What is open source?

It's very simple - the **licence** is what determines whether software is open source

The licence must be approved by the Open Source Initiative (www.opensource.org)

All approved licences meet their Open Source Definition (www.opensource.org/docs/definition.php)

Approved licences >50 and include the GPL, LGPL, MPL and BSD.

And in practical terms?

Open source means:

- The source code is available to the end-user
- The source code can be modified by the end-user
- The licensing conditions promote re-use and wide availability of the software
- The cost of acquisition to the end-user is often minimal

Open source software is not the same as free software but there is a large overlap

``Open source is a development methodology; free software is a social movement.''

The Free software Foundation maintains a Free Software Definition (www.fsf.org)

Do I need a beard and sandals?

Don't I need to be a hacker with a beard to use open source software?

- No. It's a popular myth that open source is only for hackers.

But is open source really in the mainstream?

- Yes. Apache, an open source product, is the most widely used web server.

Many organizations from governments to commercial companies rely on open source software every day.