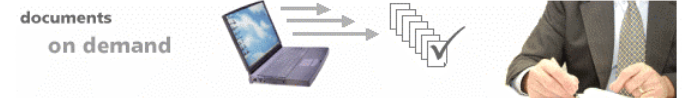


Open Source vs Proprietary Software

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Overview

- What is open source software?
- Brief history
- The GPL
- Myths
- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Success stories
- Our own real world experiences

What is open source?

- Software that's free to use, distribute and modify
- Source code is open for all to see
- Merit based, collaborative development
- Examples include Linux (OS), Apache (web server)
- Not the same thing as “open standards”

A brief history of open source

- Richard Stallman starts the GNU project in 1984
- GNU to be a “free software” alternative to the Unix OS
- Free Software Foundation publishes GPL
- Stallman coined the term copyleft (in contrast to copyright)
- Linus Torvalds wrote Linux kernel in 1991, released under GNU GPL
- Apache Group formed in 1995 to develop Apache HTTP server
- 67% of all web sites run on Apache (October 2004)

The general public license, or GPL

- GPL is the classic “free software” license
 - ensures that software stays free
 - can charge for software
 - but can’t stop others giving it away free
 - this is a “viral” license
- Other variants of “open source” license more commerce-friendly
 - Apache license is a good example
 - can distribute proprietary improvements
 - this is not a “viral” license

Myths

- All open source software is viral...
- It undermines the intellectual property system
- It's just a passing fad
- It's a non-commercial fringe hobbyist thing...
- It's a development free-for-all destined for instability
- There's no support

Strengths

- Many hands make light work
- Many eyes make better code
- Easier to find and block security holes
- Self-help... check the code and fix things instantly
- Less vendor lock-in

Weaknesses

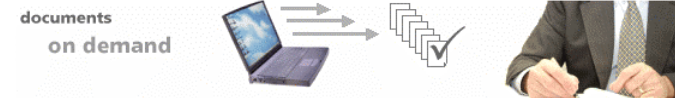
- Switching costs
- Documentation can be thin
- Smaller projects may lose momentum
- Harder to blame/sue someone?

Success stories

- Linux
- Apache Software Foundation
 - Apache web server
 - Tomcat application server
- Mozilla/Firefox
- JBoss
- MySQL

Our own real world experiences

- We develop with...
 - Linux, Tomcat, Ant, Eclipse
- We ship...
 - Tomcat, Xalan, Xerces, Slide
- We host...
 - Xerlin XML editor
- We also ship proprietary software



In summary...

- Open source is here to stay
- Support from big players
- Linux taking over from Unix
- But proprietary systems also here to stay
- Aim to find the best mix...