

OSS Watch: Doing stuff

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OSS Watch



OSS Watch

We dwell in Oxford...



Photo: R. Casero

... hosted by the OUCS



Photo: S. Yeates

What are we?

- JISC free-of-charge advisory service for UK FE and HE on open source software

UK Gov open source policy

- “consider OSS solutions alongside proprietary ones”
- “only use products for interoperability that support open standards and specifications”
- “avoid lock-in to proprietary IT products and services”

UK Gov open source policy

- “the software [produced by publicly funded R&D projects] shall be exploited either commercially or within an academic community or as OSS”

What aren't we?

- Advocacy group
- Developers
- Lawyers (e.g. patents depend on JISC Legal)

History

- Estb. July 2003: 1.2 FTE
 - Randy, Sebastian, Rowan, Stuart
- Dec 2007: 5.2 FTE
 - Ross, Mike, Rowan, Stuart, Ramón, Elena, Gabriel
 - Preparing 3rd round of funding



SS Watch



People

Staff



Randy (2003-2007)



Ross (2007-)

- Line managers
- Emphasis in open communities
- Engage with JISC projects and beyond

Staff



Sebastian (2003-2007)



Mike (2007-)

- Directors
- Strategy

Staff



Rowan (2003-)

- Legal expert
- Licensing, IP consultation
- Knowledge transfer

Staff



Stuart (2003-2008)

- Documents, help desk, friendly face
- Communities (Moodle, RSC, projects)
- Open educational resources

Staff



Elena (2005-)

- Content manager
- Website, QA, LoveIns
- External content with 3rd parties

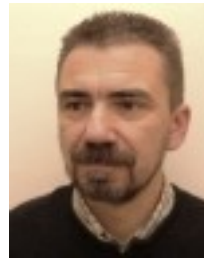
Staff



Ramón (2006-)

- Research
- Studies and national survey 2008
- Community metrics?

Staff



Gabriel (2007-)

- Anthropological study of open communities
- Consultations (community building, sustainability)

Alumni



Barry (2005-2006)

- Wiki, website, stylesheets
- Surveys: Usage of Linux at OU, national survey 2006

Alumni



James (2006-2007)

- Content creation
- Events (conferences, workshops...)

External consultants

- David Tannenbaum (DPhil student)
 - OSS scoping study 2003
- Ellen Helsper (DPhil student)
 - National survey 2006
- Intelligent Content
 - Sustainability conference and study editing



SS Watch



Our output

Publications

- Website

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



The screenshot shows the OSS Watch website homepage. At the top left, there are links for "Text only" and "Skip links". The main header features the OSS Watch logo (a magnifying glass over the letters "OSS") and the text "open source software advisory service". To the right of the logo is a search box with a "Search" button and the text "Searching is powered by Google". Below the header is a navigation menu with links for "news", "publications", "events", "faq", "about", and "contact us". The main content area is divided into several sections: "welcome", "on our site", "are you a ...?", and "featured article". The "welcome" section contains introductory text about the service. The "on our site" section lists various resources. The "are you a ...?" section lists roles such as "newcomer", "academic end-user", "software developer", "IT manager or technical staff", and "strategic IT decision-maker". The "featured article" section highlights a new FAQ. On the right side, there is a "simple print format" button and an "OSS Watch team blog" section with several article titles and an "RSS" link.

Publications

- Briefing notes (~50, QA)



Text only | Skip links

OSS Watch
open source software advisory service

Search

Searching is powered by Google

news publications events faq about contact us

GPL v3 - What's New?

- [1. What was wrong with version 2?](#)
- [2. 'Tivoisation' and Technological Protection Methods](#)
- [3. Unintended incompatibilities](#)
- [4. US-specific legal terminology](#)
- [5. The rise of the web application as a means of realising value from software](#)
- [6. Software Patent Wars](#)
- [7. Conclusion](#)
- [8. Further reading](#)

On 28 June 2007, the Free Software Foundation (FSF) finally published the third version of their GNU General Public License (GPL). Over the previous eighteen months the Foundation had engaged in an unprecedented public consultation exercise, publishing four discussion drafts on the web and gathering opinions via a specially written web application that allowed anyone to flag sections of the drafts with their comments or concerns. In addition to this, the FSF formed four discussion committees designed to represent the wide range of interested parties from enterprise to private users.

This document attempts to describe the major elements of the GPL v3, how it differs from its predecessor and some of the reasons for these changes.

1. What was wrong with version 2?

Over sixteen years separate the GPL v3 and its predecessor. In terms of information technology and software development, they have been extremely eventful years. Despite having been created for a world in which the

simple print format

related information

- The GNU General Public License - An Overview
- The GNU Lesser General Public License - An Overview
- Open Source Development - An Introduction to Ownership and Licensing Issues

publications

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

Publications

- Briefing notes (~50, QA)
- Book reviews
- Conference reports
- Opinion pieces

Online resources

- Team blog (opinions, discussion)
 - <http://involve.jisc.ac.uk/wpmu/oss-watch>



The screenshot shows the OSS Watch team blog website. The header includes the title "OSS Watch team blog" and the subtitle "open source software advisory service". Navigation links for "HOME" and "ABOUT" are visible. A search bar is present on the left. Below the search bar is a "Categories" list with buttons for: Community, Development, Discussion, Legal, Software, Access Management, E-Administration, Information Environment, Standards, Strategy And Policy, and Uncategorised. An "Archives" section shows buttons for "December 2007" and "November 2007". The main content area features two articles:

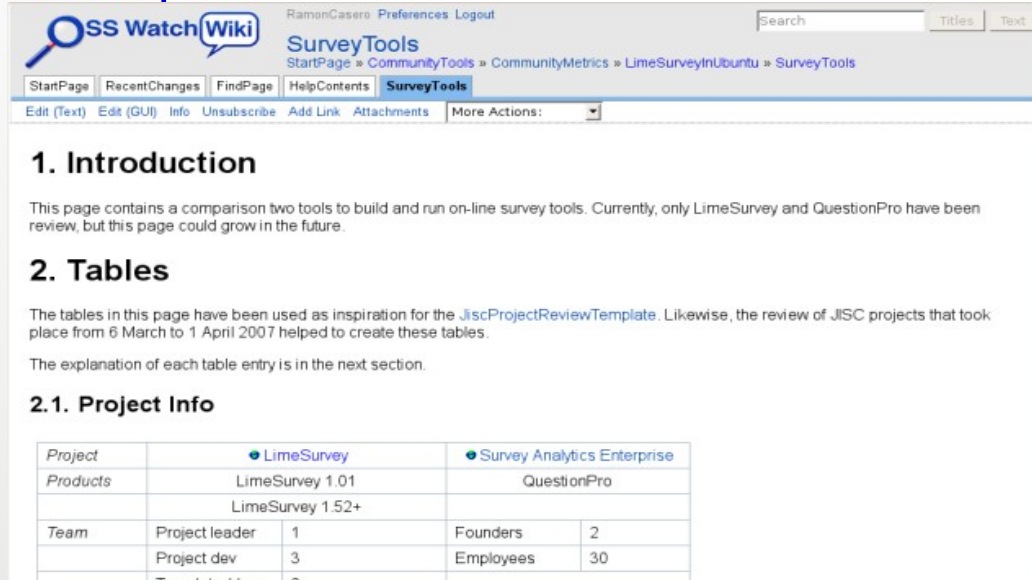
- Recognising Contribution**
Posted by Ross Gardler on December 5th, 2007
An important part of building a viable community is to recognise the contributions of all participants. To this end I'm very pleased to pass on the news that Brian Kelly recently received an award for the Information World Review (IWR) Information Professional of the Year. Brian is someone who has contributed in no small part to my understanding of the potential for social tools in the educational environment.
Congratulations Brian.
Posted in Community | Edit | No Comments »
- Open Standards are not enough to prevent lock in**
Posted by Ross Gardler on November 30th, 2007
Many people claim that open standards are the answer to lock in problems of software. Even our government can be heard to claim open standards are the answer:

There can sometimes be a danger of lock-in with some proprietary providers, and we must avoid developing an over-reliance on individual suppliers. The Government, via the Office of Government Commerce, work hard to avoid that by using open standards to ensure that different suppliers' software can be used interchangeably. (Angela Eagle, The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury during a parliamentary debate)

On the right side, there is a "Recent Posts" section listing several titles, and a "Blogroll" section with links to "OSS Watch Website" and "OSS Watch wiki".

Online resources

- Wiki (non-QA documents)
 - <http://wiki.oss-watch.ac.uk/>



The screenshot shows the OSS Watch Wiki page for SurveyTools. The page has a navigation bar with links for StartPage, RecentChanges, FindPage, HelpContents, and SurveyTools. Below the navigation bar, there is a section titled "1. Introduction" which contains a paragraph about the page's purpose. This is followed by a section titled "2. Tables" which contains a paragraph about the tables used in the page. Below this is a sub-section titled "2.1. Project Info" which contains a table with columns for Project, LimeSurvey, and Survey Analytics Enterprise. The table lists products, team roles, and counts for each project.

Project	LimeSurvey	Survey Analytics Enterprise
Products	LimeSurvey 1.01	QuestionPro
	LimeSurvey 1.52+	
Team	Project leader	Founders
	Project dev	Employees
	Translator/dev	
	1	2
	3	30
	2	

Events 2006

- CETIS e-Learning programme meeting - *Sustainability and Communication*
- UKUUG Linux conference
 - *What are all these distributions and how should I choose one?*
 - *The State of Open Source in Higher and Further Education*
- Open Source VLEs: the next generation - *Open source software and the VLE*
- Oxford ITSS conference - *Engaging with open source*
- IWMW - *What does open source mean for the institutional web manager?*

Events 2006

- RSC Northern Ireland - *Engaging with open source*
- BCS Aberdeen - *Open source is for real, and it's for you*
- Higher Education Academy - *Open source: an introduction*
- RSC Eastern E-Learning Forum - *Open source: an introduction*
- **Open Source and Sustainability**
 - *Open source: an introduction*
 - *The Linux Kernel: evolving into sustainability*
 - *The open source licensing framework*

Events 2007

- Single Source Publishing with Apache Forrest
- Selecting a Linux distro
- Copyright in online resources
- OpenOffice course
- Foundations of Openness, development workshop
- Free and Open Source Software: How and Why?, AURIL/OSS Watch full-day workshop
- Open source for photographers
- Copyright in online resources

Events 2007

- **Community Workshop (National)**
- **Introduction to survey design (with OII)**

Consultations

- ~30 face-to-face
- Building communities
 - Licence strategy
 - Once the project is running
 - From the beginning (better)
- Commercial exploitation

Consultations

- Help JISC projects (150+), Research Councils to comply with open source policy
- Help academics release software as OSS

Studies

Scoping study 2003

- OSS in UK FE and HE survey
- 38% of HE, 9% of FE have OSS policy
- Staff with OSS skills
 - 88% of FE very few members
 - 59% of HE moderate or significant

Scoping study 2003

- Consider OSS for deployment
 - 15% of FE
 - 73% of HE
- Reasons to choose OSS
 - Cost, interoperability
- Lack of licence policy, 59% of institutions

National survey 2006

- Update Scoping study 2003
- Response rate from 6% to 18%
- 25% have OSS policy, 77% consider it
- 13% known to submit patches
- 56% FE use Moodle
- 29 different CMSs

National survey 2006

- No wikis or blogs
- OSS and PS mixed in servers 75%
 - databases 62%
 - web servers 59%
 - operating systems 56%
- In-house support

National survey 2006

- OSS and PS mixed in desktops 42%
 - Linux 11%
 - Mozilla/Firefox 68%
 - Thunderbird 22%

National survey 2006

- Reasons for OSS
 - TCO
 - No lock-ins
 - Interoperability

Automatic MTA survey 2007

- Large number of institutions:
 - 441 FE, 163 HE, 2300 Other
- Outsource email:
 - 46% FE, 26% HE, 48% Other
 - 52% to ac.uk, 52% to commercial

Automatic MTA survey

- Favourite MTAs
 - Exim: 8% FE, 33% HE
 - MS Exchange: 22% FE, 5% HE
 - Sendmail: 3% FE, 6% HE
- Bash and GNU R scripts
 - <http://code.google.com/p/mta-tracker/>

Sustainability study 2007

- Commissioned by the JISC
- Successful open source projects
 - Apache Cocoon (Web dev. framework)
 - Apache-style community of peers
 - APLAWS (CMS for local authorities, LAs)
 - 5 LAs, 2 charities, Sun, Red Hat, Oracle
 - Camden and beyond, user group meetings

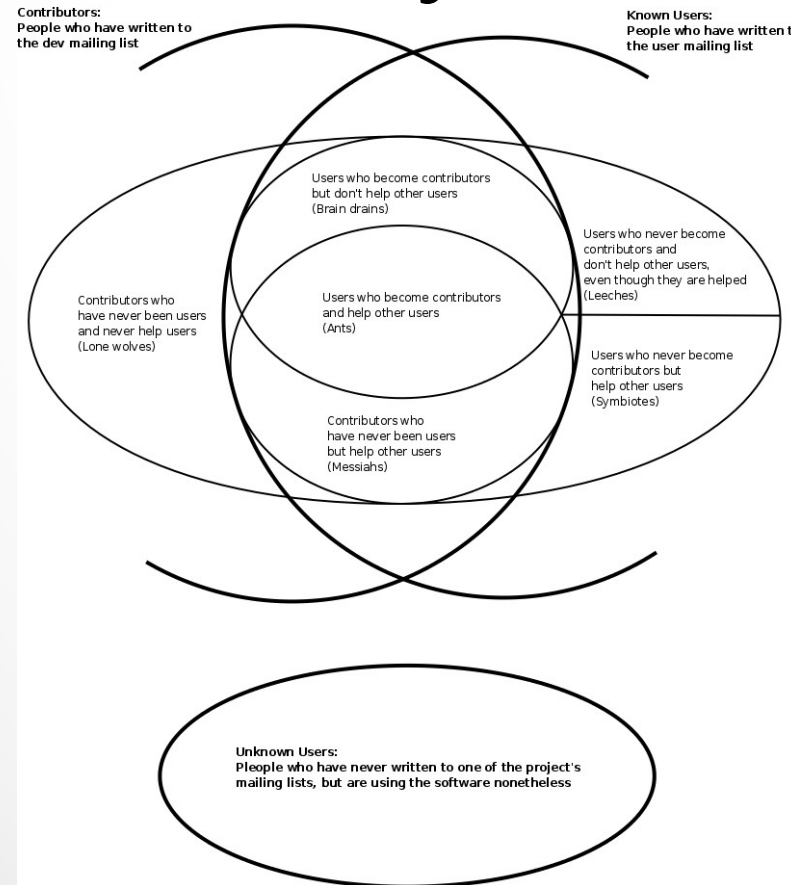
Sustainability study 2007

- Exim, MailScanner
 - One-man project + voluntary contributors
 - Cambridge and Southampton Universities
- Sakai (VLE)
 - 100 paying education & commercial members
 - Close community → Open community

Sustainability study 2007

- Moodle (VLE)
 - One-man project → early release
 - Commercial services → franchising + Trust
 - LAMS, Open University (£5)
- DSpace (digital repository)
 - HP + MIT Alliance → open source, Foundation
 - Community of educational institutions
 - 2 years to release OSS + 1.5 years transition

Community metrics?





SS Watch



That's all folks!