Open Forges and Open App Stores: Joining the dots

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Forges ...
... and App Stores
What are the differences

Forges are focussed around the code and the tools for the developer community, with perhaps a "prosumer" user experience. Its up to projects if they want to build their own more user-centric "shopfront"

App stores are more focussed on the consumer experience with a generic shopfront
App Stores

**Platform-centric**: iOS, Android, Mac App Store, Windows 8...

**Operator-centric**: Vodafone, Orange...

**Plugin directories**: Wordpress, Chrome, Opera...

**Open Web Apps**: Mozilla, OpenAppMkt

**Niche stores**: ITEC, SURFNet, Widgr, internal enterprise stores
Traditional software downloads

CNet
Tucows
Soft32
Open Source Mac
Softpedia

...
Joining Up

What are the issues?

Contracts and licenses
Metadata
Publishing and synchronisation
Intermediaries
Some FOSS licenses are not necessarily compatible with app store terms of service (e.g. GNU Go, VLC...) 

App Store model isn't necessarily a good fit with distributed open communities 

Need to interpret different store contracts, agreements and T&Cs 

http://oss.ly/appstores
Joining Up: Metadata issues

Forge metadata is focused around information related to the management of the project, the code and community (developer-centric)

App store metadata is focused around discovery, use and suitability (user-centric)

Standards?
Joining Up: Publishing

Integrating stores and forges
Multiple target stores
Signing and Packaging
Beyond one-shot publishing - synchronising releases
Joining Up: Intermediaries
Is it worth it?

App stores seem to have a natural maximum size before becoming less useful for discovery.

App stores may be a side-channel rather than the main channel for distribution - doesn't replace having a user-centric website as well as developer-centric forge page.

For many open source projects that are cross-platform, many potential app stores to target.

How important is it to forges?
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