Choosing and Using Free and Open Source Software: A Primer for Nonprofits

Written by Michelle Murrain

Published by NOSI (Nonprofit Open Source Initiative)

Reviewed by:
Allen Gunn, Executive Director, Aspiration
Amanda Hickman, Steering Committee, NOSI
Chris Bailey, Coordinator of Advice for Life FOSS in the Voluntary and Community Sector project
Glenn McKnight, Director of Operations, Linux Professional Institute
John Kenyon, Nonprofit Technology Strategist
David Geilhufe, Philanthropy Program Manager, NetSuite
Dave Chakrabarti, Director of Programs, Grassroots.org

The original primer was funded by IBM International Foundation. This edition is supported by ... "On Demand Community", IBM's Volunteer Initiative.

Choosing and Using Free and Open Source Software: A Primer for Nonprofits

Table of Contents

Appendices

Chapter 1: Introduction

*(Note: all terms in **bold** are defined in the glossary, at the end.)*

Many nonprofit organizations that once relied almost entirely on commercial software in their organizations are now beginning to implement the "open source" or "free software" alternative. Open Source, or Free Software refers to software distributed with the condition that anyone using it must have access to, and the ability to give away unlimited copies of, both the program and the **source code** that is needed to make changes to the program. We will use the term "free and open source" (or FOSS) from now on, for software that is either (or both) "free software" (free as in "**libre**" - not just without cost) or "open source." Free and open source software is distinguished here from commercial software, also called **proprietary** software, which is any software that is distributed under commercial license agreements, usually for a fee.

When we first wrote this primer four years ago, few nonprofits had even heard of open source software, or Linux, and even fewer had adopted them. There was a real dearth of information available on free and open source software for the sector (which is why the original primer was written) and most free and open source software that nonprofits might implement weren't ready. In the four years since, there has been a sea change. More and more free and open source software is ready for nonprofit use, and many nonprofits have incorporated free and open source software in their work. Things have changed so much that the majority of nonprofits running dynamic websites use free and open source software to run those websites. Linux servers in the back offices of nonprofits are commonplace, and there are even some nonprofits that have converted to using Linux on the desktop.

There is always room to grow. However, it is clear that nonprofits are finding free and open source software to be a secure, stable, and cost-effective way to solve a variety of their technology problems. In addition, it is easy to see why nonprofits are finding the community model of software development to be appealing. Social justice nonprofits have always struggled to build diverse coalitions based on shared resources and a commitment to strengthen the entire movement, rather than enriching an individual or single organization. Community development groups strongly advocate on behalf of community ownership of resources and property. The concept of community has always been of real importance to nonprofits seeking to build genuine relationships with the individuals and groups with which they work.

In this updated primer, we examine how free and open source software is developed, how its costs and benefits are evaluated, how nonprofits are using it today, and we provide specific examples and resources. We also offer ideas on how to further advance the applicability of FOSS to the nonprofit sector, and discuss philosophical issues of FOSS and why it is such a good fit for the missions of many nonprofit organizations. Further, we provide a list of free and open source software that is ready to be used in organizations today, and a list of consultants and vendors that provide support for FOSS.

Chapter 2: What is free and open source software and how is it developed?

The FOSS model of software development

In the past decade, computer and Internet technologies have caused radical changes in the way organizations carry out their missions. The existence of more powerful hardware is certainly significant. Even more important is the software installed on these machines – the technology that allows computers to communicate over the Internet, and accomplish mission-specific tasks. And further changing the this has been the explosion of **Web 2.0** – tools used over the web such as Google documents, Flickr, and others, that replace large amounts of work that used to be done either on one machine, or within an organizational network, as well as promote collaborative content generation and peer connections.

In the past, the primary model for acquiring desktop software was to obtain it at the time of your computer purchase, or as an add-on purchased later. The software might come pre-installed or on a separate installation CD, but in no case would you have access to the source code. The software vendor would retain the exclusive right to make changes, and thus you would be at their mercy for updates. Quite often, enhancements and technical support for products you used would be discontinued after a time, possibly to encourage you to purchase newer products.

For server-based software (software with shared data that relies on a server such as case management, member databases, or **CRM**) an organization could choose to buy expensive software, or have it built for them. In either case, it was rare that this software would come with a license that allowed for modification or re-release.

Free and open source software is a different model of software development, one that the nonprofit sector is just beginning to embrace. The key advantage of the open source model over the proprietary model is that everyone has access to the source code of an application. This may not seem very significant to most nonprofits; after all, few organizations can afford a software developer on staff.

In practice, the fact that a program is open source makes a difference, because in many cases, it enables hundreds of technical people, many working as volunteers with no commercial incentive, to collaborate on continual enhancements to software. Eric Raymond, in a seminal paper on the FOSS model entitled The Cathedral and the Bazaar (http://catb.org/~esr/writings/cathedral-bazaar/), wrote: "open-source software [is] the process of systematically harnessing open development and decentralized peer review to lower costs and improve software quality."

In addition, unlike many proprietary products, FOSS is often based on **open standards**, which enhance the potential interoperability of software that organizations need to use, and also enhance the ability of different software to communicate with each other. The use of open standards can help to prevent "lock-in," a common problem where organizations are forced

to continue using the same product because data migration would be too expensive.

Who creates free and open source software?

The movement toward open source software was originated by computer science researchers as early as the 1970s. Early open source projects were concentrated in academia, where developers popularized the idea of copyrighting one's computer programs with a statement mandating that the software would always be open to the public. This made a lot of sense, as much of the initial research in the field was funded with public tax dollars.

As a result of this movement the practice of "giving back to the community" by writing FOSS was adopted by many software developers. Many organizations (primarily academic institutions) followed suit, agreeing to release the source code of software developed for internal use. In the early 1990s, a Finnish researcher named Linus Torvalds built upon previous work (by the Free Software Foundation and others) to create what is now known as **Linux** to replace the proprietary Unix **operating system**.

In the mid 1990s web sites like SourceForge.org arose to serve as clearinghouses for open source development efforts, so that open source programmers would be less likely to reinvent the wheel. The body of software that has resulted from this process is such that most medium and large for-profit corporations are now using FOSS to carry out some of their IT needs, and some have chosen to replace proprietary software entirely. Many large and medium-sized nonprofits, such as Greenpeace and Amnesty International, depend on FOSS. Some of the largest web services companies, such as Google, Yahoo and others completely rely on open source software for their infrastructure.

In addition, there has been an evolution of support for FOSS, that we will talk about later in this primer – from organizations depending on volunteers to support FOSS, to hiring consultants and vendors to install, maintain and support FOSS in their organizations.

The Development Process

Despite the many differences from proprietary software, it is important to note that FOSS development generally goes through the same stages as a proprietary product.

Some key differences are:

- In open source project development, this process may happen much more organically – starting with a single developer doing a relatively small project, then having the project involve more developers, and attract institutional support as it develops.
- The pace of open source development is sometimes slower, due to the voluntary nature of many development projects. However, if there is a very large developer community the pace of development can be faster.
- The quality of open source software can be better than proprietary software, because programmers learn from each other, the additional "sets of eyeballs" viewing the code tend to catch potential bugs, and there is less commercial deadline pressure to rush

the software out the door in an unfinished state. In particular, security vulnerabilities can be brushed under the rug if a limited number of developers are able to look at the source code. However, if the developer community is very small, that can decrease the quality of the code.

Licenses

A software license is basically an agreement between the user and the developer on how the software can be acquired, used and shared. Whenever you install software, and click on the "I Agree" button, you are accepting a EULA (or End User License Agreement). The most popular open source license is called the GNU Public License (or GPL). The GPL stipulates not only that the source code needs to be available, but also that the program can be modified and re-distributed, as long as that re-distributed program is also governed by the GPL.

Many open source software licenses are less strict than the GPL. Some aren't viral, that is, don't require the same licenses to be on derivatives: the BSD (Berkeley System Distribution) license permits derivative applications to be distributed under any license, open or not. Other licenses require developers to document their changes explicitly. See: http://www.opensource.org/licenses/index.php for an overview of the range of open source licenses.

By contrast, most proprietary or commercial licenses explicitly limit the number of allowed users and prohibit modifications to the software. Unlike proprietary or commercial software, one of the hallmarks of FOSS is that there are no unit or per-seat licenses – you can install the software on as many machines as you want, with no added licensing cost. You don't have to track licenses, worry about whether you are running 12 copies of a software package you have 10 licenses for, and as your organization grows, you don't have to budget for new licenses to add new staff to software you rely on. FOSS enables nonprofits to avoid resource-scarce thinking due to license constraints; in some cases, organizations get around proprietary licensing limitations by asking users to share accounts and passwords, compromising the security and often the usefulness of the software, and making it very difficult to address misuse when it does arise.

How is the development of FOSS supported?

Because the development of free and open source software is not funded directly by license fees, the ways in which development happens is quite varied. It has never been true that all FOSS projects depend completely on volunteer labor, although it is true that the majority of projects have volunteer developers somewhere along the way. Some FOSS projects are entirely supported by the work of volunteers, and others are entirely supported by for-profit companies, and projects exist in the entire spectrum in between.

It is quite common for commercial companies, universities, and nonprofit groups to provide resources, usually in the form of developer time, to FOSS projects that they can use internally. The range of people involved can be broad, from volunteers who report bugs and

write documentation, to professional QA staff that might perform end-user testing. Almost all developer communities are open to providing user support (more on support in the Administration and Support section below).

The Apache project, which produces the most widely used program for powering web sites, formed a nonprofit foundation to raise funds for future development of their project in 1999. Since then, a number of projects have followed suit, including Mozilla, which develops email clients and web browsing software, and Joomla (a FOSS content management system or CMS).

Open source projects have also spawned for-profit companies, whose primary goal is to develop and support the open source software project. Examples of these include MySQL (a popular database program), Zope (a tool for building interactive web-based applications), as well as many companies that package and support the Linux operating system, such as RedHat (more on Linux distributions in the appendix) and Canonical (responsible for the Ubuntu Linux distribution). In these examples the development work done by a mix of volunteers and the employees of these companies. Very often these companies gain revenue by providing fee-for-service technical support for a cost (or selling an "enterprise" version of their project which includes support.)

Another, more recent development is companies who have some proprietary products and some released as free and open source, and others who have free and open source versions of some of their software (an example of this is SugarCRM). This is a hybrid model, where there are some versions, or some specific packages that remain closed source, and have license fees is a way to support software that is free and open source. A further example is FOSS projects that are hosted applications, or "Software as a Service" - revenues from this model can be used to fund the further development of the source code, that anyone can use.

In cases where a number of non-profit organizations could benefit from a particular tool, foundations funding those organizations may devote some resources to developing or documenting the software, or to providing technical assistance that helps groups take advantage of the tools while providing developers with consistent and thoughtful use cases and bug reporting.

Chapter 3: How should you decide if FOSS will work for you?

Background
Adopting free and open source software can be as simple as downloading one software package, installing it, and using it on a single workstation, or as complex as implementing a Linux server cluster to do complex computing, or anything in between. This section will focus on smaller-scale implementations of FOSS, which are more relevant to most nonprofit organizations.

All organizations should *consider* implementing FOSS. But in any organization, it is necessary to make a case for what can be a significant internal change. This section lays out some of the factors you might need to address in weighing the costs and benefits of FOSS against comparable proprietary solutions. (Later sections of the primer offer more concrete examples.)

Concepts
There are three concepts to consider when evaluating software: Total Cost of Ownership (TCO), strategic value, and mission-based philosophy.

Total Cost of Ownership:

> TCO is a familiar term to many people – it represents a calculation of how much technology costs to implement, use and maintain over time.

Strategic Value:

> Strategic Value takes additional factors into account beyond the costs connected to the technology itself. In the nonprofit context this means accounting for the mission-based value that a technology might bring to an organization. Measuring the impact on staff productivity or on the quality of services delivered to clients is part of evaluating strategic value.

Mission-based Philosophy:

> In large part, free and open source software is community-driven and owned, and implementations of FOSS will be able to feed back so that all users of FOSS can benefit (from experience, enhancements, changes, documentation, and the like that arises from that implementation.) In addition, FOSS operating systems can be used on older equipment, extending its useful life, and thus making organizational computing more ecologically (and economically) sustainable. If these characteristics of FOSS are in line with the mission of an organization, then use of FOSS is thus mission-based.
>
> The simple act of using software builds community around that software, and you, as the user are now part of that community of users. Every time you ask a question or report a problem, you are contributing to the development of the software you're using. If the software you use is affordable to smaller groups or groups with less resources, or if your clients or members can use tools on their own computers to produce media, then you're making accessible software better by using it and building community around it.

FOSS can influence the TCO of technology, as well as the strategic value that it brings to an organization. Further, it can be aligned with mission.

TCO Considerations

TCO is a calculation of the *entire* cost of implementing a technology solution. This includes the initial cost of acquiring the software (purchase price, setup fees, subscription fees, or license fees), hardware costs, installation costs (staff time or consultant costs), end-user training costs, and the cost of maintaining the software (annual maintenance fees, support costs, and upgrade costs). This entire spectrum of costs should be considered when comparing *any* solutions, no matter how they are licensed.

The most obvious advantage of FOSS over proprietary solutions in terms of costs are in the software acquisition costs, maintenance costs, and upgrade costs. FOSS is almost always freely available, has no license fees or annual maintenance fees (there are some exceptions, most often in the form of managed support contracts) and upgrades are also free. Of course, the acquisition costs of most software packages are far outweighed by the other kinds of expenses you'll incur (consultant time, staff training, administration, etc.), so software that is free of charge is not necessarily less expensive in TCO terms than software that you have to pay for.

Newer hosted tools (such as Google Apps for your domain, Kintera, Zoho Office, Salesforce.com among many others) sometimes have an advantage over proprietary solutions in terms of acquisition cost. They also have advantages over both FOSS and proprietary self-hosted applications because there are no hardware costs involved in implementation. However, some of these hosted applications (especially CRM applications) do charge for access to your data, and you generally don't have the same control of your data as you do when that application is self-hosted.

Another model, hosted open source applications (such as Civicspace on Demand or Democracy in Action) gives you some of the advantages of both worlds – although unlike its self-hosted counterparts you'll have to pay a setup fee to get up and running.

- Compatibility with mission-critical applications

  Key questions to ask when evaluating FOSS technology:
  What are the software applications critical to your organization?
  What operating systems will they run on?

Another important factor to take into account is compatibility between the open source solution you are considering and any mission-critical applications that you already run. In particular, when considering using Linux as an operating system, be aware that many software vendors still do not support versions of their software that can run on Linux. This is especially true of “vertical” software products for the nonprofit sector, such as case tracking programs for legal-services organizations, or mortgage-tracking programs used by affordable-

housing groups. Unfortunately, the increased use of Linux over the past few years has been primarily on the server side, so increasing numbers of server-side applications that run on Linux (such as Intuit's Quickbooks Enterprise product) have not been reflected on the desktop.

Organizations that depend heavily on a program not available for Linux find that, if they want to use Linux, they must also maintain a Windows machine dedicated to running that mission-critical program. If that is likely to be the situation, the costs of maintaining that additional machine need to be included in the TCO. In addition, any inconvenience to users could be considered a drain on strategic value. However, virtualization technology has improved dramatically, so that keeping a windows virtual machine on a desktop that is relatively modern is often a more viable alternative than maintaining a separate machine.

TCO analyses that compare FOSS, proprietary and web-hosted solutions will depend on the complexity of the software, the end user impact, the administration costs, as well as the acquisition cost of the proprietary or web-hosted solution.

Software Acquisition Cost

Key questions to ask about software acquisition costs:
With a proprietary solution, how large will software acquisition costs be relative to other costs?
With a proprietary solution, how easy will it be to get discounted software?

Some proprietary products, like simple tools or small applications, have very low software acquisition costs. Other products, like office suites, groupware, complex databases, financial or fundraising packages, or server operating systems can have high acquisition costs. In some cases, nonprofit organizations can get many software packages or web-hosted applications donated or at reduced costs, which may reduce or eliminate the acquisition cost for the software.

Sometimes, however, organizations are limited in how many copies of a product will be reduced-price or donated (for example, an organization can only get 50 user licenses of Microsoft Office XP from DiscounTech, so a medium to large organization would not be able to take full advantage of this donation. Salesforce.com provides 10 free licenses for their CRM tool, but subsequent licenses are $300/year.) Virtually all open source software is available for no acquisition cost whatsoever, and no multiple licenses are needed.

Case Study: AIDG
(interview with Cat Laine, Communications Director)

Appropriate Infrastructure Development Group (AIDG.org) has a small shop in Guatemala, and needed to find a way to set up that shop with as low cost and easy maintenance as possible. They didn't have money for Microsoft licenses, and wanted to stay legal. They chose to install Ubuntu on their four desktop workstations, and use Open Office for productivity software. Intern volunteers were able to set it all up, and

that went very smoothly. Overall, they are very happy with the setup, and the learning curve for Open Office in this situation was very low – most of the users were young engineering students. In general, the changeover to Linux was smooth, and the users acclimated quickly.

The shop produces their own brochures and marketing materials in-house, and use the free and open source applications GIMP (an editor) and Scribus (a desktop publishing application) to create those documents. Both have worked well for them, and they are thinking of adding GNUCash (a free and open source accounting application) to the mix.

Cat Laine says of using free and open source software, "it's allowed us to keep costs down, and avoid piracy. We have the productivity benefits of Microsoft Office, etc., and do not have copyright problems. We have found open source alternatives for all of our needs."

Implementation costs

Key questions to ask about implementation costs:
What is the ease of implementation in terms of resources needed (time and money)?
What kind of expertise might be needed for this software, whether it is proprietary or open source?
What kind of expertise do you have available?
How much time, money and other resources will you have to invest?

For some software, implementation is quite easy, and will take a staff person 10-30 minutes to install. More complex applications (financial, client management packages, etc.) take days of staff and/or consultant time to implement, and convert information from an old system.

When evaluating the options for a particular solution, be aware that in some cases open source projects can be more difficult to install than their proprietary counterparts, especially if the folks doing the installing are new to FOSS. It is worth looking carefully at the installation documentation for any solution you are planning to implement.

If your organization will needs consultant support, you may find it difficult to find consultants who are familiar with free and open source technologies, although that is changing as tools are used more widely and organizations that provide technical assistance to non-profits have recognized the value and importance of training their consultants in free and open source server technology. If you now depend on a consultant who is unfamiliar with them, you may need to consider sending them to a training or seeking out a different consultant in order to smooth your move to free and open source technologies.

Hardware costs

Key questions to ask about hardware:
Will you be using multiple servers?
Does the proprietary software being evaluated have any special hardware

requirements?
Does it require vendor-certified hardware?

In many situations, you will be implementing software on existing hardware, so you will not incur additional hardware costs. However, if you are implementing a new kind of server, or replacing an old server, hardware costs will likely be an issue. In general, the larger your network needs (in terms of capacity) the more hardware savings you are likely to realize with the a FOSS operating system (such as Linux) and other FOSS on your server. Recent research has found that servers based on Linux (as opposed to Microsoft Windows) can handle more traffic, hold more accounts and do more processing given the same hardware. Thus in a situation where you might need multiple Windows servers, fewer Linux servers will meet your needs.

Training costs

Key questions to ask about training costs:
Will implementing this software require end-user training?
Will you rely on in-house staff to support this solution? What is their current knowledge of the software?

For end-user solutions (like office applications, financial packages, etc.), training is by far the most costly part of implementing new technology. Staff who are going to use this software on a day-to-day basis must be trained to use it, and learn to use it. Most non-technology staff will be unfamiliar with non-Windows operating systems and applications, so implementing an open-source solution that replaces a well known and used application on a widespread basis must be considered carefully. The benefits of using a solution like Open Office, for example, may or may not outweigh the wide variety of training costs that will be incurred. However, the long-term training implications (once the staff are trained, you only require some on-going training, and training of new employees) should also be factored in.

For software that has little or no end-user impact (file servers, database servers, etc.), the only training costs to think about are training your technology staff (or "accidental techies") to handle the new systems. These costs become a larger factor when a) you rely on in-house staff, rather than outside consultants, to support the solution, and b) your in-house staff does not have experience using FOSS.

Maintenance Fees

Key question to ask about maintenance fees:
Does the proprietary alternative require annual maintenance fees?
Will you have to pay for upgrades and security patches?

Some software products have annual fees of some sort. For all practical purposes they can be thought of as annual license fees, since they are typically calculated as a percentage of the original software license acquisition fee. These fees should be included in your TCO analysis.

Most FOSS has no annual maintenance fees, since it had no license acquisition cost to begin with. Some enterprise-level Linux distributions (like RedHat) do have annual maintenance

fees, which entitle you to prompt on-demand support. However, very few nonprofits fit into the categories of organizations that would make use of these enterprise-level packages, and they are not mandatory – it is possible to use the equivalent of RedHat for example (it is called Fedora,) at no cost.

Annual fees for web-based software may be quite low, especially when only a small number of users access it, but they also can increase without warning, and new users can push you into a new fee bracket

Upgrade Fees

Key questions to ask about upgrade fees:
How often might you need to upgrade this software?
Are upgrades available at a nonprofit discount, and if so does your organization qualify?

Keeping software relatively up to date is important. It increases stability, security and features. It is not necessary to upgrade at every version change, but it is critical to install security patches, and when features that you want are improved, or there are dramatic stability improvements, upgrading is important.

Obviously, the cost of upgrading a single copy of a software product is much less expensive than having to do a site-wide upgrade. You can often get upgrades of proprietary software at discounted fees or donated. The vast majority of open source software has no upgrade fees at all. You can simply download the upgraded version, and install. (Or, in the case of many Linux distributions, it is a one-command operation – 'apt-get dist-upgrade' or 'yum upgrade' – that upgrades the entire operating system and all software on it.)

Administration & Support

Key questions to ask about administration and support:
What sources of support are available for the open source option? How would they fit into your overall IT support strategy?
How important a factor is reliability in your choice of solution?
Are viruses and other security problems common with the proprietary option?

All software – whether applications, databases, or operating systems -- requires administration and support of some type. In some cases, you will have your staff provide the support; in other cases, you will hire consultants to do it. Characteristics of the software that determine the level of support needed include how reliable the software is, how vulnerable it is to security problems, and how complex it is to use both for end-users and the administrator. Factoring these into your consideration of FOSS is important.

Nonprofits interviewed for this primer that use Linux placed a similar importance on its reliability, as well as security. Without exception, every one said that after they moved to Linux, their network was more stable and stayed up longer. Participants also agreed that it is easier to secure their network using Linux. In part this is because Linux and related operating systems were used for the Internet several years before Windows adopted Internet

technology, and the open nature of the code enabled developers to snuff out many potential security problems even before the Internet became popular. In part because of these design advantages, computer viruses and spyware have not affected Linux, while they are prevalent on Windows.

For an organization that relies on consultants for support, this time saved translates directly into costs saved. For an organization that uses in-house support staff, the savings may be more complex to calculate. However, if you are in a situation where you have multiple servers, one administrator can handle more Linux servers than Windows servers.

It is also reasonable to assume that the greater reliability and security of Linux systems improves the productivity of end users. Staff can get more work done if their systems are out of commission less often. Morale is likely to improve with fewer network outages. As most of us have learned the hard way, having your computer crash and destroy the document you were writing, or being unable to use e-mail for several crucial hours during the day is incredibly frustrating.

While it is often the case, one cannot generalize Linux's reliability to all FOSS. There are many FOSS projects that are neither more stable nor more secure than their proprietary alternatives, so doing research will be important for comparison.

In addition to the reliability and security of a solution, you also need to account for its complexity. Complexity can increase support costs in one of two ways: either by increasing the time needed to perform certain tasks, or by requiring a more highly skilled (and thus more expensive) person to do the job. With regard to the first point, our experience and that of the organizations we interviewed is that FOSS is not necessarily more difficult (or easier) to administer than proprietary software. An important caveat, however, is that this assumes that the administrator is familiar with a FOSS solution. If not, additional training costs will be incurred (see Training section above).

With regard to the second point – whether FOSS support staff and consultants are more expensive – our experience is that this is less of a concern than many nonprofits expect. The larger issue faced by the organizations we interviewed tended to be finding staff and consultants who work with nonprofits and have FOSS skills. In the case of networks, there are many more Windows administrators than Linux administrators available in most areas. Again, this does not necessarily hold for all FOSS – there are many sources of support for FOSS CMS systems. And, in addition, the open source community affords its users many more informal sources of support than are available with proprietary software (see Support section).

Strategic Value

Besides TCO (Total Cost of Ownership), you need to consider what we will refer to as Strategic Value. This type of value is harder to quantify, but can often be more important in the decision process.

One facet of strategic value for open source solutions is the ability to solve problems in ways

that would not be possible with proprietary solutions. Providing extremely low-cost and secure internet café stations, providing a secure network of remotely accessible servers internationally are just a few of those possible solutions using Linux.

Case Study: Alabama Legal Services
(interview with William Guyton)

Alabama Legal Services, an organization that provides legal aid to people who are unable to afford lawyers, was in the position of having to replace their phone system in a matter of weeks. “Our old DOS-based voice mail died, then Katrina hit. We needed to have a call center opened in 6 weeks. No Hardware PBX vendors were willing to commit to that time frame.” Asterisk, a Free and Open Source software telephony engine was the most mature software PBX out there at the time, and they chose to implement it.

They were able to get the call center up and running without much trouble. They did discover (and report) some bugs in the software, however. They had been using some FOSS for a while, but “doing a PBX in software means the phone system becomes a change management process. It takes away what is proprietary hardware, and makes it something that needs to be managed.” They found that because there was more management involved, the cost ended up being a wash, but they gained much more flexibility. They could “add a hotline in a matter of hours – traditional PBX vendors can't do that.” In addition, they found that SugarCRM (an open source CRM solution) interfaced well with Asterisk – so they could know who was on the phone before someone even answered it.

Being able to modify the code in software in a way that will be best for an organization is another example of strategic value. Not all organizations will take advantage of this, but many can. Further, if one organization modifies a FOSS project, it can distribute this modification to other organization that are similar, and collaborate – something that is not possible for either proprietary or web hosted solutions (because of their open platform, Salesforce.com is sort of an exception to this rule, but not entirely.) Further, because the source code is always available, adopting FOSS gives organizations long-term flexibility, the ability to evolve as needs change, and to more easily migrate to new solutions as they arise.

Control (or lack thereof) is another strategic consideration that leads some nonprofits to opt for FOSS. They may have had a bad experience relying on a proprietary software package designed to serve their particular “niche” of the nonprofit sector. If the vendor of that software goes out of business, is acquired by a competitor, or decides to stop supporting that product, then its customers will likely have nowhere else to turn for support. With FOSS, if the original developer disappears the product can live on, supported by its community of users and other developers. So, in the long run, the open source approach can provide a degree of risk mitigation.Control of data is another issue. Data in a proprietary format, or on a server outside of the control of the organization is a disadvantage for some organizations.

Chapter 4: Philosophical Considerations

There is another factor to consider in thinking about adopting free and open source software that is unique to nonprofits: and that is a philosophical one. Nonprofits exist because they have a specific mission and philosophy, and work to fulfill that mission according to that philosophy. FOSS exists for many reasons, but one of the most salient is not technical, but philosophical.

Philosophy of Free Software

As you might expect, there are many schools of thought regarding the philosophical issues related to free and open source software. What we will outline here is what could be called the "middle way" of free and open source philosophy – a real appreciation for the basic ideals of free software, and an understanding of the pragmatic issues inherent in implementing technology. Every organization, depending upon its own mission and philosophy, as well as its inclination toward or away from FOSS (usually due to staff experience and expertise) will determine the distance on the path toward full adoption of FOSS that the organization will take.

The foundational philosophy behind free and open source software as articulated by the Free Software Foundation is that software freedom means:

> The freedom to run the program, for any purpose. The freedom to study how the program works, and adapt it to your needs. Access to the source code is a precondition for this. The freedom to redistribute copies so you can help your neighbor. The freedom to improve the program, and release your improvements to the public, so that the whole community benefits. Access to the source code is a precondition for this.

The Free Software Foundation feels that **all** software should be free in accordance with this definition.

There are two different threads to these philosophical underpinnings of FOSS – freedom to use, see, modify and distribute code, and the community-driven nature of FOSS. They are interdependent, and, in a nonprofit context, both are important to talk about.

Values synchrony

For some organizations, especially those focused on media, progressive technology, and issues of the commons and the ways in which corporate intellectual property demands can weaken and impoverish the commons, use of free and open source software is clearly in line with their mission. Many organizations of this type are already heavily invested in free and open source software.

For other organizations, the connection between their mission and the use of free and open source software might be less obvious.

Case Study: Times Up! HQ
(interview with Aaron Grogan)

Times Up! is a small, all-volunteer environmental advocacy group in New York City. Aaron Grogan has the responsibility of taking care of their IT needs, and has worked increase the group's use of FOSS. They have a small headquarters with four desktop computers and a website running the free and open source CMS Drupal. Three of the four desktops are running Ubuntu Linux. They do a lot of video work, and are trying to produce video in non-proprietary formats. They use a variety of free and open source desktop video tools, including as Cinelerra and Kino (for editing video), MPlayer and VLC for reviewing it and for their weekly movie nights.

Aaron says that using FOSS has "allowed us to do a lot with very little. We get donations that are unpredictable in terms of hardware. If we were using Windows there would be all sorts of licensing hassles and such, and logistical issues. We can take advantage of opportunities in terms of hardware donations."

Times UP is a progressive organization, and Aaron explains "It's been possible to talk with people about how their own progressive politics are resonant with the free software movement."

At the simplest level, software that is without cost (that is "free as in beer") and freely available, without license restrictions or limits, as described in the previous chapter, provides clear TCO benefit. From a big picture perspective, though, supporting software that is freely available is actually in line with the missions of many nonprofit organizations – those who are focused on providing resources to make the work and lives of organizations and communities better.

Community Ownership

The next aspect of free and open source software is the issue of community ownership. Of course, a single developer, or a few developers started any project, and in a sense. they"own" it – they determine the direction of development, choose feature sets, etc. However, because the code to the software is accessible and modifiable, in a very basic way it is community owned. Anyone can take the existing code as a starting point and move it in an entirely different direction - this is called a "fork." Sometimes, forks happen over differences in opinion about interface design, features, or kinds of applications of software. The Mozilla suite of internet applications, the Firefox browser in particular, has spawned a number of forks, each with its own applications. For example, the Camino browser is based on the original Mozilla code, but optimized for the Macintosh OS.

Some forks come about because of philosophical differences on the development team, often around licensing choices. Joomla, a CMS in wide use in the nonprofit sector, is a fork of Mambo. When the "owners" of Mambo decided that their next release would not be free and open source, a community of developers that had grown around the software took the last version that had been released as open source and forked it under the Joomla name. The

leaders of the Xfree86 project (X-Windows) decided to change the license, which prompted a group to create a new fork, called xorg. In these cases, the free and open source nature of the software license allowed developers and users to keep a project alive and thriving.

Code that is free can never be lost to a corporate merger, a company going out of business, or a decision to abandon a product. That software can be adopted by anyone, and continue to be used and developed. This community ownership could be thought of as lending strategic value to a software decision, as mentioned previously. Community ownership of software is also in itself consonant with the missions of many nonprofit organizations, whose role is in strengthening community. By using tools that are owned by everyone, you know that you aren't building your work in a way that depends on or benefits any one corporation or institution, but building your work in a way that benefits everyone.

The community ownership model of free and open source software means that involvement in that community can have an impact on the direction that software takes. As we'll make clear in the chapter on support, nonprofit involvement in free and open source developer communities has a direct benefit for nonprofit organizations – NPOs get to be involved in making sure that developers pay attention to their needs.

> Case Study: CiviCRM
> (text from John Kenyon)
>
> John Kenyon has been working with the core development team of CiviCRM (a free and open source nonprofit CRM project) on documentation.
>
> “As I documented the tool I not only had many questions about how things worked but why they were built certain ways. As I have found in my work with programmers in the past, there were instances where things seemed not be designed with the users interests paramount. For example, drop down lists of existing fields in the database were in order of how they appeared in the database, so speaking for the user I advocated for the list to be in alphabetical order so that it was easier for the user to find their choice. There was some pushback as this was not a simple thing to do, a good amount of code needed to be written and tested for this to function correctly."
>
> How did it go?
>
> "The team listened, understood and acted on my recommendations. Being not only brilliant programmers but understanding that the user, not the programmer, is the most important person in the open source equation, despite having long lists of things they wanted to add or improve, they took the time to change these things.”

A key philosophical underpinning of FOSS is “the freedom to improve the program, and release your improvements to the public, so that the whole community benefits.” Free and open source developer communities work to improve software through the work of many individuals working together. That is, ultimately, what open source communities are for –

making free software better, more usable, more capable. And those benefits are equally available to everyone, since the software is freely available to all.

Case Study: The Drupal community and Citizen Speak (interview with Jo Lee)

CitizenSpeak (CS) is a project that demonstrated how nonprofits can get technology developed in a shared manner that benefits everyone. CS started out as a free e-advocacy tool, but was basically a static site, where the content couldn't be modified or customized easily. It proved its concept, but was not manageable in the long term without a budget.

Bids to rebuild the site were in the $7,000 range, which was not possible, as the project is an all-volunteer effort on a shoestring. A proposition was made: have the Drupal community help raise $1500 to rebuild CS as a Drupal module, and make it free and open source. There was interest in the community, and after CS generated some publicity, the $1500 was raised for development of the module.

Rebuilding CS in Drupal allowed the site to be updated at a much lower cost, and allowed users of CS to create branded versions of CS for their organizations or networks. In the words of Jo Lee, “Open Source lowers cost and builds instant community.”

Case study: US Social Forum
(interview with Jamie McClelland, MayFirst/People Link)

The US Social Forum was a conference attended by over 12,000 people, held in Atlanta, GA, in the summer of 2007. The entire technology infrastructure of the conference was put together almost entirely using free and open source software. “We defined the problem differently than other problems in the past. Rather than say 'there is no effective website taking place' say 'there is no effective technology organizing being done'.” They looked at it not as much as a technology challenge, but as an organizing challenge.

The website and registration system, including community blogs, program of sessions, registration and authentication was Drupal based, with custom coding. At the conference, there were 90 computers – 44 dedicated to registration, the rest for public use, and many in the Media Justice Center (a place set up for press and those who worked with media to use computers and upload camera photos and videos and the like.) There were 4 rooms in the Media Justice Center and 7 DSL lines. Each room had a backbone server, which acted as a router and firewall. There were also file/media servers. All of the servers ran Debian Linux, while all of the desktops ran Ubuntu Linux.

They were given many computers, and they also were able to buy 60 computers at

> $45 each. They were running Windows, but there was consensus that installing Linux on all of those desktops would make it much easier to get them up and running and maintained for the length of the conference – it was easiest to support Linux, even for that short a time. In addition, it was easier for them to recruit volunteers who would set up and configure those computers if they ran Linux.
>
> For end users, however, there was a different experience. Since the registration system was web-based, it was very straightforward for users (and the registration system was quite robust.) But for users who needed more complex features, like using proprietary media formats, it was difficult to support those issues, since the volunteers had little media experience, and there are also some weaknesses in Linux in that area.
>
> The heavy use of Drupal led to a number of bugfixes and code contributions to the Drupal community. Unfortunately, because of the lack of time, the custom code isn't in a format that is appropriate to send back to the Drupal community.

It is this value most of all, the value of volunteer labor collectively creating software that anyone can use, that is most in line with the values of nonprofit organizations – whose purpose for existence is the improvement of the lives of individuals and communities. Since the strength of particular free and open source project, as well as the strength of the open source community as a whole, is dependent on the involvement and support of individuals and organizations, having nonprofit organizations use and support free and open source software creates a synergy that improves technological capacity for the entire global community.

Of course every nonprofit has its own particular mission, whether to save the whales, feed people, create job opportunities, or shelter people from a hurricane. In that particular mission, they need tools that work, that allow them to accomplish their tasks effectively. The bad news is that for many organizational functions, free and open source software that is usable just doesn't exist yet. The good news is that for many functions it does. And the best news is that collectively, between the nonprofit technology community as a whole, collaboratives of nonprofits and funders, individual nonprofits, and free and open source developer communities, all of the resources necessary are in place to create new viable options for nonprofits. The primary challenge is how to leverage those resources in a way that will create the most value.

Software Choice Worksheet

Below is a worksheet you can use to help you look at the TCO, strategic value, and mission-based philosophy of proprietary vs. FOSS vs. web-hosted system. (A note – "software as a service" includes services such as Salesforce, Google Apps or Kintera.)

	Proprietary Solution	**FOSS Solution**	**Software as a Service**
TCO Considerations	**Actual Costs**	**Actual Costs**	**Actual Costs**
Software Costs			
Hardware Costs			
Installation Cost			
Web Setup Fee			
Customization Costs			
Annual Fees			
API access Fees			
Training and Documentation			
Upgrade Costs			
Support Staff Time			
Costs of security monitoring/updates			
Other costs:			
Total Cost			

Strategic Value Considerations	Score – 1 is least possible/important,	Score – 1 is least possible/important,	Score – 1 is least possible/important,

	5 is most possible/important	5 is most possible/important	5 is most possible/important
Ability to modify to fit organizational needs			
Control of Data			
Data and server security			
Control of Software upgrades			
Interoperability and open standards			
Ease of migration			
Ability to release modifications to other like organizations			
Creation of support networks			
Possibility of creating ongoing relationships with developers that will increase value			
Accessibility			
Other strategic value:			
Total Score			

Mission-based Philosophical Considerations	Score 1 – FOSS philosophy and Org. Philosophy are not related, 5 – FOSS philosophy and Org. philosophy closely match	Score 1 – FOSS philosophy and Org. Philosophy are not related, 5 – FOSS philosophy and Org. philosophy closely match	Score 1 – FOSS philosophy and Org. Philosophy are not related, 5 – FOSS philosophy and Org. philosophy closely match
Open access to information			
Community-owned solutions			
Economic justice			
Environmental concerns			
Educational or personal empowerment			
Other Philosophical issues:			
Total Score			
Summary (TCO and strategic value + philosophical scores)			

Chapter 6: Four specific examples of ways you can use Free and Open Source Software to address specific needs in your organization

We have outlined the basics of FOSS, how it's developed, and why we think the free and open source model is valuable for nonprofit organizations. We've also provided some specific concepts and tools to use to make decisions about the adoption of FOSS in your organization, as well as some specific examples of organizations that have adopted FOSS as a part of their technology infrastructure. We outline here some concrete detailed examples you can try out to begin to put FOSS to work in your organization, and in the process learn more about it, and its capabilities and cost-effectiveness.

Example 1: Mozilla Suite

Web browsing and e-mail are two of the primary tools that nonprofit staff members need to do their daily work. Fortunately, the proprietary software programs typically used to perform these functions all have well-developed open source alternatives that run on Macintosh and Windows platforms in addition to Linux.

Most people reading this primer have heard of Firefox. Most have also tried it out, and some perhaps depend on it. Mozilla Firefox, the stand-alone web browser of the Mozilla Suite, is the fastest growing web browser, with approaching 20% market share in North America, and approaching 30% in Europe. Firefox is recognized as a more secure browser than Internet Explorer. In addition, because it is open source, and has an open architecture, developers are producing useful plug-ins and add ons to Firefox. Mozilla Thunderbird is the stand-alone e-mail client.

All of the stand-alone parts of the Mozilla suite as well as the full suite are cross-platform (Windows, Mac, Linux and other UNIXes) and are free to download and use. The full Mozilla suite (now called "Sea Monkey") includes the components for web browsing and e-mail, as well as additional components including a news-reader, **IRC** client**,** and **HTML** editor.

Example 2: OpenOffice.org

Office productivity suites, including word processing, spreadsheets, presentation, and databases, are critical to the work of all nonprofit organizations, and Microsoft's Office suite is ubiquitous, and often considered essential. However, there is a very capable alternative to MS Office that is freely downloadable, and increasing in capability with each release.

The free and open source alternative is called OpenOffice.org, and it is a full-featured office suite that can read and write Microsoft Office files (.doc, .xls, .ppt, .mdb). It contains a word processor, spreadsheet, presentation package, and database, as well as additional tools that are not present in MS Office. The database tool (called OOo Base) is the least developed of the suite – all of the others have the full feature set of MS Office applications. It is also possible to export PDF files. OOo Base can read Access database tables, so that you can begin

a migration to Base, but it does not read forms, queries or reports. Unfortunately, OpenOffice.org does not always completely faithfully render very complex MS Office files.

OpenOffice.org is a great alternative if you've run out of licenses from a donation program, or you want to switch to an open source alternative to MS office.

Case Study:East of England
(from: http://foss.ciac.org.uk/article43.html)

A test study of desktop FOSS implementation in 10 voluntary sector organizations in England was carried out under the auspices of CIAC (Cambridge Independent Advice Centre). They gave a Ubuntu Linux desktop to each organization, which included software such as Open Office, Firefox, Evolution and others. The organizations were invited to an initial session where they were introduced to Linux and FOSS, and then received on-site training. There was an interim assessment at 3 months, and a final assessment at the end of the project.

In general, users liked the usability and features of the software, and found it easy to use. However, there was considerable resistance in other quarters, making future implementation of Linux desktops very unlikely in the future. Some contracted technical support staff saw it as a threat to their entrenched monopoly position of using Microsoft software. In at least two cases they put strong pressure on the organizations involved to switch to using Microsoft, making clear that they would not supply any support for Linux, and implying that there were unstated dangers to mixing its use with Windows. This raised fears with decision makers about being able to get longterm technical support for Linux.

Managerial staff often thought that they had invested so much money on technical support and solving past problems that a move to Linux would be a waste of the money already spent. Linux desktop migration is sometimes difficult when someone has already heavily committed to a Microsoft server environment, particularly if they are using Exchange server.

So even though end users liked their exposure to FOSS, because of resistance on the part of managers and technology support, it is unlikely that this exposure to Linux on the desktop and FOSS applications will result in any new implementations of Linux or FOSS in these organizations.

Example 3: Linux Desktop
If some of your staff are primarily using only the programs mentioned in Steps 1 and 2, then you could experiment by installing Linux on an extra workstation on your internal network. In addition to providing the applications mentioned in the previous steps, Linux comes with many other multimedia and productivity applications.

To evaluate using Linux on the desktop, you can take an old desktop that might be gathering dust in the corner (preferably a Pentium processor of 500 MHz or better), and install a

distribution of Linux on it. Arguably the easiest but certainly increasingly increasingly popular Linux distribution is Ubuntu Linux.

This will give you an idea of how to use Linux on the desktop, and introduce you to a wide range of OS packages for you to test out. It is a good way to understand how Linux works. In addition, there are several ways (see list below) to use Windows software on your Linux desktop, when that is needed.

You can also use Ubuntu or others (like Knoppix) as a “LiveCD” - boot from the CD and run Linux without changing your system.

Case Study: Eco Encore
(interview with Jon Stahl, text from Jessie Alan)

EcoEncore.org is a small innovative nonprofit organization. They collect used books, CD, DVDs and software, sell these on Amazon, and the proceeds go to other nonprofits. Everything they need for that process is done by volunteers, and happens in a web browser. They received a donation of 10 fairly new Dell workstations with empty hard drives, but with licensed copies of Windows XP – so installing Windows was an option. However, these are machines that have to do only one task: have untrusted volunteers use a web browser, and they needed low maintenance and support. The decision was clear – Linux (in this case, Ubuntu) was the best option, and the “setup was painless.”

Jessie Alan, Executive Director of Eco Encore says:

“My summer intern used Ubuntu on his computer. He worked primarily on web-based stuff like website management with Plone, and uploading inventory to BookSku.com. The one thing he struggled with a bit was manipulating digital photos and logos for printed outreach materials.

And the benefits are great but were definitely anticipated. We were pleased to save money and find that Ubuntu is very user-friendly and works great for our intern's/volunteer's basic needs.”

Example 4: Open Source CMS

In actual fact, many nonprofits have tried this as their first FOSS exploration. Free and open source Content Management Systems (CMS) have, more than any other FOSS applications, become almost standard in the nonprofit sector. There are three popular FOSS CMS, although there are others in use as well. Drupal, Joomla and Plone are all extremely powerful, capable, and usable CMS platforms, with overlapping feature sets. Drupal and Joomla are easily installable on standard, inexpensive virtual hosting packages. Plone requires special hosting, but there are many hosting companies that can provide it.

Case Study:BCFacts.org
(text adapted from a study they wrote)

BCFacts.org is a web project of the Conservation Voters British Columbia Education Fund. It is designed to scorecard the BC government's environmental decisions. BCFacts.org ran a proprietary ColdFusion CMS for two years. They became frustrated with the with limited out-of-the-box functionality, high costs of maintenance and any addition of new features, because it negatively impacted their ability to keep the site completely up-to-date with new events.

They decided to migrate their site to Plone, giving them a number of important benefits, including a standards-based approach, AJAX functionality, WYSIWYG editing interface, many more out-of-the-box features than they had with their previous platform.

The free and open source nature of Plone, as well as the vibrant developer community has been of great benefit to them. “Now that the site is in Plone, BCFacts.org doesn’t need to pay for the site just to exist. Rather, they have budget to spend every month on innovation and because the Plone-community is very active, that budget can often equate to configuring an entirely new add-in module with fairly advanced functionality. In other words, innovation to the site is a fraction of the cost.”

Case Study: Greenpeace Canada
(interview with Eric Squair)

For a new event-related website (http://standtall.greenpeace.ca) Greenpeace Canada needed to allow individual supporters to register to host issue-related parties across Canada, and allow guests to sign up for parties, send RSVPs, and get email reminders. The ... evaluated some commercial packages, but those generally would require Greenpeace Canada to pay for each event. Using Drupal, a free and open source content management system gave them the flexibility they needed, at a cost that was within their budget. They did find, much to their frustration, that two key features could not be implemented in an intuitive and user friendly way.

They are committed to Drupal, even given this limitation. Eric Squair, who implemented the system said, “What's really needed is a good bounty or development system ... we need a centralized way to hire a developer quickly and painlessly, and feed that back into the system ... it's tough to do these things well so that they are dead easy and intuitive to use.” They feel that given their modest web budget, they can get much more power and flexibility from Drupal than they could ever get from a commercial system.

Getting good developers is also important. Eric's advice? “[W]hen you buy proprietary software, you look for a good vendor. With open source, get a good developer you can

depend on ... Find someone who will tell you honestly what's up and who communicates well – free software isn't entirely free – you need someone to tweak things."

Chapter 7: How to find support for free and open source software

One of the major questions that nonprofits have about implementing FOSS in their organizations is "How will I get support?" We outline here a variety of ways to get support for FOSS, as well as the increasing awareness and expertise about FOSS in the nonprofit sector. We also describe several case studies of nonprofit technology providers specializing in some FOSS projects, and building relationships with developers, which lead to enhanced capabilities for support.

Technology support model

Technical support for any computing product can come from one of four places: internal staff and volunteers, technology consultant(s), software developer or vendor, and the larger community (whether it be the community of nonprofit technology workers, the community of users and developers of a particular product, or the larger user community on the Internet). Support for any software product is either provided to an end-user, or for the person who administers that software in an organization (these may be the same people).

Support for FOSS comes from those same four sources, but the emphasis is different. As a general rule, FOSS is not created by, or supported by a company that you can call on the phone or e-mail for support. (There are exceptions, like some Linux distributions, and some other software packages for which you can purchase support). However, the community of support for open source software is sometimes much richer than the communities of support for proprietary software.

There are some ways that FOSS may lag behind proprietary software in terms of support – FOSS documentation tends to not be as user-friendly, although this is rapidly changing, and there are increasing numbers of independent documentation efforts. There are fewer available printed books on many FOSS packages (however, there are many books on the most popular applications). In addition, as we'll describe below, it can be harder to find local, or sector-specific FOSS expertise from consultants.

There is an increasing amount of support available for FOSS, due to the following five factors:

- Open source applications have developed sophisticated user communities, and have even created free web services and applications (like SourceForge and phpBB) that enable a volunteer-based community to collaborate on answering questions, creating tutorials, and reporting bugs and requests for new features.

- The nonprofit community itself, including foundations, independent consultants, and NTAPs (nonprofit technology assistance providers) is recognizing the inherent advantages of open source software tailored to the specific needs of the nonprofit groups they support. In addition, NTAPs are increasingly adopting and supporting FOSS.

- The producers of mature open source applications (RedHat, Ubuntu, and MySQL are three examples) often sell their software bundled with support. Since the software

itself can be obtained for free, “value added” is essential to create the sales needed for a viable business model. Other FOSS producers do not offer support themselves, but refer users to a growing number of small support providers. The cost is often competitive with the price that larger firms charge for support of popular proprietary applications. And it is optional: if you can do without phone support, you do not have to pay for it.

- Where software developers once dominated the open source community, people with additional skills (technical writers, designers, usability experts, etc.) are now actively participating.

- Several established corporations have recognized a self-interest in supporting the development of open source options, and are now investing tens of millions of dollars (or more) each year to address the shortcomings that hinder widespread FOSS adoption. Dell is now selling desktops and laptops with Ubuntu Linux.

We will focus on the first two of these, which are most relevant to nonprofit organizations.

Community Support
Both developers and end users have created rich online communities where peer-to-peer support for FOSS can be found. There are many mailing lists, website and even chat rooms devoted to users of open source software products. Users of the Linux operating system can find support by seeking out the nearest Linux User Group. We list some of the possible sources of Linux community support below. If you do seek help from other FOSS user or advocates, you will likely notice a culture that is cooperative and giving, consistent with the charitable nature of most nonprofit organizations. In many cases, the developers themselves monitor these lists, and will participate in answering questions.

Each Linux distribution has one or many mailing lists that you can use for support. In general, those tend to be high traffic, and there are generally people who are very familiar with a particular distribution on those lists. Increasingly, you can find community support on more general nonprofit technology lists, as FOSS is used more often in the community.

In general, it is surprising how many people have had the same question you might have, and have gotten it answered in some online forum or list. Typing the key portion of your question in Google will often lead to successful resolution of many issues.

Case Study: Linuxchix
(text by Michelle Murrain)

Linuxchix is a growing community of people whose mission is to provide support and resources for women using Linux and FOSS. It is not a community solely of women; there are also many men involved. Linuxchix has several mailing lists, from “newchix,” for people completely new to FOSS to “programming” for development questions. The Linuxchix motto is: “be polite, be helpful.”

Because of this motto, Linuxchix mailing lists and IRC channels are an extraordinarily friendly place to get support for a wide variety of Linux and FOSS questions. Because it is a broad ranging community, it might be harder to get support about a very specific issue, but in general, it is another good avenue for support.

I've been involved in Linuxchix for over 7 years, and the level of support for using FOSS and camaraderie offered by this community is unparalleled.

Nonprofit, Consultant, and Foundation Support for FOSS

The final trend we will address, and the most important in our opinion, is the recognition within the nonprofit and foundation community that FOSS deserves more attention.

Five or six years ago, during the big push to get nonprofits using technology appropriately, there were only a handful of nonprofit consultants who advertised expertise in open source solutions. Today there are literally hundreds consultants available, and you can find them through the consultant databases available through TechFinder, Idealist, and CTCnet. There are also many nonprofit technology assistance providers that provide support for FOSS. Finally, there are a number of FOSS developers and projects designed specifically for nonprofit organizations' needs (among them are Benetech, CiviCRM and Organizers' Database).

An increasing number of NTAPs and consultants are beginning to specialize in providing support for FOSS, particularly FOSS CMS and CRM systems. Some of these are building relationships with the developer communities, which both strengthen the developer communities, as well as enhance the ability of the providers to give high-level support to their clients using these tools.

Case Study: ONE/Northwest and Plone
(interview with Jon Stahl, ONE/Northwest)

ONE/Northwest has become a key player in the Plone developers community. They started working with Plone early on, after they realized that the free and open source CMS platforms had reached some level of maturity. Jon Stahl commented, "We could imagine small non-technical nonprofits could succeed with them – they seemed ripe." They worked with a number of them, and even considered working with more than on in parallel, but the features and underlying technology of Plone was, for them, enough to sway them to focus just on Plone.

For them, as organizers, participating in community comes easily. As they worked with Plone, they started to contribute, and started to write about their experiences. That got noticed, and they were drawn in to work more closely in the community. Eventually, they were even responsible for hosting the global Plone developer's conference. They have also contributed modules and documentation. The relationship is synergistic – ONE/NW can contribute its prodigious organizing skills to help the Plone community.

Of course, dedicating the kind of time that ONE/NW does to working with the Plone

community has its risks. But Jon says that this time has paid for itself. “The risk was worth taking because this platform's usefulness is directly related to the health of the community – we can't contribute lots of code, but we can contribute things that help the health of the community. It's a wise thing to do, and very satisfying.”

ONE/Northwest's clients have benefited from this relationship because the health of the community means better code for their clients – and ONE/NW has relationships with developers that mean that their questions get answered, their ideas get listened to, and they can have influence over the direction of the development of the project. All of these things make the final products that their clients use better.

Ask the following questions when deciding to adopt a FOSS project to use with clients:

- Can this FOSS project take care of some needs your clients have at the moment?
- Does this FOSS project have the potential to fill needs in the future?
- Do you have enough expertise in the language of the project (PHP, Python, Java, etc.) and the underlying technologies (web applications, desktop development, etc.) to be able to take full advantage of the project?
- Have you participated in the user community? Is the culture compatible with your culture?
- What might you be able to share with the community? Code? Documentation? Community-building?

Case Study: PICNet and Joomla
(interview with Ryan Ozimek, PICNet)

Like ONE/NW, PICnet has been an active part of the community of Joomla developers, another free and open source CMS platform. They started their involvement slowly, and chose Mambo primarily because of its user-friendliness. They stuck with the product which then became Joomla.

Ryan Ozimek says, “Our way of giving back was to get involved in PR and Marketing – we started with a nonprofit subforum on the Joomla forums. Then we started to help organize the Joomla day events.” Ryan is now on the board of “Open Source Matters” - Joomla's foundation.

PICNet's relationship with the Joomla community means that they are often looked to for leadership around features that might be of use to nonprofits. They have insider knowledge about Joomla development and direction, which benefits their clients. They do wish they'd been able to submit patches and code earlier in their connection with the project – they feel that their work with the core development team has been more powerful than they'd anticipated.

Overall, Ryan says “From a business perspective it's been fabulous.”

Case Study: NPower and Plone
(interview with Patrick Shaw, NPower Seattle)

NPower Seattle picked Plone to work with after looking at a variety of CMS packages. They felt that Plone was the most scalable, even though it required a special hosting environment. Hosting Plone themselves gives them better control and support of client sites.

They initially got involved in the Plone community through their work with ONE/NW – they went to Plone user groups, and began to host some. In about a year, they were able to

start contributing back to the Plone codebase, and documentation.

NPower finds the Plone community helpful and friendly, and they say that having access to the developers is terrific for them. Involvement in the community has meant that they have become better developers, and it helps them produce things that become available to other nonprofits and Plone users. However, Plone did have a longer learning curve than they expected, and they also had to learn server administration on top of learning Plone and Python. It's been a challenge for them to figure out a good system for staffing and training.

Overall, they are very happy with their decisions to adopt Plone, and get involved in the Plone community. “We'd been tagged as the 'Microsoft shop'. The tools have matured to the point where we've integrated an open source product into our service delivery ... People are enthusiastic about the tools because they are usable.”

Case Study: SolutionGrove and Open ACS
(interview with Caroline Meeks)

Open ACS is an free and open source CMS platform that supports a number of vertical products, including .LRN, which is a very widely used e-learning application. Solution Grove is a small company that was created by Caroline Meeks, who was on the core OpenACS team. It now has 6-7 staff, where one full-time developer is on the core OpenACS team. Caroline serves on the board of the .LRN consortium. Solution Grove is one of the major companies that does development on OpenACS, and contributes to governance and the core code base.

Because of this close relationship, new functionalities can be delivered to clients very quickly at low prices – their clients get “cutting edge stuff at the fraction of the cost.” Because they are known and respected in the community, they get their questions answered quickly. They give help, and get help back. One downside they see is that contributing to the community does take time – it is a labor of love.

There has been some interest in FOSS among funders. Tech-oriented philanthropist Mitchell Kapor founded the Open Source Application Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to the creation and maintenance of quality end-user open source software. Philanthropic organizations like the Technology Affinity Group of the Council on Foundations are including open source sessions at their conferences. Some foundations are now requiring, as a condition of their grants, that any software developed by grantees must be made available, under an open source license, to the entire nonprofit sector. In addition, The Meyer Memorial Trust, IBM, and the Open Society Institute (OSI) fund the development of and support of FOSS for the nonprofit sector.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

In the almost four years since we wrote the first version of this primer, much of the landscape around the use of free and open source software in the nonprofit sector has changed. In September of 2003, Jonathan Peizer argued that to realize the full promise of OSS in nonprofits, “a proactive, well thought out strategy by a collaborative of progressive funders, developers and technology service providers” is required. (http://www.soros.org/initiatives/information/articles_publications/articles/realizing_20030903)

Unfortunately, that proactive, well thought out strategy has *not* come to fruition. What *has* come to fruition is a great deal of maturity in all free and open source software as described in the first version of the primer, an increasing number of nonprofit-focused FOSS projects, the wholesale adoption of free and open source CMS platforms by nonprofit organizations, and increasing availability of support for FOSS by both nonprofit and for-profit technology providers. There are now examples of nonprofits that have completely converted to using free and open source software. Most basic office tasks (email, web browsing, office productivity) can be handled, in a way that is usable by even by non-tech savvy staff, and free and open source projects that still continue to improve.

The primary hurdles to increasing adoption of FOSS software in the sector are missing applications, lack of information about support options, lack of training and familiarity of nonprofit staff on FOSS applications, and, finally, perception. It is primarily perception, in our opinion, that prevents the wider adoption of FOSS alternatives. There is still the perception that FOSS is “for geeks only.” There is still the perception that FOSS is harder to support, or that it's not possible to find support for FOSS. There is the perception that nonprofit staff won't want to use FOSS, or won't be able to get used to it. As the examples in this primer show, everything from a small office converting entirely to Ubuntu desktops, to a 12,000 person conference, can be run on FOSS, with end-users able to use the software.

Even as perception is the primary hurdle we see, real gaps remain in the realm of applications and support. There are some areas where FOSS options just don't exist to replace proprietary software. In particular, the alternatives to accounting packages and fundraising packages are few and far between, and those that exist are not mature enough. Many nonprofits depend on MS Access or Filemaker Pro databases for keeping track of clients or donors, but OOBase, the only FOSS alternative to desktop databases like Access is not mature enough to replace those databases (and migration to Base could be costly.) Although it is possible to find many technology providers in all major cities and most communities that are familiar with FOSS, they still are outnumbered by the providers that focus on proprietary (primarily Microsoft) tools.

As FOSS gets more and more mature, and more people become familiar with it, there will be broader adoption over time. However, there are some areas, particularly “vertical” nonprofit focused applications, such as case management, volunteer and project management, and fundraising and CRM, where there are few (or no) free and open source options, and little or no resources going into development and improvement of those options. It is in this area

more than any, that free and open source options would provide nonprofits with huge value and benefit. These packages are often the most expensive, the most complex, and there are the least numbers of options (except for CRM and fundraising.) Developing free and open source applications in these realms that are extensible, use open standards and are interoperable would provide nonprofits with cost-effective alternatives that would increase their mission effectiveness. It is in this area more than any other, that we need a collaborative approach, bringing together nonprofits, funders, providers and others to build these tools.

FOSS is, on many levels, a good fit for nonprofits. FOSS can provide less expensive, easier to maintain, more extensible, more secure implementations of software than proprietary alternatives. FOSS development and FOSS communities often work in ways that are consonant with nonprofit mission (in fact, many FOSS projects are nonprofit organizations themselves.) The development of FOSS specifically for the nonprofit sector provides the possibility of freely available community-driven, community-owned software, that can change and grow with organizations as they grow and change.

Free and open source software still, after all these years, provides real promise for the nonprofit sector. Our challenge is to find ways to work together to further and more fully realize that promise.

Glossary

Applications – software on your computer that does basic user tasks, like word processing, accounting, etc.

CMS – Content Management System. This is a software application that goes on a web server, and generally connects with a database, to manage the content dynamically on a website.

CRM – Constituent Relationship Management – a software application that keeps track of indivudual donors/constituents, and an organizations relationship with them (donations, events, etc.)

Fork – When a developer takes an open source project developed by someone else in an entirely different direction. This is done for a variety of reasons – disagreements with the philosophy of the original developer, slowness in development of the original, different purpose for the new software (an example of this is FilmGimp, a fork of the Gimp image processing program developed specifically to work with film).

Free Software – Free software, in this context, does not just mean software that has no license or acquisition fees. It pertains to software that is written under an open source license, and can be freely copied, modified and re-distributed (and you are free to sell it.) See http://www.fsf.org/philosophy/free-sw.html for a full definition.

GUI – Graphic User Interface – a method of interacting with a computer program that allows point and click with a mouse as opposed to typing commands on a command line. For example, Windows and Macintoshes use a GUI, DOS does not.

HTML – Hypertext Markup Language, the language used to create web pages.

IRC – Internet Relay Chat – IRC is a way to chat with others that are on the internet in real time. There are many IRC clients for all platforms. IRC has been around for a very long time, and has many purposes, but there are several IRC servers that are dedicated to providing support channels for open source software (Freenode.net is the major one).

Kernel – the software that controls the most important tasks on your computer. It is responsible for process management (what applications are running and how), disk management and memory management.

Libre – It is a term used by free software advocates to talk about software freedom, not in terms of cost, but in terms of what you can do with it (read the source code, modify it and/or redistribute it.)

Linux – A UNIX variant, is the most commonly known open source operating system. It was developed in the early 90s, and has become quite mainstream, especially used as servers. (More information on Linux is in the appendix)

ODBC – Open Data Base Connectivity – it is a standard that allows databases to talk to one another easily, either within one system, or across a network or the internet.

Open Standards – An open standard is a standard for data or file format that is approved by a standards body, documented, and anyone can adopt without cost. Most FOSS software uses open standards, most proprietary software does not.

Operating System – The entire collection of kernel, libraries and utilities that provide the interface between the hardware and the user (and other applications).

Proprietary – software that is "closed source." Users cannot see the source code, copy the software, or use it in any way other than specified by the strict licensing provided by the vendor. All major software products by large commercial entities (like Microsoft, Intuit, etc.) fit this definition.

Source Code – The instructions, written in a form readable and understandable by programmers that direct how an application should run. When changes or bug fixes are made to an application, these changes must be made in the source code. After the source code is complete, most applications are compiled into a "binary" form. A computer can read the binary form of an application more quickly and easily. However it is impossible to understand or modify an application in binary form if you do not have access to the original source code that created it.

Version Numbering – All software that is released to the public (and most that is not) is assigned a version number, which helps to keep track of the status of that software, and allows users to know whether it is the most up to date.

Web 2.0 – This includes the new areas of social network websites, sites that facilitate collaborative content generation, websites that use Flash and/or Ajax, and virtual worlds such as Second Life.

Support and Resource Links

Mailing Lists, Websites and IRC channels available for support of FOSS

http://www.flossmanuals.org
http://www.tldp.org/ - the Linux Documentation Project
http://www.linuxchix.org – multiple mailing lists
irc.us.freenode.net - many distribution specific channels, like #debian, #gentoo
http://www.mozilla.org – support for using mozilla
nosi-discussion@nosi.net - discussion of open source software
riders-tech@npogroups.org - circuit riders technology discussion

Organizations and websites that provide resources for FOSS

CTCNET (www.ctcnet.org) – A network of community technology centers serving urban and low-income areas
TechSoup (http://www.techsoup.org)
Free Geek CTC (www.freegeek.org) -developing a tech assistance project using FOSS
Free SW Foundation (www.fsf.org) - advocates for free software, enforces GPL license
Gilbert Center (www.gilbert.org) -strong advocate of open source
Aspiration (www.aspiration.org) – organization focused on NGO software capacity
Idealist.org (www.idealist.org) - online directory of nonprofit consultants
Penguin Day (www.penguinday.org) – events for nonprofits to learn about FOSS
Social Source Commons (www.socialsourcecommons.org) – online compendium of software tool information for the nonprofit sector.
LINC Project (www.lincproject.org) - open source for low-income comm.
LSTech (lstech.umich.org) -A technology assistance provider serving legal assistance communities
Tactical Technology Collective (http://www.tacticaltech.org/) - an international organization working to bring technology (including OSS) to NGO sectors in developing countries
NTEN (www.nten.org) – provides a directory of nonprofit consultants
One Northwest (www.onenw.org) – environmentally focused provider includes open source options
Organizers Collaborative (www.organizenow.net) -- promotes, creates open source tools for organizers
Open Source Application Foundation (www.osafoundation.org) -- nonprofit established to write open source software
Debian-NP (http://www.debian.org/devel/debian-nonprofit/) - A specific Linux distribution project for nonprofits

List of Free and Open Source Software

This list is a snapshot of the data contained in toolboxes on the site Social Source Commons. To see live data, go to http://nosi.net/projects/primer

These Toolboxes have been created using Social Source Commons, And all data is distributed under a Creative Commons License. This list, and the NOSI primer, are supported by IBM's On Demand Community.

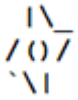
Toolbox: Free Software for the Server

Summary: Free and Open Source software for back office servers

Asterisk in 13 toolboxes

Open source PBX (phone system)

tagged: opensource, tools, voip, server, pbx, SIP, converter, softswitch, telephony
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/108/



Backup Ninja in 5 toolboxes

A silent flower blossom death strike to lost data. Backupninja allows you to coordinate system backup by dropping a few simple configuration files into /etc/backup.d/. Backupninja provides a centralized way to configure and schedule many different backup utilities.

tagged: backup, freesoftware, utility, synchronization
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1467/

CiviCRM in 38 toolboxes

Open source constitutent relationship management system.

tagged: opensource, donation, drupal, management, fundraising, civicrm, openngo, crm, ecrm, mambo, mail, email, joomla, database, eadvocacy, apc, newsletter, eorganizing, advocacy, member, relationship, contacts, elections, consituent, voter
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/78/

Debian in 20 toolboxes

Linux distribution with a very strong community

tagged: opensource, Linux, GNU, server, free, distribution, distro, ubuntu, debian, operatingsystem, apc, DEB
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/128/

 **Enterprise Linux** in 3 toolboxes

Multipurpose Linux server software.

tagged: opensource, Linux, server, free, redhat
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/467/

 **Open Workbench** in 2 toolboxes

Open Workbench is a FOSS project management application. Open Workbench provides robust project scheduling and management functionality. Although it is provided as free software you still need the Clarity suite if you want to use a central database to manage enterprise collaboration. With Clarity's Schedule Connect module, it can specifically link to many PCs with Open Workbench 1.1 installed.

tagged: server, projectmanagement, scheduling, task, NOSI, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1958/

 **Orange HRM** in 1 toolbox

OrangeHRM is an open source Human Resource Management (HRM) solution for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). It can however also be adapted to the needs of NGOs. OrangeHRM is developed on PHP, MySQL and Apache HTTP Server and can be downloaded to use on both the Linux operating system and Microsoft Windows.

tagged: Linux, GNU, windows, NOSI, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1956/

 **activeCollab** in 3 toolboxes

Web based, open source collaboration and project management tool.

tagged: opensource, test, projectmanagement, webbased, colaboration, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1445/

 **apache** in 21 toolboxes

industry standard open source web server

tagged: opensource, server, free, webserver, HTTP
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/287/

Toolbox: Free Software for the Web

Summary: Free and Open Source software for web servers that provide web applications and other functionality.


AWStats in 4 toolboxes

Free open source web site traffic analysis software.

tagged: opensource, GNU, free, analysis, Logs, website, traffic
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/391/


CiviCRM in 38 toolboxes

Open source constitutent relationship management system.

tagged: opensource, donation, drupal, management, fundraising, civicrm, openngo, crm, ecrm, mambo, mail, email, joomla, database, eadvocacy, apc, newsletter, eorganizing, advocacy, member, relationship, contacts, elections, consituent, voter
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/78/


Drupal in 67 toolboxes

Very extensible CMS platform based on PHP and used by many NGOs - "Community Plumbing"

tagged: web, opensource, blogging, open, source, php, civicspace, CMS, rss, contentmanagement, modules, Bryght, eadvocacy, development, apc, OnDemandNPO, site, npo, nonprofit, civicactions, leadlearn
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/49/


Joomla in 19 toolboxes

FLOSS content management system

tagged: opensource, blogging, community, php, CMS, mambo, rss, contentmanagement
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/96/


OpenACS in 1 toolbox

OpenACS (Open Architecture Community System) is a toolkit for building scalable, community-oriented web applications.

tagged: collaboration, website, web-applications, acs
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/680/

Plone in 25 toolboxes

A powerful platform for content, community and collaboration websites

tagged: opensource, hosted, blog, calendar, blogging, community, CMS, email, rss, Petition, contentmanagement, python, zope, wicked, plone, humaninet
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/70/

WordPress in 65 toolboxes

Flexible open-source content management and blogging software with an active user and developer community and a wide variety of plug-ins or extensions available.

tagged: opensource, blog, blogging, php, CMS, apc
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/48/

apache in 21 toolboxes

industry standard open source web server

tagged: opensource, server, free, webserver, HTTP
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/287/

mediawiki in 41 toolboxes

Powerful wiki software built to support the Wikipedia project

tagged: wiki, server, wikipedia, collaboration, apc, private, wikiwiki, password-protected
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/92/

phpMyAdmin in 20 toolboxes

web-based interface for managing MySQL

tagged: opensource, php, mysql, database, webapp
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/671/

 **zope** in 2 toolboxes

Zope is an open source application server for building content management systems, intranets, portals, and custom applications.

tagged: opensource, server, python
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1576/

Toolbox: Free Software for the Desktop -- OSX Edition

Summary: Macintosh or OSX based desktop software.

 **Adium** in 29 toolboxes
Adium is a free instant messaging application for Mac OS X that can connect to AIM, MSN, Jabber, Yahoo, and more.

tagged: opensource, mac, chat, IM, AIM, YAHOO, MSN, free, multiprotocol, gaim
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/213/

 **Colloquy** in 8 toolboxes

Colloquy is an advanced IRC & SILC client

tagged: opensource, mac, chat, IRC, macintosh, free, Security, MacOSX, Apple, silc, NOSI, ngoinabox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/354/

 **Cyberduck** in 12 toolboxes

Cyberduck is an open source FTP and SFTP client for Mac OS X. Cyberduck is easy to use and includes features such as uploading and downloading by drag and drop. It can also synchronise files and directories. Cyberduck includes a bookmark manager and supports the Mac OS X Keychain and Bonjour networking.

tagged: mac, FTP, free, desktop, utility, file, NOSI, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/186/

 **Evolution** in 9 toolboxes

Integrated mail, addressbook and calendaring functionality to users of the GNOME desktop.

tagged: calendar, mail, email, addressbook, GNOME, apc
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/141/


Firefox in 163 toolboxes

Popular open source web browser from Mozilla

tagged: web, browser, opensource, mac, CSS, mozilla, internet, crossplatform, apc, webbrowser, secbox, llc
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/51/


GanttProject in 8 toolboxes

GanttProject is a tool for creating a project schedule by means of a Gantt chart and resource load chart. GanttProject allows you to break down your project into a tree of tasks and assign human resources that have to work on each task. You can also establish dependencies between tasks, like "this task can't start until this one is finished". GanttProject renders your project using two charts: Gantt chart for tasks and resource load chart for resources. You may print the charts, generate PDF and HTML reports, exchange data with Microsoft(R) Project(TM) and spreadsheet applications.

tagged: opensource, free, crossplatform, java, projectmanagement, gantt, scheduling, desktop, NOSI, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/132/


NeoOffice in 14 toolboxes

NeoOffice is a fully-featured set of office applicationsfor Mac OS X. Based on the OpenOffice.org office suite

tagged: opensource, mac, editor, tools, macintosh, MacOSX, Apple, office, openoffice, worksheet
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/962/


SeaMonkey in 3 toolboxes

Web-browser, advanced e-mail and newsgroup client, IRC chat client, and HTML editing

tagged: browser, opensource, HTML, email, chat, IRC, newsgroup
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1198/


Sunbird in 9 toolboxes

Open-source calendar that works with the Mozilla suite of tools or by itself.

tagged: opensource, mac, calendar, mozilla, ical, tasks
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/62/

 **Sylpheed** in 3 toolboxes

Sylpheed is a lightweight open source email and news client offering quick response, easy configuration and an abundance of features. Sylpheed is free software licensed under the GPL. It's a good choice for if you have limited computing power and don't need all the features of Thunderbird.

tagged: email, free, desktop, NOSI, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1957/

 **Thunderbird** in 64 toolboxes

Mozilla's Open Source email client

tagged: opensource, mac, Linux, GNU, mail, email, client, side, crossplatform, IMAP, communication, mail_client, secbox, e-mail
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/90/

 **WengoPhone** in 3 toolboxes

WengoPhone is a free software Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service. It allows users to speak at no cost from one computer to another. It also allows users to call landlines, cellphones, send SMS, make video calls and chat using various Instant Messaging services. WengoPhone is a FOSS alternative to proprietary systems such as Skype.

tagged: mac, Linux, voip, windows, telephony, NOSI, ngoinabox, voice-chat, instant_messenger, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1955/

 **fireftp** in 6 toolboxes

FireFTP is a free, secure, cross-platform FTP client for Mozilla Firefox which provides easy and intuitive access to FTP servers. FireFTP is very simple to use and integrates into your web browser.

tagged: opensource, FTP, desktop, firefox, cross-platform, NOSI, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1202/

gftp in 3 toolboxes

gFTP is a GNU/Linux multi-threaded FTP client. It is mostly used on Unix-like systems, but it can be used on Microsoft Windows and Mac OS X. It includes both a GUI and a command-line interface

tagged: opensource, GNOME, desktop, filemanager, NOSI, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/263/

Toolbox: Free Software for the Desktop -- Windows Edition.

Summary: Free and Open Source software for the MS Windows desktop.

Evolution in 9 toolboxes

Integrated mail, addressbook and calendaring functionality to users of the GNOME desktop.

tagged: calendar, mail, email, addressbook, GNOME, apc
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/141/

Firefox in 163 toolboxes

Popular open source web browser from Mozilla

tagged: web, browser, opensource, mac, CSS, mozilla, internet, crossplatform, apc, webbrowser, secbox, llc
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/51/

GIMP in 39 toolboxes

A freely distributed piece of software for such tasks as photo retouching, image composition and image authoring.

tagged: opensource, Linux, photos, crossplatform, multimedia, graphics, windows, apc, photo_editor, bitmap
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/131/

GanttProject in 8 toolboxes

GanttProject is a tool for creating a project schedule by means of a Gantt chart and resource load chart. GanttProject allows you to break down your project into a tree of tasks and assign

human resources that have to work on each task. You can also establish dependencies between tasks, like "this task can't start until this one is finished". GanttProject renders your project using two charts: Gantt chart for tasks and resource load chart for resources. You may print the charts, generate PDF and HTML reports, exchange data with Microsoft(R) Project(TM) and spreadsheet applications.

tagged: opensource, free, crossplatform, java, projectmanagement, gantt, scheduling, desktop, NOSI, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/132/

Open Workbench in 2 toolboxes

Open Workbench is a FOSS project management application. Open Workbench provides robust project scheduling and management functionality. Although it is provided as free software you still need the Clarity suite if you want to use a central database to manage enterprise collaboration. With Clarity's Schedule Connect module, it can specifically link to many PCs with Open Workbench 1.1 installed. The module installs on both centralised server and the desktops, adding database access to Open Workbench's screens.

tagged: server, projectmanagement, scheduling, task, NOSI, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1958/

OpenOffice in 86 toolboxes

Open source office suite; free MS Office replacement

tagged: opensource, microsoft, presentation, editor, bloatware, crossplatform, wordprocessing, officesuite, productivity, apc, office, spreadsheet, word, powerpoint, calc, spreadshet
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/69/

Pidgin in 44 toolboxes

A multi-protocol Instant Messaging (IM) client

tagged: opensource, messaging, open, chat, instant, message, IM, IRC, AIM, YAHOO, MSN, crossplatform, apc, gaim, secbox, NOSI, ngoinabox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/86/

PuTTY in 41 toolboxes

A Free Telnet/SSH Client

tagged: encryption, Security, telnet, ssh, tunnelling, apc, small, scp, remoteaccess

http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/113/

 **SeaMonkey** in 3 toolboxes

Web-browser, advanced e-mail and newsgroup client, IRC chat client, and HTML editing

tagged: browser, opensource, HTML, email, chat, IRC, newsgroup
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1198/

 **Sunbird** in 9 toolboxes

Open-source calendar that works with the Mozilla suite of tools or by itself.

tagged: opensource, mac, calendar, mozilla, ical, tasks
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/62/

 **Sylpheed** in 3 toolboxes

Sylpheed is a lightweight open source email and news client offering quick response, easy configuration and an abundance of features. Sylpheed is free software licensed under the GPL. It's a good choice for if you have limited computing power and don't need all the features of Thunderbird.

tagged: email, free, desktop, NOSI, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1957/

 **Thunderbird** in 64 toolboxes

Mozilla's Open Source email client

tagged: opensource, mac, Linux, GNU, mail, email, client, side, crossplatform, IMAP, communication, mail_client, secbox, e-mail
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/90/

 **TurboCash** in 1 toolbox

TurboCASH includes a wide array of functions: debtors, creditors, general ledger, VAT accounting, invoicing, bank reconciliation, trial balance, balance sheet and income statements, full reporting and analysis. It also has multi-company and multi-user capabilities.

tagged: windows, finance, accounting, book, ngoinabox, keeping
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1954/

WengoPhone in 3 toolboxes

WengoPhone is a free software Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service. It allows users to speak at no cost from one computer to another. It also allows users to call landlines, cellphones, send SMS, make video calls and chat using various Instant Messaging services. WengoPhone is a FOSS alternative to proprietary systems such as Skype.

tagged: mac, Linux, voip, windows, telephony, NOSI, ngoinabox, voice-chat, instant_messenger, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1955/

WinSCP in 14 toolboxes

WinSCP (Windows Secure CoPY) is an open source SFTP and FTP client for Microsoft Windows. Its main function is secure file transfer between a local and a remote computer. WinSCP offers basic file manager functionality for uploading and downloading files from a server.

tagged: FTP, encryption, Security, desktop, utility, filetransfer, scp, SFTP, NOSI, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/185/

fireftp in 6 toolboxes

FireFTP is a free, secure, cross-platform FTP client for Mozilla Firefox which provides easy and intuitive access to FTP servers. FireFTP is very simple to use and integrates into your web browser.

tagged: opensource, FTP, desktop, firefox, cross-platform, NOSI, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1202/

gftp in 3 toolboxes

gFTP is a GNU/Linux multi-threaded FTP client. It is mostly used on Unix-like systems, but it can be used on Microsoft Windows and Mac OS X. It includes both a GUI and a command-line interface

tagged: opensource, GNOME, desktop, filemanager, NOSI, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/263/

organizer's database in 1 toolbox

Free contact and donor database for grassroots organizing groups. Also known as ODB.

tagged: opensource, free, database, eadvocacy, freesoftware, eorganizing, NOSI, ngoinabox,

basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/101/

Toolbox: Free Software for the Desktop -- GNU Linux Edition

Summary: GNU/Linux based desktop software.


Audacity in 34 toolboxes
Free, open source software for recording and editing sounds.

tagged: opensource, mac, crossplatform, multimedia, sound, audio, converter, multmedia, avbox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/130/


Cinelerra in 1 toolbox

Cinelerra is a highly advanced and professional opensource video editing.

tagged: opensource, editor, video, videoeditor, opengl
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1769/


Democracy in 15 toolboxes

Download and watch all the best internet TV shows and videos in one powerful application. New channels arrive daily in the built-in Channel Guide. Stop squinting at tedious web videos: sit back and watch big, high resolution videos.

tagged: opensource, mac, rss, free, internet, eadvocacy, distribution, freesoftware, TV, television, video, movie, podcast, streaming, vodcast
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/207/


Evolution in 9 toolboxes

Integrated mail, addressbook and calendaring functionality to users of the GNOME desktop.

tagged: calendar, mail, email, addressbook, GNOME, apc
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/141/

Fedora Core in 2 toolboxes

The Fedora Project is a collection of projects sponsored by Red Hat, and developed as a

partnership between the open source community and Red Hat engineers.

tagged: Linux, distribution, distro, red, hat
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1531/


FileZilla in 16 toolboxes

Free FTP client software.

tagged: FTP, free, windows, SFTP
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/188/


Firefox in 163 toolboxes

Popular open source web browser from Mozilla

tagged: web, browser, opensource, mac, CSS, mozilla, internet, crossplatform, apc, webbrowser, secbox, llc
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/51/


GIMP in 39 toolboxes

A freely distributed piece of software for such tasks as photo retouching, image composition and image authoring.

tagged: opensource, Linux, photos, crossplatform, multimedia, graphics, windows, apc, photo_editor, bitmap
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/131/


GnuCash in 1 toolbox

GnuCash is personal and small-business financial-accounting software, freely licensed under the GNU GPL and available for GNU/Linux, *BSD, Solaris and Mac OSX.

tagged: opensource, accounting, financial, money
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1216/


Kino in 1 toolbox

Kino is a non-linear DV editor for GNU/Linux. It features excellent integration with IEEE-1394 for capture, VTR control, and recording back to the camera. It captures video to disk in Raw DV and AVI format, in both type-1 DV and type-2 DV (separate audio stream) encodings.

tagged: Linux, video
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/2012/

OpenOffice in 86 toolboxes

Open source office suite; free MS Office replacement

tagged: opensource, microsoft, presentation, editor, bloatware, crossplatform, wordprocessing, officesuite, productivity, apc, office, spreadsheet, word, powerpoint, calc, spreadshet
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/69/

Pidgin in 44 toolboxes

A multi-protocol Instant Messaging (IM) client

tagged: opensource, messaging, open, chat, instant, message, IM, IRC, AIM, YAHOO, MSN, crossplatform, apc, gaim, secbox, NOSI, ngoinabox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/86/

Scribus in 4 toolboxes

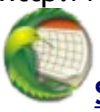
Scribus is an open-source program that brings award-winning professional page layout to Linux/Unix, MacOS X and Windows desktops with a combination of "press-ready" output and new approaches to page layout.

tagged: apc
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/269/

SeaMonkey in 3 toolboxes

Web-browser, advanced e-mail and newsgroup client, IRC chat client, and HTML editing

tagged: browser, opensource, HTML, email, chat, IRC, newsgroup
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1198/



Sunbird in 9 toolboxes

Open-source calendar that works with the Mozilla suite of tools or by itself.

tagged: opensource, mac, calendar, mozilla, ical, tasks
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/62/

Sylpheed in 3 toolboxes

Sylpheed is a lightweight open source email and news client offering quick response, easy configuration and an abundance of features. Sylpheed is free software licensed under the GPL. It's a good choice for if you have limited computing power and don't need all the features of Thunderbird.

tagged: email, free, desktop, NOSI, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1957/

Thunderbird in 64 toolboxes

Mozilla's Open Source email client

tagged: opensource, mac, Linux, GNU, mail, email, client, side, crossplatform, IMAP, communication, mail_client, secbox, e-mail
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/90/

Ubuntu in 63 toolboxes

User-friendly Linux distribution

tagged: opensource, Linux, GNU, operating, system, Africa, South, Canonical, distribution, distro, ubuntu, debian, operatingsystem, freesoftware, OS, apc
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/75/

VLC Media Player in 27 toolboxes

VLC media player is a highly portable multimedia player for various audio and video formats (MPEG-1, MPEG-2, MPEG-4, DivX, mp3, ogg, ...) as well as DVDs, VCDs, and various streaming protocols.

tagged: mac, audio, apc, video, streaming, media, dvd, media-player, mp3, divx, xvid, flac, player, mpeg
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/704/

WengoPhone in 3 toolboxes

WengoPhone is a free software Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service. It allows users to speak at no cost from one computer to another. It also allows users to call landlines, cellphones, send SMS, make video calls and chat using various Instant Messaging services. WengoPhone is a FOSS alternative to proprietary systems such as Skype.

tagged: mac, Linux, voip, windows, telephony, NOSI, ngoinabox, voice-chat, instant_messenger, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1955/


X-Chat in 4 toolboxes

Free cross-platform IRC client

tagged: chat, IRC, crossplatform, gtk
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1279/


fireftp in 6 toolboxes

FireFTP is a free, secure, cross-platform FTP client for Mozilla Firefox which provides easy and intuitive access to FTP servers. FireFTP is very simple to use and integrates into your web browser.

tagged: opensource, FTP, desktop, firefox, cross-platform, NOSI, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1202/


gftp in 3 toolboxes

gFTP is a GNU/Linux multi-threaded FTP client. It is mostly used on Unix-like systems, but it can be used on Microsoft Windows and Mac OS X. It includes both a GUI and a command-line interface

tagged: opensource, GNOME, desktop, filemanager, NOSI, ngoinabox, basebox
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/263/


openSUSE in 2 toolboxes

The openSUSE project is a worldwide community program sponsored by Novell that promotes the use of Linux everywhere. The program provides free and easy access to openSUSE.

tagged: Linux, distribution, distro, suse, novell
http://www.socialsourcecommons.org/tool/show/1533/

These Toolboxes have been created using Social Source Commons, And all data is distributed under a Creative Commons License.

List of Consultants, Vendors and Organizations

This is a list of organizations, consultants and vendors that responded to a query sent on numerous nonprofit technology related lists in September of 2007. It is *not exhaustive*, nor is it an endorsement. It is meant as a helpful resource for those looking for support for FOSS.

If they provide support and/or services for desktops: 

If they provide installation and support for FOSS servers or provide hosting services: 

If the develop, install, or support web applications: 

Asia (Pakistan)

Organization/Company/Individual name: Fouad Riaz Bajwa

Location: City, State/Province, Country: Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
contact email: fouadbajwa@gmail.com bajwa@lpi.org
URL: www.lpipakistan.org
Locations served: South Asia, Asia Pacific, Middle East & Africa, Europe, and Australia

Services : development, installation and configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support, training
FOSS Specialties:

FOSS service business development and marketing solutions, policy design, specialized strategic technology management services, community development
Provide the skills, tools, expertise and experience to:

- Facilitate growth of your organization by simplifying & getting more from the IT environment
- Strategic Technology Management reducing costs, and
- Low-Cost Hardware Solutions for developing regions

Comments :

We are available for assignment based relocation when and where required on pre-arranged basis. We have considerable global travel and consulting experience including working with and supporting organizations with over 20,000 employees and global operations.

Europe (Belgium)

Organization/Company/Individual name: BeezNest

Location: Brussels, Belgium
contact email: info@beeznest.net
URL: www.beeznest.net
Locations served: all over Europe (mainly Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain and Germany)
Services: development, installation and configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support, training
FOSS specialties: Linux, Apache, PHP, MySQL/PostgreSQL, Samba, Dolibarr, Dokeos, Asterisk
Comments:
BeezNest specializes in FOSS since early 2001 and people in it have been contributing to many projects back since 1999.

Europe (United Kingdom)

Organization/Company/Individual name: M6-IT Community Interest Company

Location: City, State/Province, Country: West Midlands, United Kingdom.
Contact email: enquiry@m6-it.org
URL: http://m6-it.org/
Locations served:

UK (especially Midlands, Wales, and NW England)
NW Europe

Services: development, installation and configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support, training, Other (please describe):

IT strategy; project management; (training &) certification; on-line back-ups; finanace software.

FOSS specialties (what software projects):

CMS (Plone & Zope); TinyERP; Debian / Apache / Exim / subversion servers;

Comments :

M6-IT is a Community Interest Company. Our social enterprise is devoted to providing sustainable IT to the third sector (Civil Society / NGO / NPOs), and education projects, using Free & Open Source Software. We are particularly concerned with IT strategy, and providing extensive training (and certification), to boost IT efficiency in the sector.

Organization/Company/Individual name: Resource Information Service (RIS)

London, UK
tim.bailey@ris.org.uk
ris.org.uk
Locations served: All of UK

Services : development, installation and configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support and training

FOSS specialties (what software projects):

Drupal, Wordpress, CiviCRM, most FOSS bulletin board packages, SugarCRM, vTiger

Comments :

Resource Information Service is a specialist information charity. We are the leading provider in the UK of directories, websites and information systems about services for people in need. We also provide general advice and consultancy on all aspects web based technologies. Contact

Tim Bailey at RIS for an informal chat.

New Zealand

Organization/Company/Individual name: Rimu Hosting

Location: City, State/Province, Country: Cambridge, New Zealand
contact email: support@rimuhosting.com
URL: http://rimuhosting.com
Locations served: International
Services :
installation and configuration, hosting, support

FOSS specialties (what software projects):

Our admins are experienced with most popular FOSS applications, including Java, LAMP, and Ruby on Rails based applications.

Comments :

RImuhosting provide Xen based Virtual Private Servers and Linux dedicated server hosting plans. We employ a team of Linux system administrators who provide support for our customers in setting up and supporting the FOSS applications your interested in using.

North America (Canada)

Organization/Company/Individual name: Fruition Interactive

Location: City, State/Province, Country: Toronto, ON Canada
contact email: kent@fruitoininteractive.com
URL: http://www.fruitioninteractive.com
Locations served: Canada, USA, Europe
Services : development, installation and configuration, customization, integration , support, training

FOSS specialties (what software projects):
eZPublish, Drupal, SugarCRM, MySQL, LInux, Apache, PHP,

Comments :

Fruition Interactive provides services to help your organization communicate with greater impact, work more efficiently and create new opportunities using the Internet. We do that by using industry-leading methods to work with you to create exceptional online experiences and to deliver your projects better, faster and more on-target with your evolving needs.

Organization name: Koumbit Networks, Inc. / Réseau Koumbit, Inc.

Location: Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Contact email: info@koumbit.org
URL: http://koumbit.org
Locations served: North-America

Services: development, installation and configuration, hosting, customization, support, training
Other (please describe): graphics design, both web and print.

FOSS specialties (what software projects):

Drupal (including multi-lingual sites, CiviCRM, e-commerce), MoinMoin wiki, RT (ticket tracker), Ledger-SMB (accountancy), AlternC GPL hosting panel (to easily manage FTP accounts, domain configuration, Mailman, MySQL databases).

Comments:

Koumbit is a non profit organisation whose mission is to promote the appropriation of free/libre and open source software by social groups in Quebec, in Canada and abroad.
We work on the development of a collective software platform and we provide support for users of free software.
See also: http://koumbit.org/en/about/founding_principles

Organization/Company/Individual name: OpenConcept Consulting Inc.

Location: City, State/Province, Country: Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
contact email: mike@openconcept.ca
URL: http://openconcept.ca
Locations served: Canada/USA

Services : , development , installation and configuration , hosting, customization , integration, support, training

Other (please describe): We've got some services which are based on floss products that we release into the community.

FOSS specialties (what software projects): Drupal, CiviCRM, php/mysql, LAMP admin

Comments :

At OpenConcept Consulting Inc. we stand for open source web development for social change. We strive to give our clients quality, dynamic, interactive web sites and high caliber online

community tools at an affordable price. We ensure that our clients get the most from their online presence.

OpenConcept's tool kit includes: Websites, Blogs, Petitions, Action Fora, Campaign Sites, Newsletters, Membership Portals & Management, and Web 2.0. But if there is no ready-made solution to your web needs, we can help you build one that is customized to your specifications with the support of an open source community that spans the globe.

Let us tailor your web based solution. Visit openconcept.ca or email info@openconcept.ca for more information.

Organization/Company/Individual name: Openflows Community Technology Lab

Location: City, State/Province, Country: based in New York City with nodes in Toronto and Montreal
contact email: eric@openflows.com
URL: http://openflows.com
Locations served: Our clients are scattered all over North America and Europe.
Services: development , installation and configuration , hosting , customization , integration , support , training
Other (please describe):
Members of Openflows regularly run seminars or present at conferences. Topics covered include Introduction to Free/Open Source Software; mapping with F/OSS tools; Free Software and business models; Free Software for Librarians
FOSS specialties (what software projects):

Openflows has used a number of tools as part of projects for our clients, including but not limited to:
Bricolage
SlashCode
Drupal
Asterisk
phpGroupware
mySQL and PostgreSQL

Comments:

Operating since the year 2000, the Openflows Community Technology Lab (OCTL) is a professional network of developers, consultants and researchers committed to bringing cutting edge open source software solutions to NGOs and progressive community organisations. All our clients are unique, and so are our solutions. We believe that open source software is not just technologically superior, but that free access to information and open collaboration is what the internet was meant to be used for.

We have taken our obligation to give back to the free software community seriously. This usually takes the form of bug reports and patches submitted directly to the maintainers of a given project, as well as coding or sponsorship of new features.

All OCTL workers are members of either the U.S. Freelancers Union, Communications Workers of America Local 1180, or The Canadian Freelance Union (CEP Canada)

Organization/Company/Individual name: Starnix Inc.

Location: Toronto, ON, Canada
contact email: matt@starnix.com
URL: http://www.starnix.com
Locations served: Toronto and GTA (physically), globally (remote and/or onsite)
Services: development, installation and configuration, customization, integration, support, training
Other (please describe): managed services
FOSS specialties (what software projects): any network infrastructure,
development in Perl

North America (US)

Organization/Company/Individual name: Micah Anderson

Location: City, State/Province, Country: New York, NY, US
contact email: micah@riseup.net
URL: http://riseup.net
Locations served: Northeast
Services: installation and configuration, hosting, training
Other (please describe): systems administration/networking
FOSS specialties (what software projects): Debian, backupninja, virtualization

Comments : I'm a Debian developer, and a systems administrator, I started Riseup and built out the infrastructure for Indymedia, I'm skilled in architecting, designing, implementing and maintaining high capacity services, I also manage the network for the Seattle Community Colocation project and can travel!

Organization/Company/Individual name: Chicago Technology Cooperative

Chicago, IL, USA
team@chicagotech.org
www.chicagotech.org

Although we are based in Chicago, we serve clients all over North America.

Services: development, install/config, customization, integration, support, training

FOSS specialties: Drupal, CiviCRM, open source GIS

Comments:

The Chicago Technology Cooperative was founded in March 2005 to provide technology assistance to the nonprofit community of Chicago; we now help organizations located all over the United States. The Cooperative is comprised of talented consultants, technicians, developers, and designers, all with extensive experience serving the unique needs of nonprofit and community-based organizations. Members of the Cooperative are committed to helping nonprofit organizations harness and leverage technology as a tool to better serve their constituencies and society as a whole. Specifically, members provide website and web-based, database-driven application development services.

The members of the Chicago Technology Cooperative are committed to the ideals and promise of Free/Libre Open Source Software (FLOSS). As active participants in the nonprofit open source ecology, we sponsor and co-sponsor several popular Drupal modules, including Gmap, Web Links, and Node Adoption.

Organization/Company/Individual name: Confluence Corporation

Location: City, State/Province, Country:Washington, DC, USA
contact email: info@confluencecorp.com
URL: www.confluencecorp.com
Locations served: National (US)
Services: development, installation and configuration, customization, integration, support, training

FOSS specialties (what software projects): Open Source Content Management Systems
Comments :

Confluence implements websites with Joomla / open source content management systems -- from design through continued maintenance and support.

Organization/Company/Individual name: Cruiskeen Consulting LLC

Location: City, State/Province, Country: Menomonie,WI USA
Contact email: sales@cruiskeenconsulting.com
URL: http://www.cruiskeenconsulting.com
Locations served: Anywhere,primarily the USA

Services: development, installation and configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support, training

FOSS specialties (what software projects): email applications, web applications, Drupal, CiviCRM, other web applications

Comments: Cruiskeen Consulting LLC provides support for web applications based on open source software. We specialize in the creation of dynamic web sites for nonprofits, political groups, and small businesses. We also provide web and email hosting, software development, mailing lists, and UNIX/Linux system administration services.

Organization/Company/Individual name: Expeditionary Information Systems

Location: City, State/Province, Country: Helena, MT, USA
Contact email: bobschmitt@onewest.net
URL: http://www.xinsys.net
Locations served: United States, Europe, Asia

Services: development, installation and configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support,training
Other (please describe): Sytem/strategy design, development and prototyping

FOSS specialties (what software projects): Information services to assist technically-oriented communities work together better, specifically: legal, humanitarian, disaster/emergency response. Typically working on LAMP platforms, integrating other platforms as needed, specializing in integrating Drupal with other platforms.

Comment: Clients include NGOs, government and commercial organizations in the United States and Europe. We focus on rapid conceptualization, prototyping and optimization of collaborative platforms.

Organization/Company/Individual name: gardner-madras | strategic creative – heather gardner-madras

Location: City, State/Province, Country: Springfield, OR, USA
contact email: hgm@heathergm.com
URL: http://heathergm.com
Locations served: work virtually anywhere
Services : hosting, support
Other (please describe):
Design & Strategy, Project Management and Technology planning

FOSS specialties (what software projects):
Joomla, Drupal, Plone

Comments :
Web design specializes in designing a site specifically to the strength of each CMS for smoother installation and site maintenance.

Organization/Company/Individual name: Giant Rabbit, LLC

Location: City, State/Province, Country: Berkeley, California
contact email:info@giantrabbit.com
URL: http://www.giantrabbit.com
Locations served: San Francisco Bay Area (for on-site work) and worldwide (for remote work)

Services : development, installation and configuration, customization, integration, support

FOSS specialties (what software projects):
Drupal, Ruby on Rails

Comments:
We provide comprehensive IT consulting services (including web and database design and strategic technology planning) to non-profit organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area and nationwide. We can help an organization determine if an open-source solution is correct for them, and we can guide the organization through every phase of the project, from selection through customization, deployment, and maintenance.

Organization/Company/Individual name: John Kenyon/John Kenyon Consulting

Location: City, State/Province, Country:San Francisco, CA, USA
contact email:kenyonsf@yahoo.com
URL:www.johnkenyon.org

Locations served: SF Bay Area in person, Worldwide virtually
Services: Training, FOSS Strategic Planning and Tool Implementation, Process and Technology Consulting.

FOSS specialties: CiviCRM, Drupal, Nonprofit use of FOSS

Comments (please limit to 200 words):

John Kenyon has been working with FOSS for over 10 years, including ebase and CiviCRM. John wrote the online documentation for CiviCRM and has created and delivers the full-day training on CiviCRM. For over fifteen years John has been assisting nonprofits in using technology effectively. He brings this experience and knowledge to helping nonprofits choose and implement appropriate technologies.

Organization/Company/Individual name: Michelle Murrain (MetaCentric Technology Advising)

Location: City, State/Province, Country: Shelburne Falls, MA, US
contact email: michelle@metacentric.org
URL: http://www.metacentric.org
Locations served: Northeast US, Worldwide
Services: support, training
Other (please describe):

strategic planning for open source software implementation, project management, technical writing

FOSS Specialties:

For planning and support – all types of FOSS. For training: Linux (all distributions), OpenOffice.org, Joomla, Moodle, WordPress, Thunderbird, phpbb, MediaWiki

Comments:

I bring my many years of experience in working with and within nonprofit and educational organizations and my deep expertise in a range of technologies to help your organization decide on, implement, migrate to, and sustain, free and open source software in your organization. I do this via planning, project management, training and writing, and evaluation.

I have more than 10 years of nonprofit and educational technology experience, and I am considered a leader in the nonprofit technology field. I have done training, evaluation and planning, and have spent a large part of those years doing development and technology implementations (primarily web and database applications.) I have many years of experience with a wide range of open source software, from operating systems such as Linux, to server-based databases, and desktop applications, such as Firefox and Open Office. I have put implementation aside, and as an independent advisor, I can help you understand what technology implementation entails, and empower you to make good technology choices.

Organization/Company/Individual name: NPower Seattle / Patrick Shaw

Location: City, State/Province, Country: Seattle, WA, United States
contact email:patricks@npowerseattle.org
URL:www.npowerseattle.org
Locations served: Seattle Area (currently). Might expand to broader area in the future
Services: development, installation and configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support, training
FOSS specialties: Plone, and Salesforce, if you consider that in the broad spectrum of open!

Organization/Company/Individual name: ONE/Northwest

Location: City, State/Province, Country: Seattle, WA USA
contact email: info@onenw.org
URL: http://www.onenw.org
Locations served: ONE/Northwest serves nonprofit environmental organizations, mostly in the Pacific Northwest.
Services: development, installation and configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support, training
FOSS specialties: Plone, Wordpress, Sympa

Organization/Company/Individual name: Phase2 Technology

Location: City, State/Province, Country:
contact email: Andre Hood, Director of Business Development, sales@phase2technology.com
URL: www.phase2technology.com
Locations served:
Services : development, installation and configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support, training
FOSS specialties (what software projects): Drupal, CiviCRM, Joomla, InfoGlue
Comments : We provide open source software consulting, customization, integration, and implementation for non-profits as well as custom web application development.

Organization/Company/Individual name: Fred Heutte, Sunlight Data Systems

Location: City, State/Province, Country: Portland, OR
contact email: phred@sunlightdata.com
Phone: 1.503.757-6222
Locations served: everywhere
Services : development, installation and configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support, training
FOSS specialties (what software projects): MySQL, Perl, FreeBSD, Ruby, Rails

Comments :

> Use Perl and MySQL extensively for data projects (list enhancement, analysis, etc). Currently have membership lists for about 600 organizations under management with about 30 million members. Experienced (basic sysadmin level) with FreeBSD since 1997. Learning Ruby and Ruby on
> Rails. Can provide assistance with database design, deployment and tuning, data cleansing and analysis, etc. Extensive experience with all kinds of open source software (starting with InfoZip, the first truly global open source project, in 1989). Have attended open source conferences since 1997 (the O'Reilly OSCON is in my neighborhood in Portland every year :) . Know a considerable amount about open source licensing, software engineering, project

management, etc., and comparative analysis for open source/proprietary deployment decisions.

Organization/Company/Individual name: Linefeed.org

San Francisco, CA, USA / Sao Paulo, SP, Brazil / Buenos Aires, Argentina
info@linefeed.org
http://www.linefeed.org/
We help non-profits located all over the world.
Development, installation/configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support, training.
Any and all open source and free software platforms.
Linefeed.org is an all-volunteer organization of software and networking professionals offering pro-bono work to selected non-profit groups. Our teams include people who speak English, Spanish and Portuguese. Non-profit groups are encouraged to submit projects to us to see if we can assemble a pro-bono team to work on it. We have been doing this kind of work since 2001.

Organization/Company/Individual name: May First/People Link

Location: City, State/Province, Country: New York, NY USA
contact email: info@mayfirst.org
URL: http://mayfirst.org
Locations served: International
Services : development, installation and configuration, hosting, customization
FOSS specialties (what software projects): Drupal, mailman, web apps
Comments :

May First/People Link is a nonprofit, unionized membership organization of progressive activists. By pooling our resources we are strengthening the movement for a better world by building a solid hosting infrastructure for the left.

Organization/Company/Individual name: North-by-South

San Francisco, California, USA and Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil
sf@northxsouth.com
http://www.northxsouth.com/ and http://news.northxsouth.com/
We do work on-site in San Francisco and Sao Paulo and remotely

develop projects all over the world.
Development, installation/configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support, training.
SugarCRM, Mediawiki, SF-Active, Trac, Linux, FreeBSD, many more.

North-by-South is an international network of sysadmins, programmers and designers who provide free software services to clients in North & South America. Our teams include people who speak English, Spanish and Portuguese. We provide special discounts to non-profits but NxS doesn't do pro-bono work (we all do that through linefeed.org).

Organization/Company/Individual name: Openflows Community Technology Lab

Location: City, State/Province, Country: based in New York City with nodes in Toronto and Montreal
contact email: eric@openflows.com
URL: http://openflows.com
Locations served: Our clients are scattered all over North America and Europe.
Services: development, installation and configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support, training

Other (please describe)
Members of Openflows regularly run seminars or present at conferences. Topics covered include Introduction to Free/Open Source Software; mapping with F/OSS tools; Free Software and business models; Free Software for Librarians

FOSS specialties (what software projects):

Openflows has used a number of tools as part of projects for our clients, including but not limited to:
Bricolage
SlashCode
Drupal
Asterisk
phpGroupware
mySQL and PostgreSQL

Comments:

Operating since the year 2000, the Openflows Community Technology Lab (OCTL) is a professional network of developers, consultants and researchers committed to bringing cutting edge open source software solutions to NGOs and progressive community organisations. All our clients are unique, and so are our solutions. We believe that open source software is not just technologically superior, but that free access to information and open collaboration is what the internet was meant to be used for.

We have taken our obligation to give back to the free software community seriously. This usually takes the form of bug reports and patches submitted directly to the maintainers of a given project, as well as coding or sponsorship of new features.

All OCTL workers are members of either the U.S. Freelancers Union, Communications Workers of America Local 1180, or The Canadian Freelance Union (CEP Canada)

Organization/Company/Individual name: pingVision, LLC

Location: City, State/Province, Country: Boulder, CO
contact email: inquiry@pingv.com
URL: http://pingv.com
Locations served: Worldwide
Services: development, installation and configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support, training

FOSS specialties (what software projects):
Drupal, custom development, graphic design, user interface design, video, 3D

Comments :
We're one of the leading Drupal development houses in the world.

Organization/Company/Individual name: rb Technologies

Rubin Bennett
80 Carleton Boulevard
East Montpelier, VT 05651

rbennett@thatitguy.com
http://thatitguy.com

Serving Central Vermont and the greater New England areas
Services : installation and configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support
FOSS specialties (what software projects):
GNU/ Linux and associated utilities
Samba
E-mail/ groupware services (Courier IMAP. Sendmail, Postfix, Scalix,
SpamDigester (spam quarantine/ management system)
Zimbra, etc. etc.)
Squirrelmail (webmail)
PHP
Perl
Apache and web related technologies
Drupal (CMS)

PHP/ Post Nuke (CMS)
dotproject (project management)
phpBB (discussion forum)
Tripwire (IDS)
Aide (IDS/ Intrusion prevention)
Disaster recovery
Network management (Nagios/ OpenNMS)

Comments :

rb Technologies has been installing and supporting networks with a primary focus on Free and Open Source software since 1997. We have a proven track record of providing resilient, thoughtfully designed, scalable networks and systems.

Organization/Company/Individual name: San Francisco Community Colocation Project

San Francisco, California, USA
colo@sfccp.net
http://www.sfccp.net/
Serves San Francisco Bay Area
Installation & configuration, hosting
Specializes in Linux & FreeBSD
SFCCP is a non-profit providing at-cost internet connectivity to other non-profits, community groups and free software projects.

Organization/Company/Individual name: Solution Grove

Location: City, State/Province, Country: Winchester MA
contact email: caroline@solutiongrove.com
URL: www.solutiongrove.com
Locations served: Primarily US
Services : development, installation and configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support, training

FOSS specialties (what software projects): OpenACS, .LRN

Comments :

Knowledge Management for Learning Communities. Specializing in Education, Intranets, Extranets, project management, learning management and training.

South America (Brazil/Argentina)

Organization/Company/Individual name: Linefeed.org

San Francisco, CA, USA / Sao Paulo, SP, Brazil / Buenos Aires, Argentina
info@linefeed.org
http://www.linefeed.org/
We help non-profits located all over the world.
Development, installation/configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support, training.
Any and all open source and free software platforms.
Linefeed.org is an all-volunteer organization of software and networking professionals offering pro-bono work to selected non-profit groups. Our teams include people who speak English, Spanish and Portuguese. Non-profit groups are encouraged to submit projects to us to see if we can assemble a pro-bono team to work on it. We have been doing this kind of work since 2001.

Organization/Company/Individual name: North-by-South

San Francisco, California, USA and Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil
sf@northxsouth.com
http://www.northxsouth.com/ and http://news.northxsouth.com/
We do work on-site in San Francisco and Sao Paulo and remotely develop projects all over the world.
Development, installation/configuration, hosting, customization, integration, support, training.
SugarCRM, Mediawiki, SF-Active, Trac, Linux, FreeBSD, many more.
North-by-South is an international network of sysadmins, programmers and designers who provide free software services to clients in North & South America. Our teams include people who speak English, Spanish and Portuguese. We provide special discounts to non-profits but NxS doesn't do pro-bono work (we all do that through linefeed.org).