Threat Analysis:
Things That Could Spoil Our Party

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State Of The Map Conference
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OpenStreetMap is great.
Nobody can take that away from us.

Right?

Right???
Happy OSM country where the sun always shines!
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Threats from outside
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- Other legal changes
e.g. regulation of geodata market
→ might drive OSM underground
Threats from outside

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- Competition outperforms us on a free license
Threats from outside

• Competition outperforms us on a non-free license
  → risk of “capture”

• Competition outperforms us on a free license
  → why worry!
Technical threats
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- Single point of failure for write accesses ("world is our mirror" for reading)

- Ill-prepared for the kind of massive request spikes that would result from e.g. being "slashdotted"
Technical threats

- Don't need 24/7 service but must not alienate community; already near impossible to take system offline for a weekend
- Pragmatism may lead to short-term solutions
- Proven do-ocracy stuff not applicable
Internal threats
Unlimited Free Labour

• We're in a competition for the spare time of our community members

• Must remain interesting, worthwhile
Community disintegration

- Local/national community changes as data matures; new goals, new processes
- Danger of national communities drifting apart
Community disintegration

- As project gains publicity: who “speaks for the project”? Who takes money from donors, who decides?
- Danger of killing “do-oocracy” (not meritocracy!) and replacing it with power structures.
Losing “openness”

- People becoming over-protective of their work and time invested
- Protection against detrimental edits by newcomers
- More complexity; tendency to command-and-control
License in-fighting

- Anti-Capitalists against Share-Alike fans against PD advocates

- License change necessary but will definitely hurt

- Danger of alienating community members and users
Summary

- External threats are limited
- Technical challenges may be present but not immediately life threatening
- Community is our Achilles' Heel.
- Fix the license!
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“South Park” figures from www.sp-studio.de