

ELAG Workshop #10

“Open Source Software: pros and cons”

Workshop report The list of participants

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Workshop report: “Open Source Software: pros and cons

- 1 – from the business, Cons
- 6- academic community, Pros
- 3 – new comers to the FOSS

Workshop report: “Open Source Software: pros and cons

Topics discussed:

- ❖ **Why to use FOSS?**
- ❖ **How to migrate to FOSS?**
- ❖ **Why the developers are participating in open source communities?**
- ❖ **“Open-source software: pros and cons”**
- ❖ **Libraries and Open Source**

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Some main findings:

- The use of open source software has grown rapidly in the last years.
- ❖ FOSS is widely used in many domains, including libraries.
- ❖ FOSS is one of the best examples of open, collaborative, internationally distributed production and development that exists today.
- ❖ Migration to FOSS is not a trivial task for organizations where proprietary models are largely in use.
- ❖ FOSS is an alternative to the commercial products

Workshop report: “Open Source Software: pros and cons Why to use FOSS?

Main conclusion: *High-quality FOSS exists for almost any need.
Server applications*

FOSS equivalent
GNU/Linux
Apache
MySQL, PostgreSQL
...
...

Workshop report:
“Open Source Software: pros and cons
Why to use FOSS?

Main conclusion: *High-quality FOSS exists for almost any need. Desktop applications*

Proprietary software	FOSS equivalent
MS Office	Open Office
Photoshop	The GIMP; TuxPaint
Quark Express, etc	Scribus
	Mozilla Firefox, Thunderbird,
	7-zip, PDF Creator
Macromedia Dreamweaver	NVU
Multi media ...	Audacity, Celestia

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FOSS products for the libraries

Integrated Library Systems: **Koha, Evergreen**
Collections - Repositories management systems: **Greenstone, ePrints, DSpace**
Portals: **Plone**
Federated searching tools: **reSearcher, LibraryFind**
Link Resolvers: **OLinks, CUFTS**
Course Management Systems: **Moodle**
Authorization/Authentication tools: **Shibboleth**

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How to migrate to FOSS

- Before starting have a clear understanding of the reasons to migrate, and good knowledge on implementation scenarios;
- Ensure that there is active support for the change from IT staff and users;
- Make sure that there is a champion for change - the higher up in the organisation the better;
- Build up expertise and relationships with the FOSS movement;
- Start with non critical systems;
- Ensure that each step in the migration is manageable.
- Monitor user feedback and fix any problems which arise.
- Explain the benefits which your organisation will earn after migration.

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Why people are participating in FOSS communities?

- ✦ to learn and develop new skills
- ✦ to share knowledge and skills
- ✦ to “improve job opportunities”
- ✦ derive direct income from this participation
- ✦ derive indirect income – such as getting a job unrelated to free software thanks to their previous or current participation in free software developer communities
- ✦ intellectually stimulating
- ✦ code should be open
- ✦ obligation from use
- ✦ not being able to pay for the commercial products
- ✦ Politics: increased funding opportunities

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Pros	Cons
Fundamental control and flexibility advantages, since the users can modify and maintain the software	Proprietary software could be better supported than FOSS?
Security - FOSS products at least provide users with the option of detailed review of the source code, and to fix problems themselves without waiting for the vendor.	Does FOSS expose you to greater risk of abandonment? YES
Localization - FOSS can be trivially localized, a critical advantage where there are languages with a smaller number of speakers	Commercial products are developed faster.

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Pros	Cons
FOSS costs nothing to install. Can be obtained at zero-cost by the vast majority of users, through direct downloading of installation packages or as a “crude” source code from the Internet.	Hidden personnel costs for installation and maintenance
The FOSS community provides an extremely efficient learning environment, as well as teamwork and leadership experience, for young people	Lack of large companies offering enterprise-level solutions, support and training on FOSS prevent its adoption by large companies.
Free from political pressure	Existence of the competition in the commercial market

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Pros	Cons
	Commercial vendors are the main supporters of the library meetings, workshops, conferences.

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IFLA 2007 PRE-CONFERENCE SATELLITE
 “Managing technologies and library automated systems in developing countries: open source VS commercial options”
 Dakar, Sénégal, August 14-16 2007.

http://www.dakar.aliaco.com/index_en.htm

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 Software Freedom Day

is a worldwide celebration of Free and Open Source Software. From 2006 onwards, it has been decided that Software Freedom Day will be held on the third Saturday of each September.

<http://softwarefreedomday.org/>

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In 2005, eIFL.net began developing a “Library in a Box” program to advocate for and support the use of open source software in the libraries.

Main goals of the project are:

- Support the development of a “Library in a Box” self-installation package (CD distribution, downloadable version from the Net)
- Coordinate the development of easier deployment and experimentation platforms for a “Library in a Box” package.
- Explore options for hosted deployments of library software, either within regions or through contributions from international partners.
- Establish “open source camps” for training/awareness raising purposes.

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Thanks to all workshop participants for contribution