

The State of Open Source in Higher and Further Education

Stuart Yeates

OSS Watch

© University of Oxford

This document is licensed under

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/uk/>

These are the points to take away from this talk:

- Open source is making progress in education from the **top down**.
- Open source is making progress in education from the **bottom up**.
- A number of key bodies include open source at a **policy level**.

In this talk

The State of
Open Source
in Higher and
Further
Education

Stuart Yeates

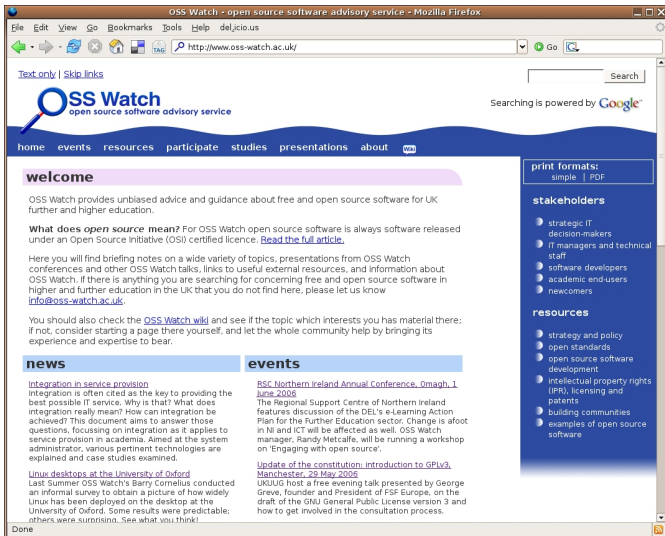
- OSS Watch
- Top-down
- Bottom-up
- Key Partners

OSS Watch: the UK open source software advisory service

OSS Watch provides unbiased advice and guidance on free and open source software for UK higher and further education.

- strategic IT decision-makers
- IT managers and technical staff
- software developers
- academic end-users

OSS Watch is funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) and based within the Research Technologies Service at the University of Oxford.



OSS Watch - open source software advisory service - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View Go Bookmarks Tools Help del_jcio.us

http://www.oss-watch.ac.uk/

Text only | Skip links

OSS Watch
open source software advisory service

Searching is powered by Google

home events resources participate studies presentations about

welcome

OSS Watch provides unbiased advice and guidance about free and open source software for UK further and higher education.

What does open source mean? For OSS Watch open source software is always software released under an Open Source Initiative (OSI) certified licence. [Read the full article.](#)

Here you will find briefing notes on a wide variety of topics, presentations from OSS Watch conferences and other OSS Watch talks, links to useful external resources, and information about OSS Watch. If there is anything you are searching for concerning free and open source software in higher and further education in the UK that you do not find here, please let us know info@oss-watch.ac.uk.

You should also check the [OSS Watch wiki](#) and see if the topic which interests you has material there: if not, consider starting a page there yourself, and let the whole community help by bringing its experience and expertise to bear.

news

[Integration in service provision](#)
Integration is often cited as the key to providing the best possible IT service. Why is that? What does integration really mean? How can integration be achieved? This document aims to answer those questions, focussing on integration as it applies to service provision in academia. Aimed at the system administrator, various pertinent technologies are explained and case studies examined.

[Linux desktops at the University of Oxford](#)
Last Summer OSS Watch's Barry Cornelius conducted an informal survey to obtain a picture of how widely Linux has been deployed on the desktop at the University of Oxford. Some results were predictable; others were surprising. See what you think!

events

[RSC Northern Ireland Annual Conference, Omagh, 1 June 2006](#)
The Regional Support Centre of Northern Ireland features a discussion of the DEL's e-Learning Action Plan for the Further Education sector. Change is afoot in NI and ICT will be affected as well. OSS Watch manager, Randy Metcalfe, will be running a workshop on 'Engaging with open source'.

[Update of the constitution: introduction to GPLv3, Manchester, 29 May 2006](#)
UKUUG host a free evening talk presented by George Greve, founder and President of FSF Europe, on the draft of the GNU General Public License version 3 and how to get involved in the consultation process.

print formats:
simple | PDF

stakeholders

- strategic IT decision-makers
- IT managers and technical staff
- software developers
- academic end-users
- newcomers

resources

- strategy and policy
- open standards
- open source software development
- intellectual property rights (IPR), licensing and patents
- building communities
- examples of open source software

OSS Watch is *not* an advocacy group. There are many other groups across the world who fulfil the advocacy function, e.g.:

- Free Software Foundation
- Open Forum Europe
- SchoolForgeUK
- and many more

OSS Watch's role is to promote awareness and understanding of the legal, social, technical and economic issues that arise when educational institutions engage with free and open source software.

- Website <http://www.oss-watch.ac.uk/>
- Wiki <http://wiki.oss-watch.ac.uk/>
- Briefing notes and guidance materials
- Conferences and workshops
- Consultation
- Research
 - national survey on open source software use in HE and FE
 - JISC study on models for sustainability in open source projects

- Government Open Source Software Trials: final report
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-government/policy_guidance/index.asp
- Open Source Software: Use within UK Government
<http://www.govtalk.gov.uk/policydocs/>
- Becta report - Open Source Software In Schools
http://www.becta.org.uk/corporate/press_out.cfm?id=4681M
- BBC use of open source
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/opensource/>
- OSS Watch <http://www.oss-watch.ac.uk/>

Also linked to the EU regulations on fiscal issues.

Office of Government Commerce software trials: Sept 2003
- October 2004. Key conclusions:

- Open Source software is a viable and credible alternative to proprietary software for infrastructure implementations, and for meeting the requirements of the majority of desktop users; no significant obstacles were noted for the adoption of Open Source in infrastructure developments
- Adoption of Open Source software can generate significant savings in hardware and software costs for infrastructure implementation, and reduce the licensing costs and hardware refresh requirements for desktop implementation

UK Government open source policy (1)

Issued in October 2004:

- UK Government will consider OSS solutions alongside proprietary ones in IT procurements. Contracts will be awarded on a value for money basis.
- UK Government will only use products for interoperability that support open standards and specifications in all future IT developments.
- UK Government will seek to avoid lock-in to proprietary IT products and services.

UK Government open source policy (2)

- UK Government will consider obtaining full rights to bespoke software code or customisations of COTS(Commercial Off The Shelf) software it procures wherever this achieves best value for money.
- Publicly funded Research and Development projects which aim to produce software outputs shall specify a proposed software exploitation route at the start of the project. At the completion of the project, the software shall be exploited either commercially or within an academic community or as OSS.

Issued in September 2005 as an implementation of the UK government policy.

- Advice and guidance must be neutral and unbiased.
- Project funding process must not discriminate between open source and closed source software, unless the purpose of the projects or services specifically requires it.
- Value for money over the expected lifetime of the system must be compared.

JISC open source policy (2): software development

The State of
Open Source
in Higher and
Further
Education

Stuart Yeates

- Projects must maintain an IPR register.
- Ownership of code in joint projects must be established before work begins.
- Source code must be released under an OSI-approved open source licence, unless the bid explicitly argues why this should not be the case and proposes an alternative licence.

JISC open source policy (3): engaging the community

- Projects must state in their bid ... whom they see participating in the project.
- Projects should engage with end users and other parties to encourage and build self-sustaining communities.
- Projects should accept bug reports, patches, translations and feedback from contributors outside the project.

A few institutions and/or units have them

- Contributing code back to projects
- Integration with institutional decision making
- Focus on software engineering good practice, project management and value for money rather than open source

Top-down vs Bottom-up

The State of
Open Source
in Higher and
Further
Education

Stuart Yeates

That was the top-down.
Now for the bottom-up.

Your experiences...

The State of
Open Source
in Higher and
Further
Education

Stuart Yeates

What have your experiences with open source in education been?

The *Traditional* Place of Open Source in Education

Used by pockets of technically-oriented people in predominately large technically-oriented departments and institutions. Physics, mathematics, computer science and *computer centres*.

Often used to provide services across institution:

- Network connectivity
- Email
- Webservers
- File stores

New Niches for Open Source in Education

The State of
Open Source
in Higher and
Further
Education

Stuart Yeates

- Thin Clients
- Browsers
- Office Suites

OSS Watch Survey of Open Source in Higher and Further Education

The State of
Open Source
in Higher and
Further
Education

Stuart Yeates

- Followed up a 2003 survey
- 114 institutions (18%)
- Answered by ICT Director
- All the usual issues with surveys apply
- Full report in production as we speak

- 76% of higher education institutions routinely consider open source
- 77% of further education colleges routinely consider open source
- Most think a hybrid open source / propriety mix is best for them in the long term.

Survey Results - Servers

The State of
Open Source
in Higher and
Further
Education

Stuart Yeates

- more than 40% of HE and FE institutions use open source operating systems, web servers and databases.
- 40% of higher education institutions are using open source mail servers
- 14% of further education colleges are using open source mail servers
- 56% of further education colleges are using the Moodle virtual learning environment (completely new since '03)

Survey Results - Desktops

- more than 20% of HE and FE institutions use OpenOffice.org on the desktop (down slightly since '03)
- more than 50% of HE and FE institutions use Mozilla/Firefox on the desktop (doubled since '03)
- 33% of HE and 16% of FE institutions Thunderbird on the desktop
- In almost all cases there was also use of propriety alternatives.

- Lockin (=)
- Interoperability (=)
- Migration between systems
- Total Cost of Ownership
- Migration between existing systems

- Total Cost of Ownership
- Lockin
- Migration between systems
- Migration between existing systems
- Bug fixes and support

Key Partners

The State of
Open Source
in Higher and
Further
Education

Stuart Yeates

- BECTA
- BBC
- EU

The State of
Open Source
in Higher and
Further
Education

Stuart Yeates

- Working to change the procurement model
- Moodle
- BETT

- Significant producer of educational content
- Very influential in the non-commercial sector
- Moving in the right direction

European Funding for Open Source in Education

The State of
Open Source
in Higher and
Further
Education

Stuart Yeates

- A broad range of projects
- Often little obvious coordination
- Not necessarily driving use in individual institutions

These are the points to take away from this talk:

- Open Source is making progress in education from the **top down**.
- Open Source is making progress in education from the **bottom up**.
- A number of key bodies include open source at a **policy level**.