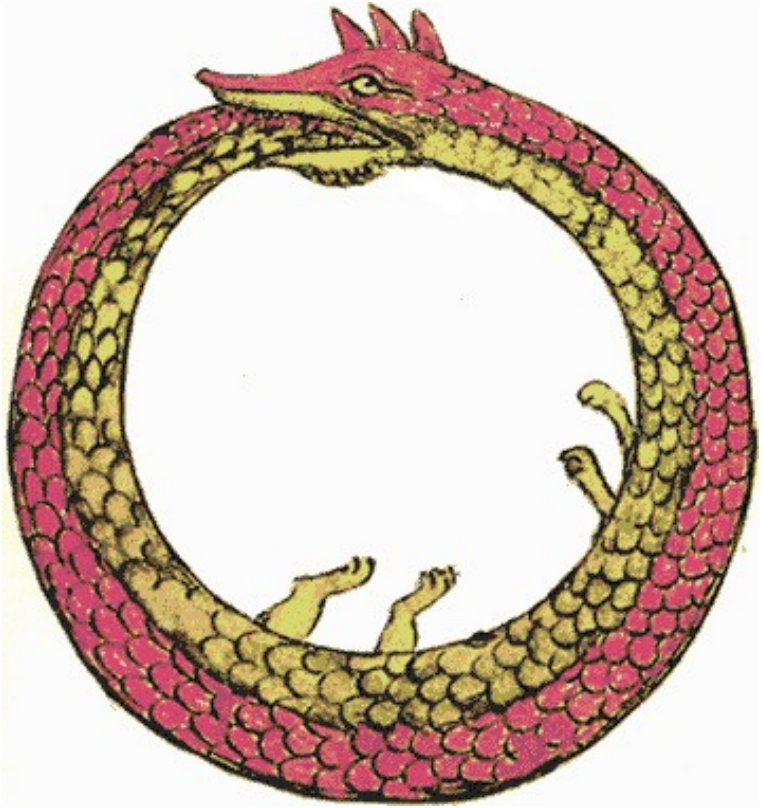
# On life and death of free softwares

David Verdin & Étienne Méléard

TNC24 – June 11th, 2024

tnc24

# On life and death



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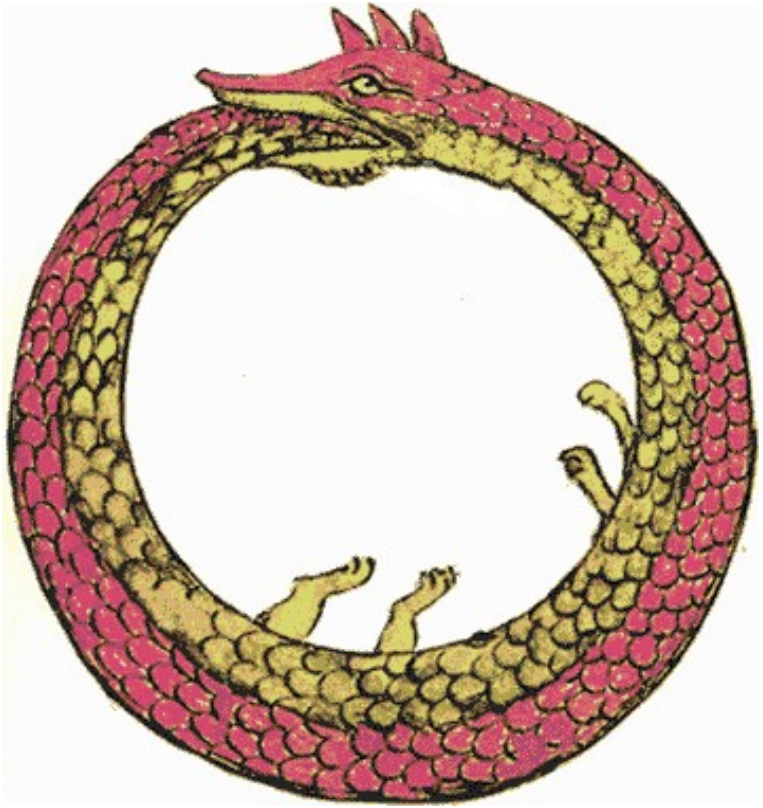

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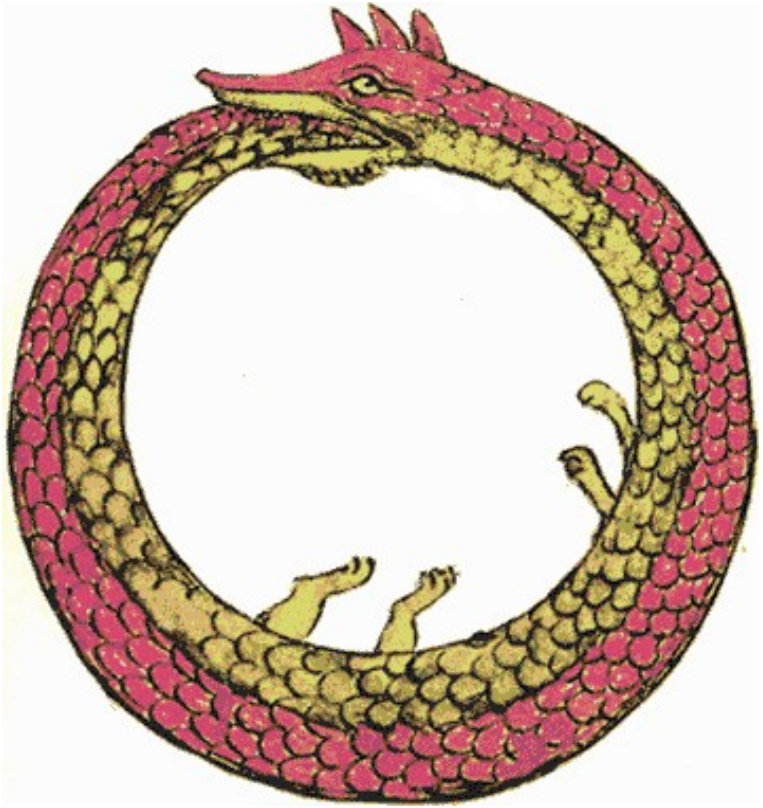

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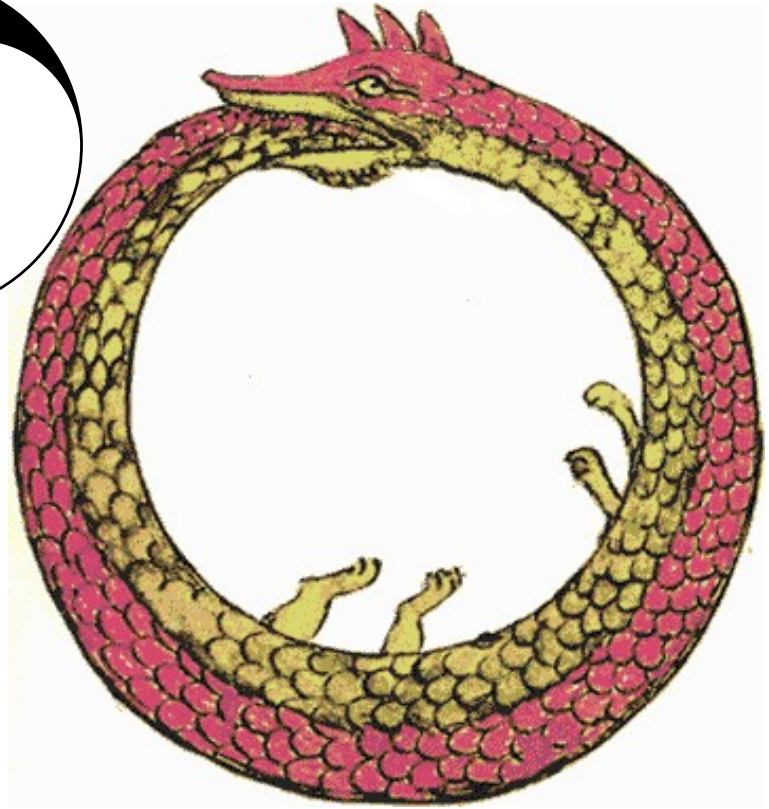

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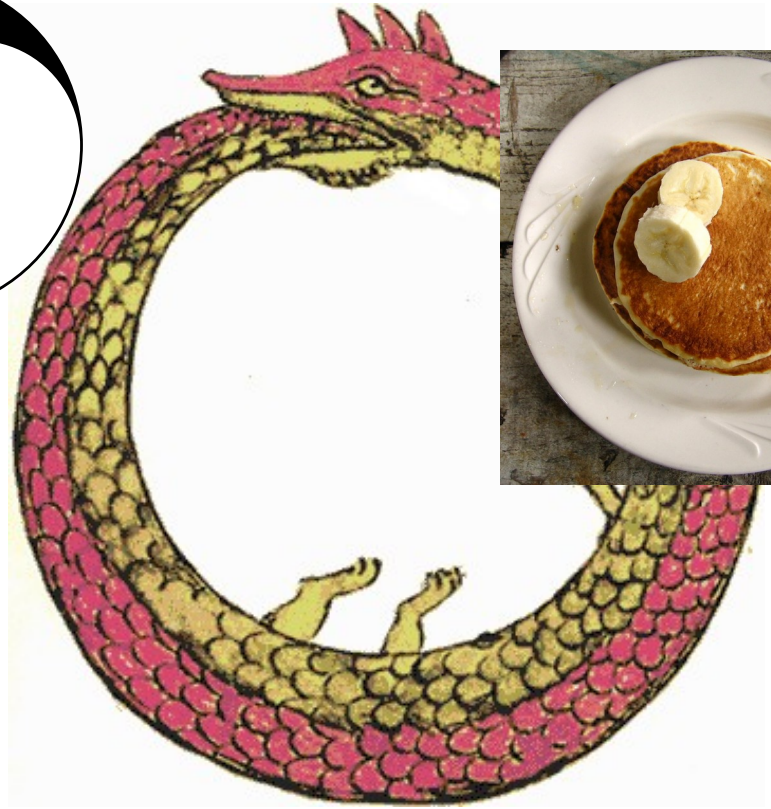
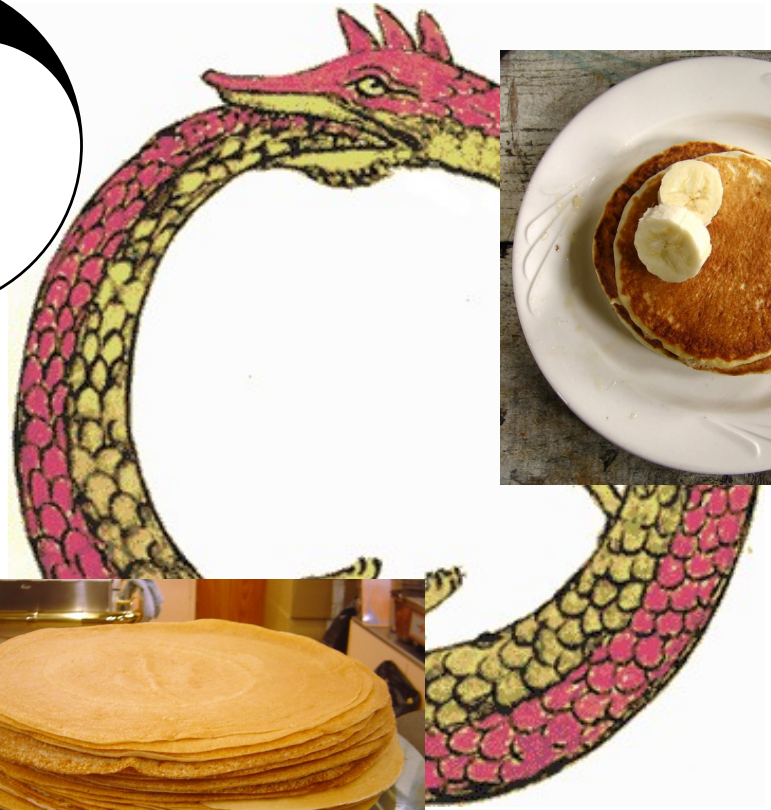


# On life and death

# Circles are nice



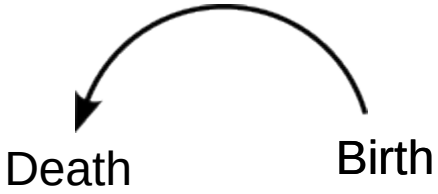
# Circles are nice

# Meet Sympa

Birth

- Sympa
- Mailing list manager
- Free software
- Born : 1997

# Meet Sympa



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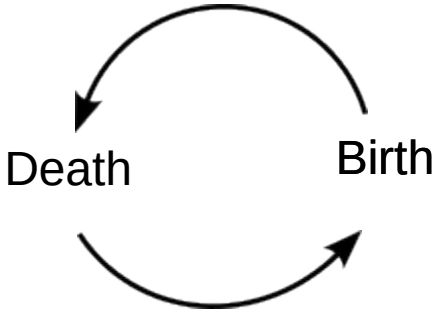

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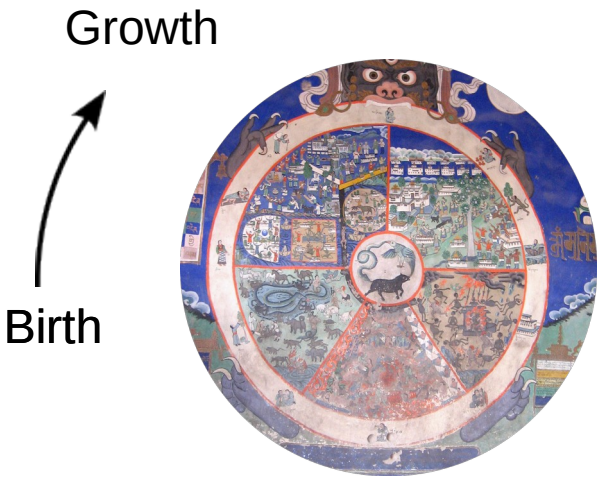
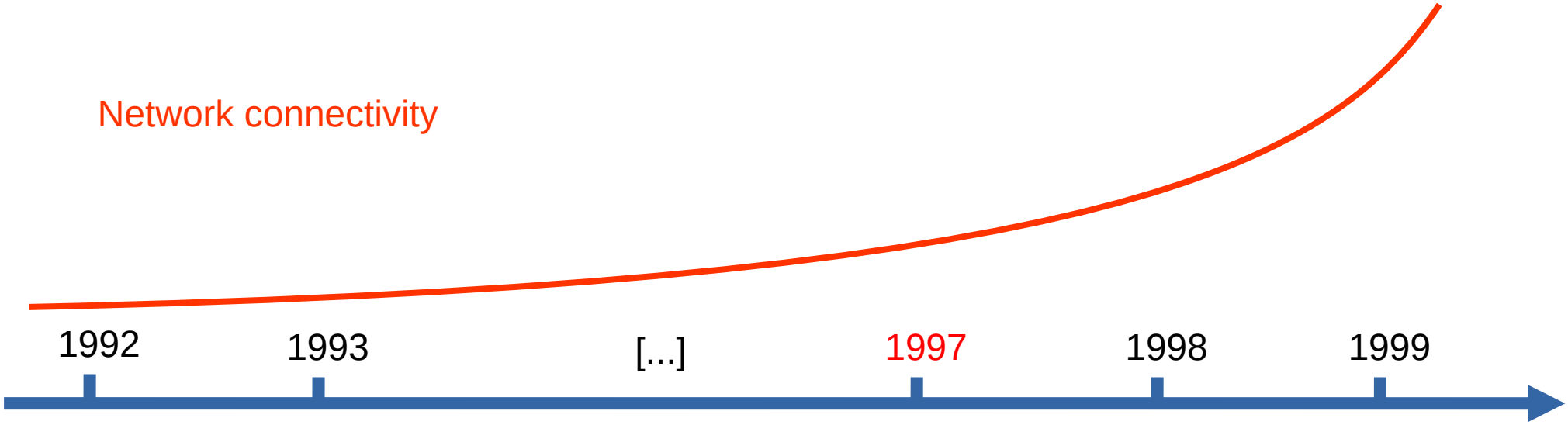



- Turned 27 this year
- Developed by CRU+RENATER during 20 years
- Widely spread
- Service at RENATER : 600 k users

# Reason for success



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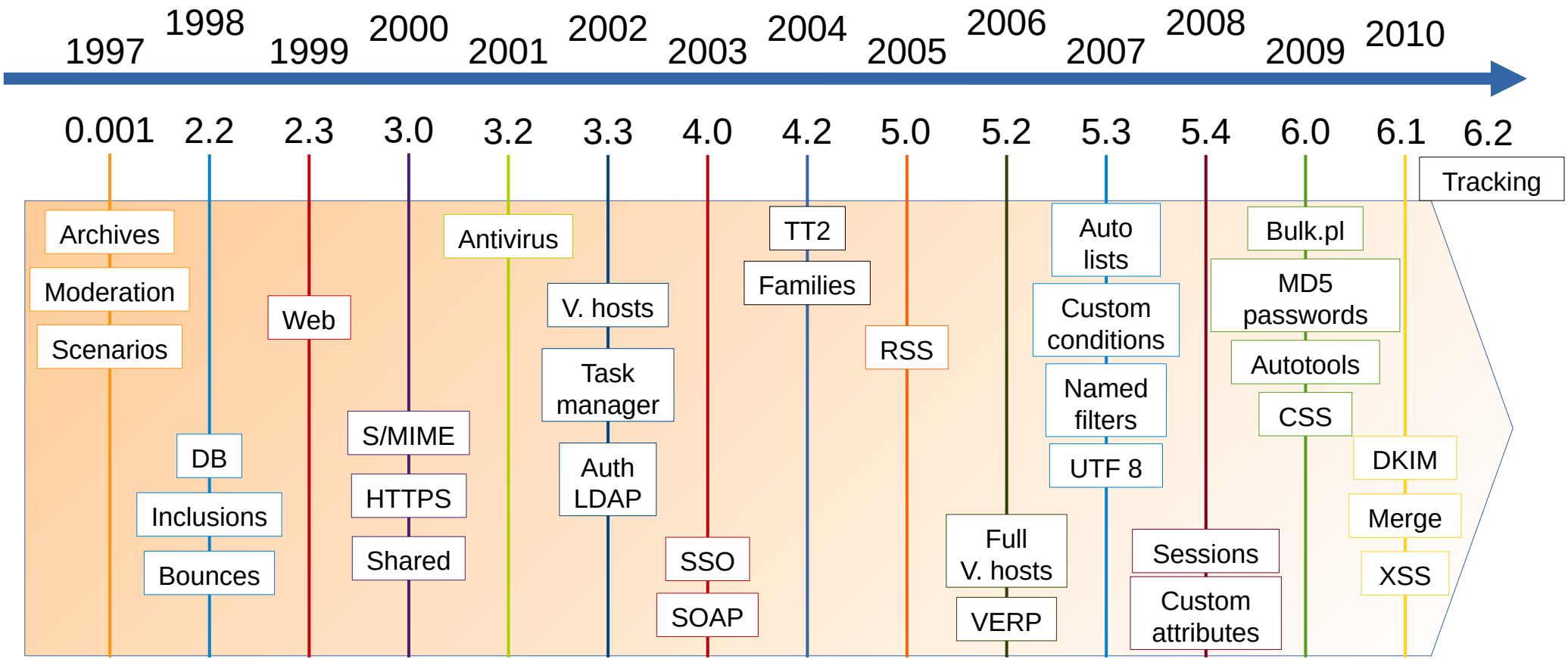
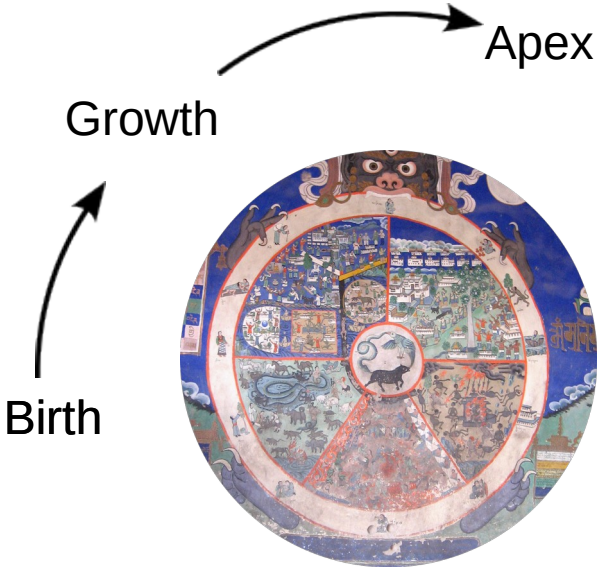
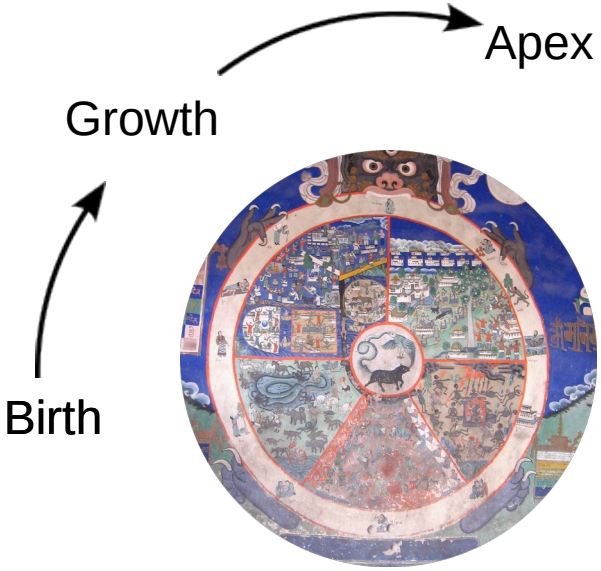


# Reasons for the reasons for success



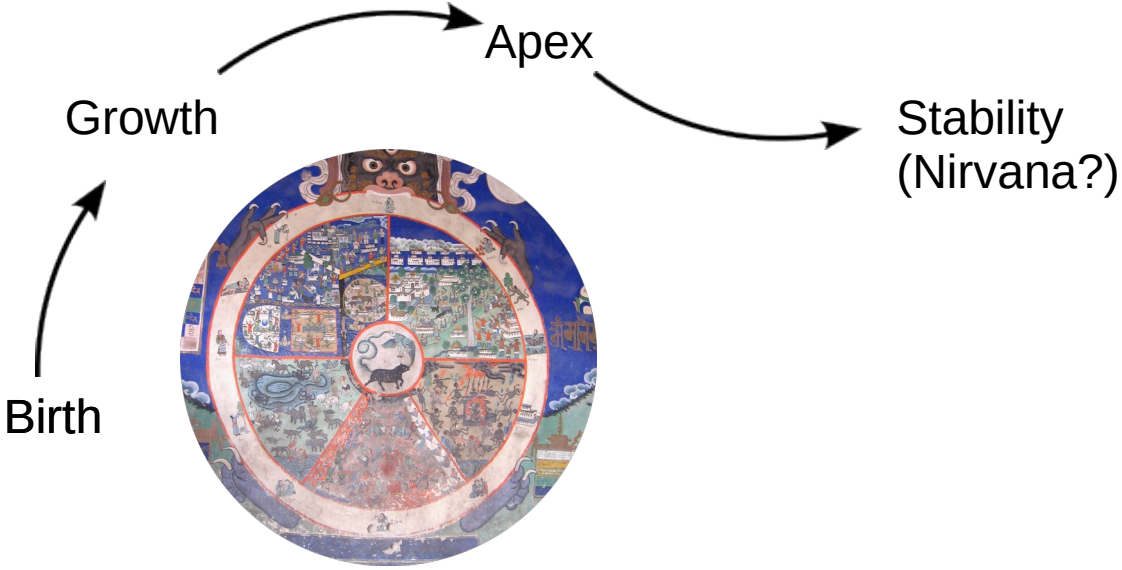

- **Functionalities + context sitting on a tree...**

# Reasons for the reasons for success




- **Functionalities + context sitting on a tree...**
- Indeed, but :
  - Small team, close to the community,
  - Trusting managers, no interferences with technic,
  - Clear political vision,
  - Strong community implication from the start.
- Seeds of decline : only one organization

# Reasons for the reasons for success



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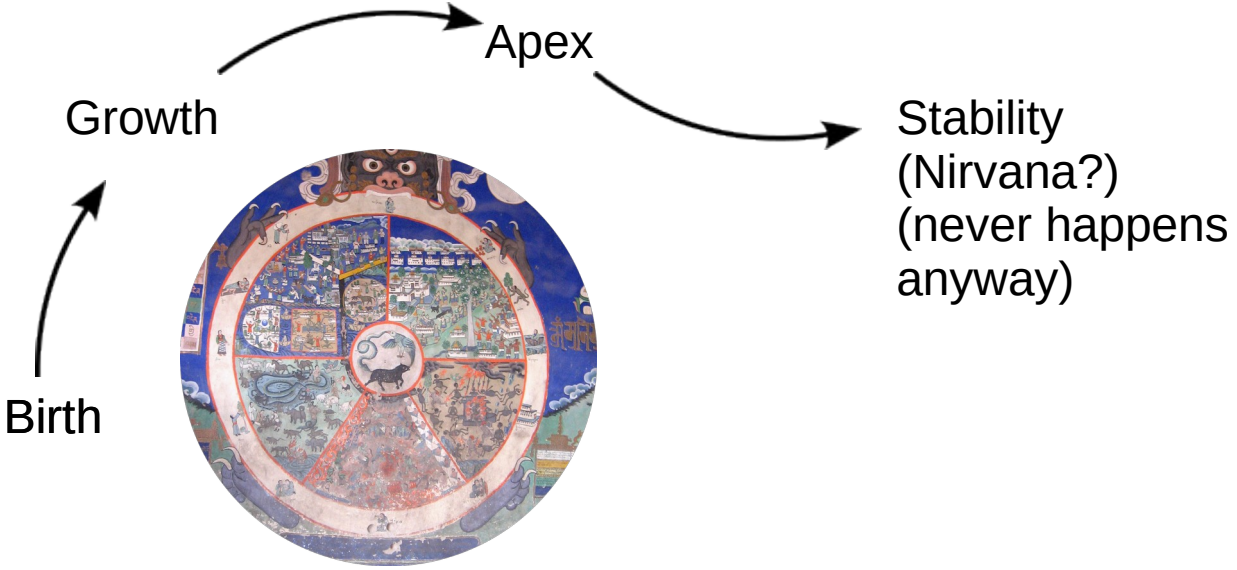
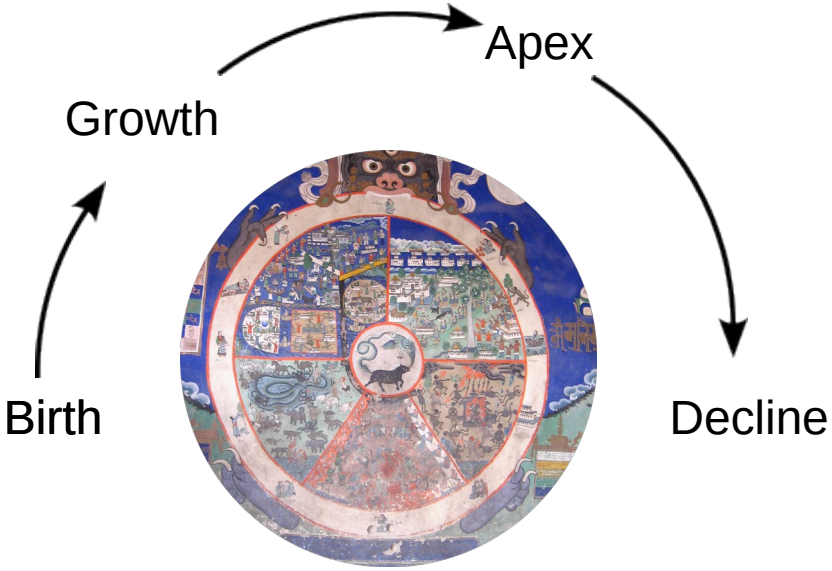


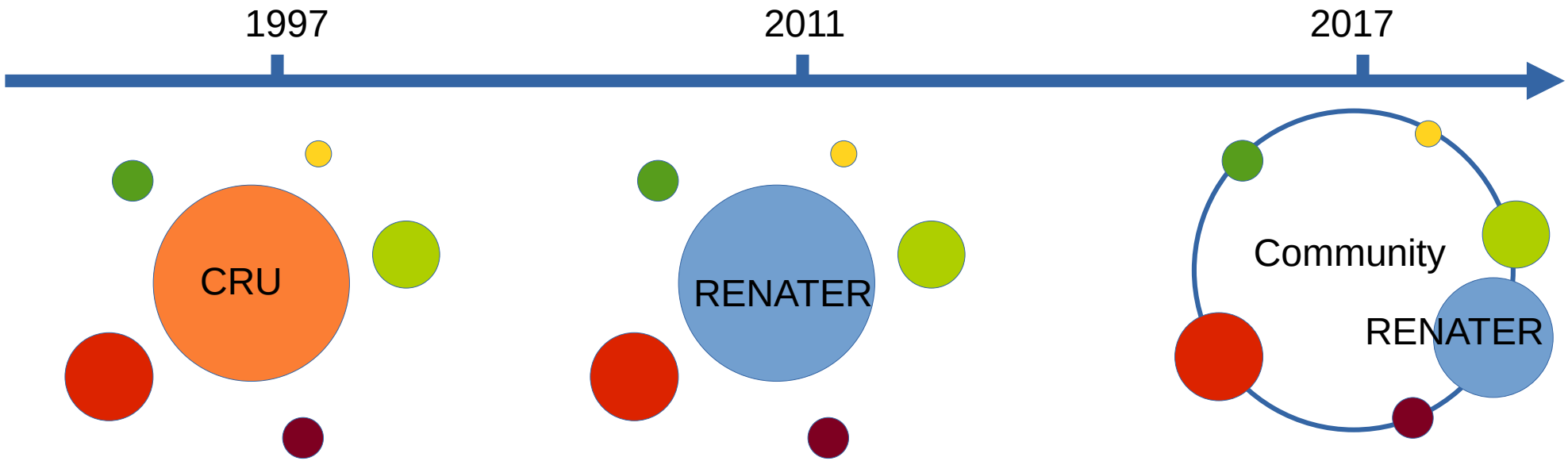
# Decline



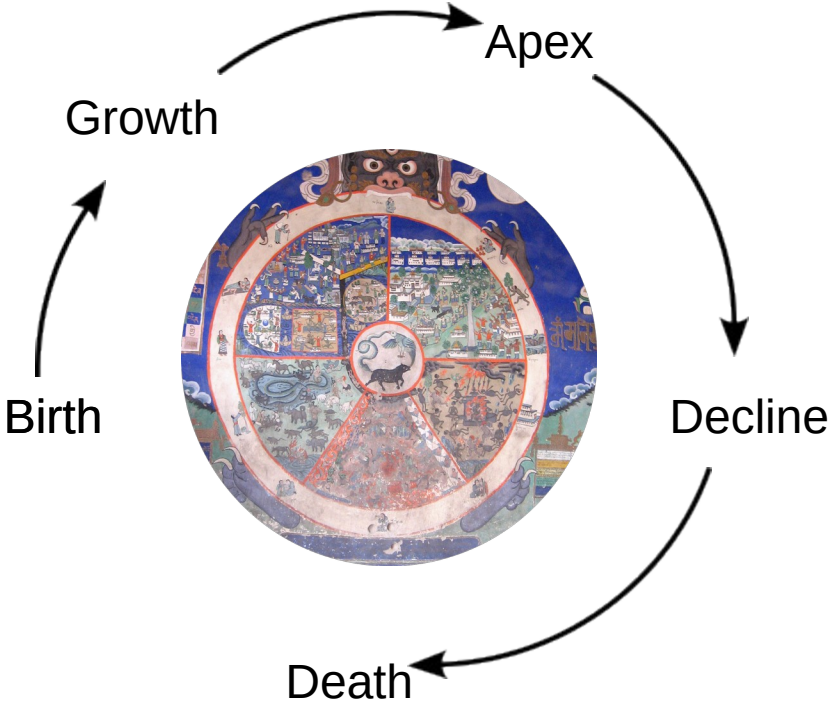

- Organization change : more formalized processes
- Increased exploitation load
- Fuzzy political vision : RENATER was a beginner in service application by then
- => Envisioning a potential structural failure ; look for outside contributors
  - => failure, but no time lost

# The fall

- A small change : missing lead developer during 6 months
- The community takes over



# The fall

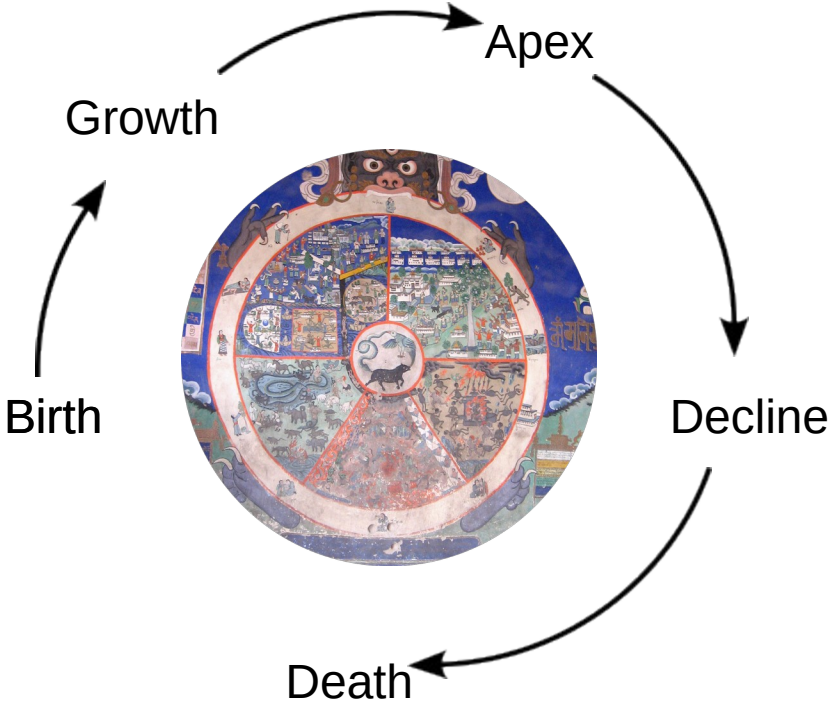



- Community :No governance
- Back to unique actor : the lead developer
- Sympa is NOT dead. Only to us.
- A story of a missed contribution

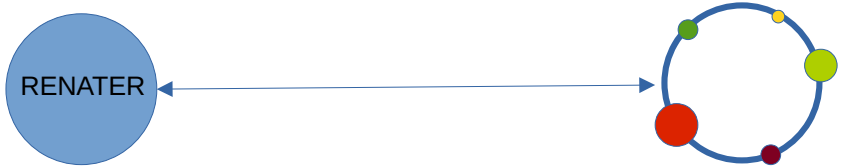
Hey, kid, you want a community ? Stick to this advice :

# BE NICE

# The choice




- We out



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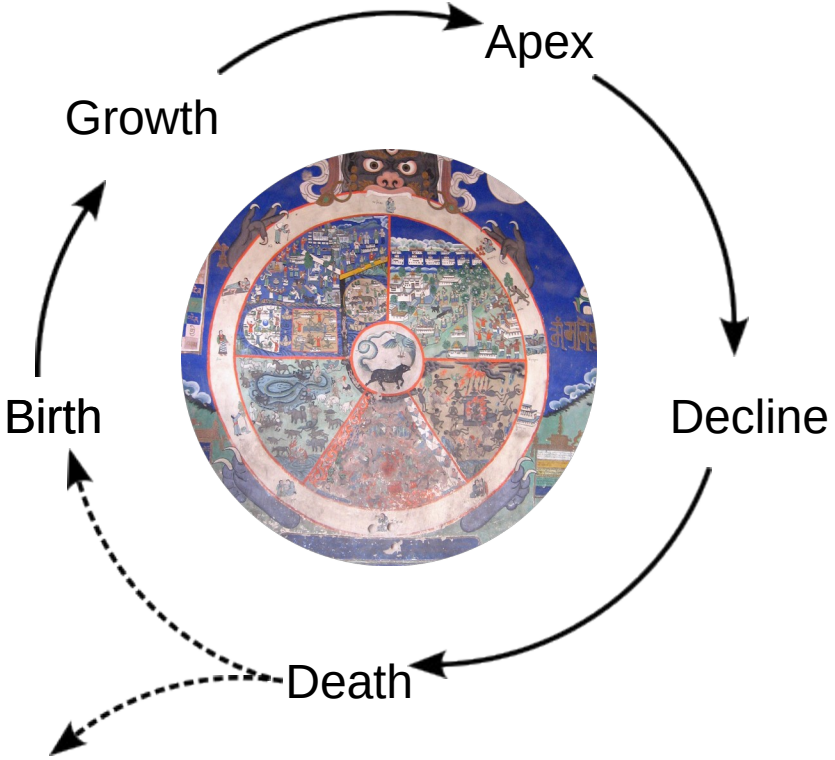


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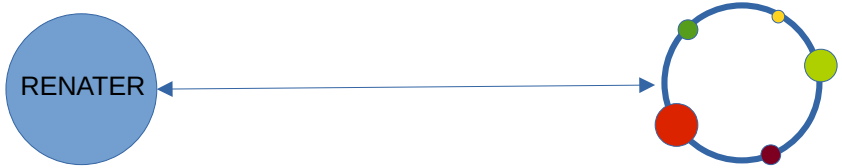

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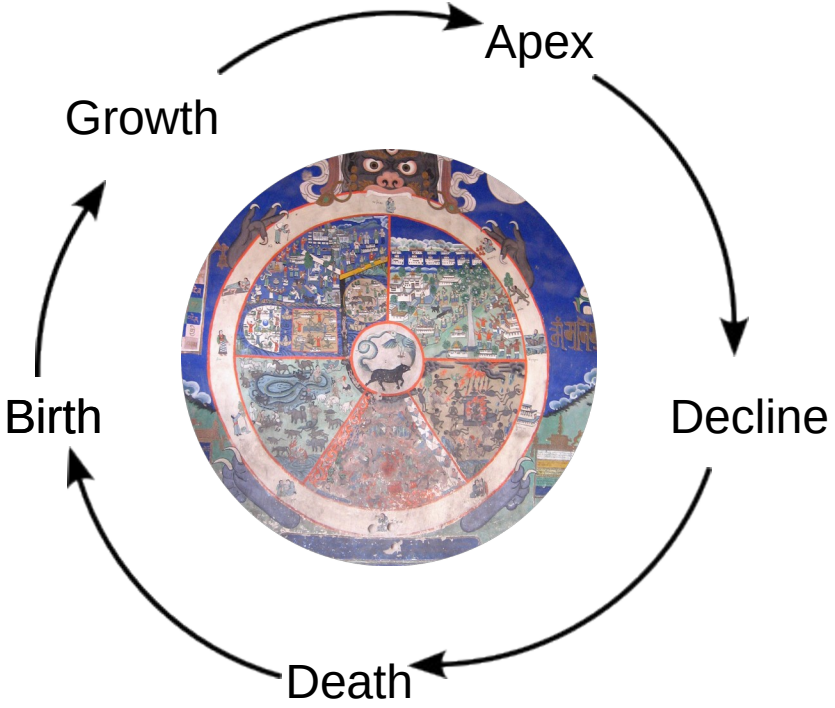


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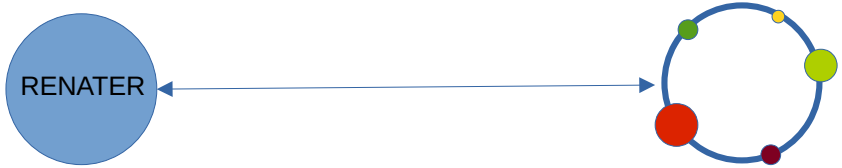
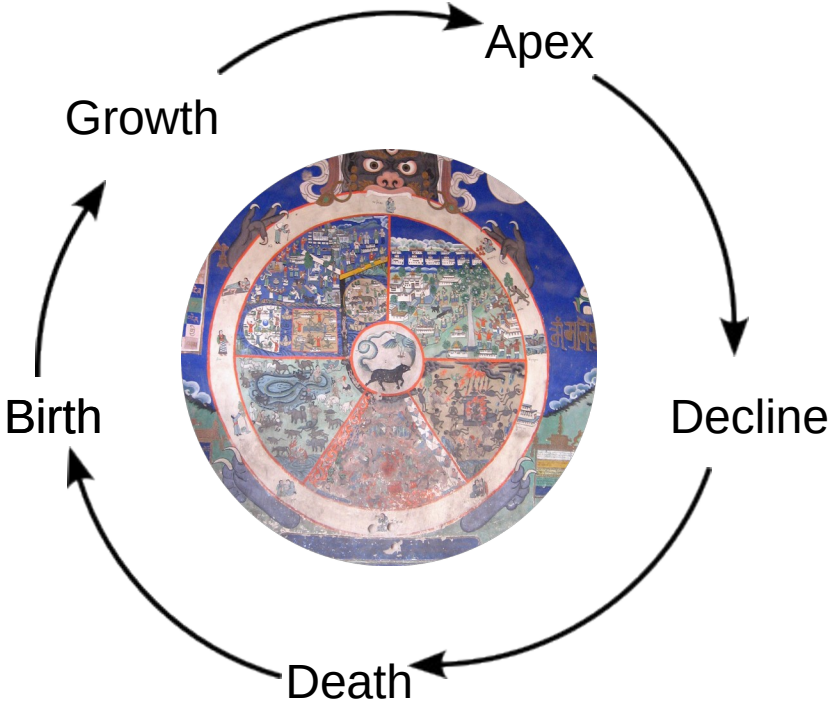
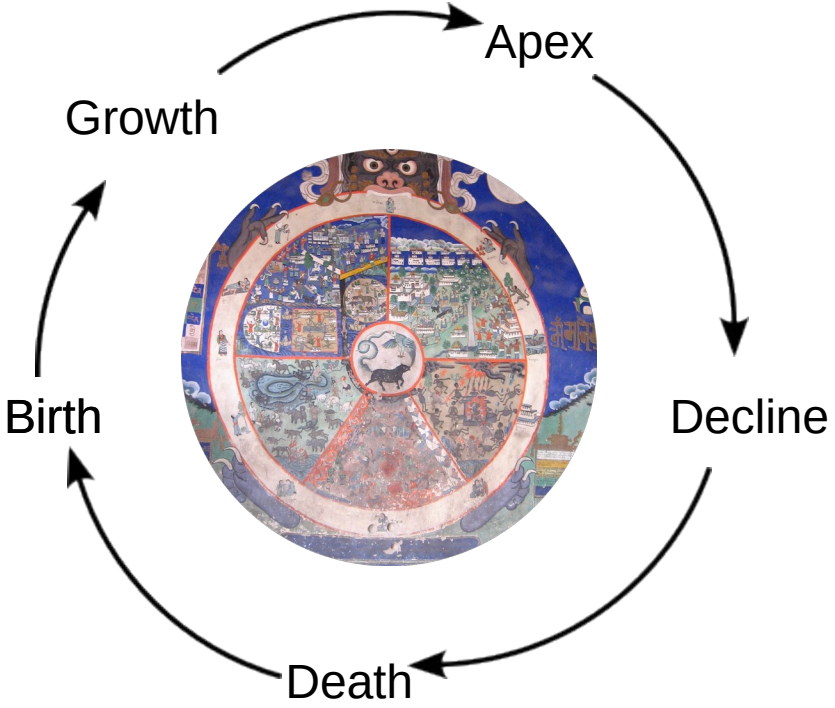


# Rebirth ?




- New team (as for Sympa)
- New software
- Hooking to an existing software
- « neither the same, nor another »

# The choice

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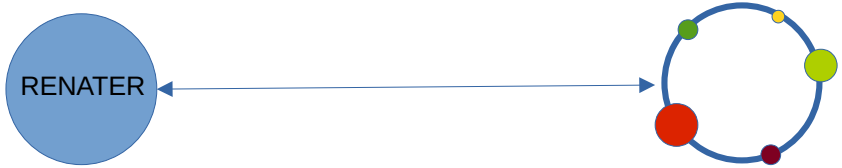
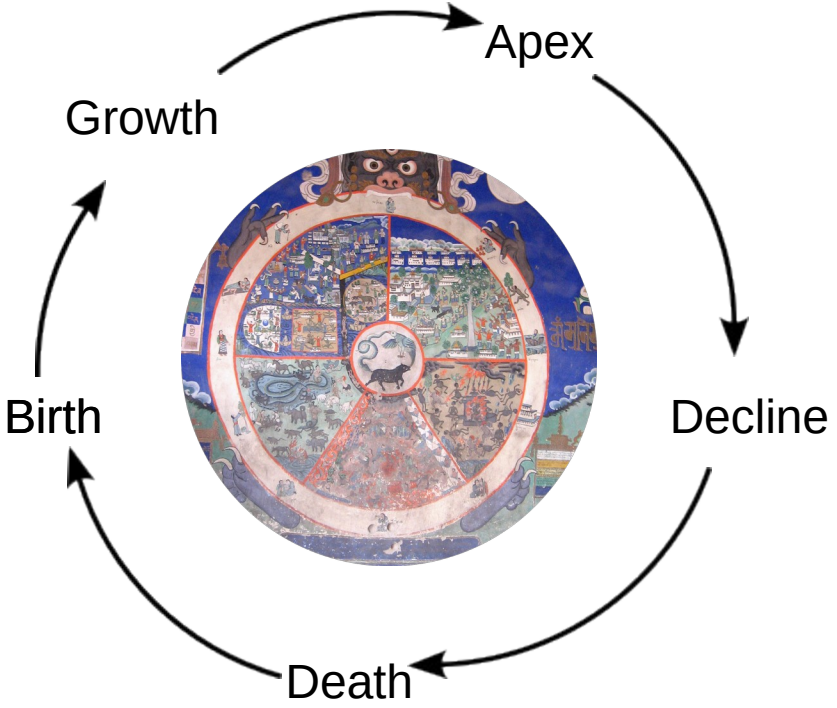



- Fork / follow / create

# The choice

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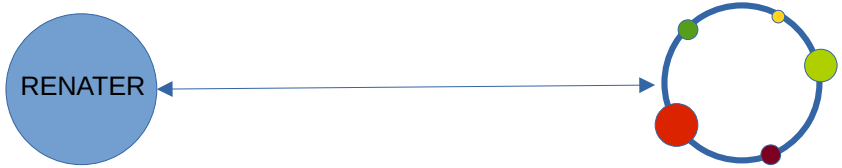
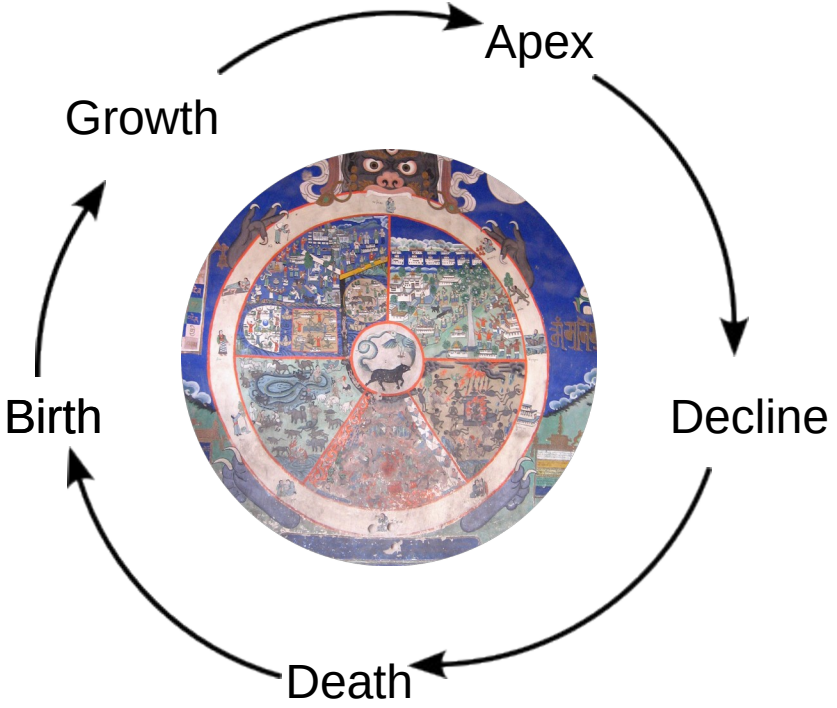



- Fork / follow / create

« Functionalities + context »

# The choice




- We out

- Fork / follow / create
- Context :
  - Outsourcing
  - Infrastructure
  - Tools (S3, Redis, etc.)
  - Global change

# The choice

Birth

- Errors were made, lessons were learnt
- RENATER is now in Agile mode and experienced in software development
- Rewriting it in Go for resources saving
- Make it new paradigm-ready :
  - Improved virtual hosting
  - Docker / S3 / etc.
- Improving existing features
  - S-expressions-based authorization – thanks Roland Edberg !
  - Generalized industrialization mechanism
  - Full group management features

# Learning from previous lives

Birth

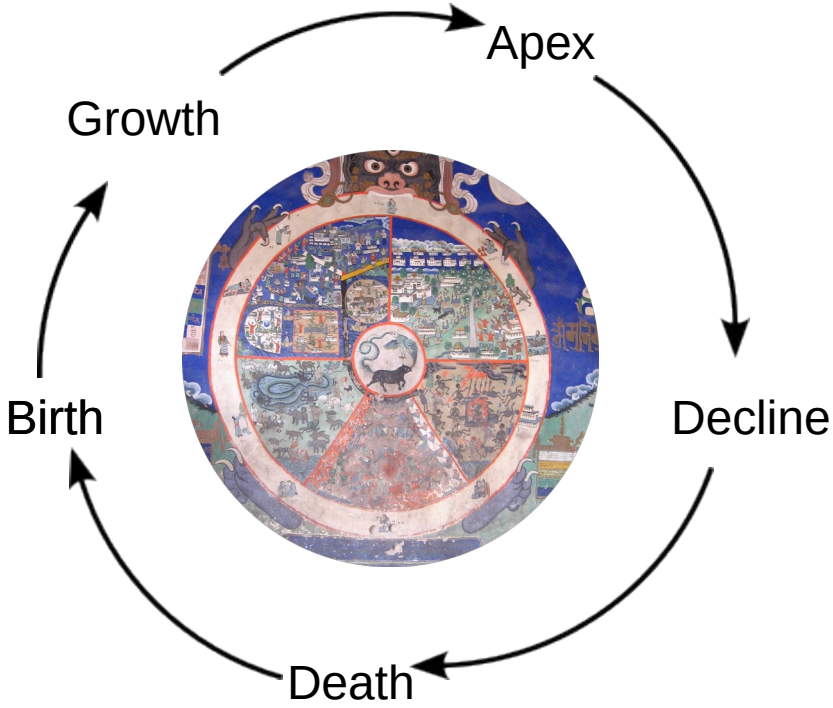
- Clear roadmap
- Agile mode
- A governance !
- Free software
- Integrating community

# Where are we now ?

Birth

- 50 % primitives developed
- 2 developers
- 1 to hire
- First executables in a few months
- Renater alpha tester

# A new cycle



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# Karma = action

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**Karma = action**
**Come and meet us at the RENATER booth.**

**Thank you !**

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