

When Firms Meet Free Software: How To Avoid Proprietarization?

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Libre Software Meeting

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When Firms Meet Free Software: How To Avoid Proprietarization?

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Schedule

a) When Firms Meet Free Software: How To Avoid Proprietarization? (30 minutes Julien Tayon)

Questions & answers (15 minutes)

b) a practical case. (15 minutes)

c) Practical initiatives:

▫ Entrouvert.org (10 minutes)

▫ Yinternet.org (10 minutes)

▫ Libroscope.org (10 minutes)

d) Conclusion

e) free as a talk

When Firms Meet Free Software: How To Avoid Proprietarization?

Roadmap

New threats to Libre Software (LS) community.

LS is not only a matter of license.

Under-estimated values of LS community.

Why, and how to share our knowledge.

Can we avoid proprietarization of LS initiatives this way?

Introduction

The success of «libre software»(LS)

- *BSD/Linux presence on embedded platforms.
- 2002 GNU/Linux adopted by French and German administrations.
- GNU/Linux, BSD, & other LS projects provided by resellers.

Introduction

Newcoming threats to «libre software»(LS)

▫ United Linux: an interesting initiative (consistent distribution). But non-collaborative way to build standard (as opposed to RFC).

▫ SourceForge: SourceForge platform once a GPL'ed software is now *-at least partially- based* proprietary software.

Introduction

These organizations have respected the license.

The FS community feel betrayed, but cannot point out how.

«Free Software»(FS) is not only a matter of license.

LS is not only a matter of license

**What else is compliant with «Libre Software»,
while not using LS licenses?**

▫ **Hactivism** «*Don't hate the media, become the media*»: indymedia.net. Collaborative, decentralized, **economically independant**, peer-reviewed journalism on the Internet.

▫ **Ynternet.org**: Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) dedicated to North/South cooperation sharing the knowledge relying on LS technologies and methods.

LS is not only a matter of license

Conclusion

More than words (licenses&code)

LS is a question of spirit (values&methods).

LS is not only a matter of license

**Libre Software is not only liberating software,
it is also liberating people.**

Well known LS practices/values.

▫ Sharing the knowledge (GNU manifesto).

▫ Transparency.

▫ Equal opportunity to contribute.

▫ «The culture of gift» (ESR).

▫ Entrepreneurship & creativity.

The hidden wealth in LS

How do we make these values respected ?

- **Equity:** open archived mailing lists & netiquette (RFC 1855) = no hidden information.
- **Culture of gift:** peer reviewing, transparency, and reputation.
- **Entrepreneurship & creativity:** «action prevails».

The hidden wealth in LS

Side effects

- Share the knowledge.
- Trust mechanisms based on reputation.

The hidden wealth in LS

Conclusion

Our values (side effects) are respected: they are associated to methods.

LS is not only a matter of license

Methods are not presented here. This is the subject of Georg Dafermos Conference.

Instead we study the interest of our methods .

The hidden wealth in LS

▫ **Libre Software licenses are a necessary element, but not sufficient to do LS.**

▫ **The use of collaborative methods is another necessary condition.**

Why would a firm (or any other organization) adopt such methods?

The reasons to adopt LS methods

Who might be interested?

Knowledge intensive organizations (Karl E. Sveiby).

- 66% of GNP in OECD countries come from value-added services (firms).
- Most of it is made by very few creative people (SUN).
- Looking for new project-management methods.
- Efficient information/knowledge propagation is strategic.
- The value of trust

The reasons to adopt LS methods

**What can we share?
In which fields is LS community an expert?**

- Creativity Management (CM).
- Collaborative methods.
- Information management.

The reasons to adopt LS methods

Creativity Management (CM).

The tree metaphor:

leaves=information/knowledge

trees=people who treat/create them.

KM=storing and labelling the leaves.

Information = valuable leaves.

Creative people = valuable trees.

CM=making the trees more fertile.

The reasons to adopt LS methods

Creativity Management (CM)

Rather than new tools, we propose a new strategy:

- Organizations don't need additional heavy-weight structures/tools
- Organizations have the men & tools, they need a new methods.

The reasons to adopt LS methods

Information management

Open collaborative networks

- Large amount of information handled.
- Getting rid of noisy information.

Certified informations

- One's reputation relies on accurate information.
- Peer review.

No hidden information

- Reputation.
- Culture of gift.

The reasons to adopt LS methods

Information management

Rather than new tools, we propose a new strategy:

- Organizations have the information & the people to treat it.
- They don't need additional heavy-weight structures/tools.
- They just need new methods.
- See « Open Source Intelligence » (Felix Stadler & Jesse Hirsh on First Monday)

The reasons to adopt LS methods

Participative Strategy

▫ «Action prevails» = equal opportunity.

▫ Peer review.

▫ Trust and reputation.

▫ Involvement, motivation.

The reasons to adopt LS methods

The Value of Trust

- Arthur Andersen: suspected of mis-acting = lost of a third of their customers.
- Enron, Worldcom, Vivendi are losing the trust of the share holders and their monetary value.
- Democracy relies on the trust citizens have in their deputies and institutions (WTO, European commissions, NGO).
- Glasnost, Free Software for E-Democracy by Emmanuel Raviart.

The reasons to adopt LS methods

Our credibility?

(Why would any organization listen to us?)

It comes from project management

- Community is built around projects.
- Well-known products
- Real Quality Assurance (QA) : both users and producers in contact. (Debian QA)

The reasons to adopt LS methods

Our credibility?

It comes from project management

- Reactivity (security patches)
- Large scale projects management/integration (savannah, vchfs 2.0, Linux/BSD distributions)
- Focus on results.

Expected benefits

Organizations

- No heavy investments in software or hardware.
- Earning the trust of the stakeholders.
- Developing involvement through an active community.

Expected benefits

Organizations

- Innovation, reactivity.
- Improving workers' satisfaction and productivity.

Expected benefits

LS Community

- «Sincere» newcomers sharing the same values
 - More likely to share the knowledge.
 - Developing the field of expertise of the community (userfriendliness, beer brewing, finance)
=> new projects will raise.
 - New allies in our battle (such as software patents)
 - Respect of LS values especially licenses.

Expected benefits

Everyone

- LS methods are incompatible with **proprietary methods (making someone dependant from information for example).**
- **Whatever your field is you can use Libre Methods, because it does not only apply to code.**
- **And above all, this is the expression of the culture of gift.**

Avoiding proprietarization.

Spreading our methods.

Ensuring the LS values & methods are understood properly.

Howto?

We have an expertise in sharing knowledge, it should not be difficult to apply our methods to fields other than coding :-)

When Firms Meet Free Software: How To Avoid Proprietarization?

Roadmap

New threats to Libre Software (LS) community.

LS is not only a matter of license.

Underestimated values of LS community (methods).

Why, and how to share our knowledge.

Can we avoid proprietarization by sharing our methods?

Conclusions

LS is not only a matter of license license.

It is also a matter of values

Values are enforced through methods.

Our methods are incompatible with proprietarization

Avoiding proprietarization = sharing our methods not only in software engineering.

Conclusions

And, this is the very moment to promote/adopt LS methods.

Conclusion

I have not spoken of hybridation yet, did I forgot something?

Hybridation=understand the culture of the others and yours to dialog.

Else, you cannot share the knowledge.

This is the topic covered in the practical case.

References

Coming soon on www.libroscope.org

Coming soon...

▫ Questions & answers

▫ Pause

▫ A Practical case: a «Libre methods» cookbook

▫ Conclusion

▫ Pause

▫ Proof by example: newcoming initiatives:

▫ Libroscope

▫ Entrouvert.org

▫ Yinternet.org

▫ Conclusion

HOWTO share the methods?

Let's do a practical case.

A company named Pingot (a car manufacturer) hires a company X, Y, or Z for a mission : they want to improve the efficiency of their accounting department. The webmaster uses linux and pointed Free Software as an innovative solution far away from proprietary methods: they don't want to be heavily dependant of a company.

HOWTO share the methods?

Three companies X, Y, Z visit the office and finds out:

- Every workers has developed their own tools in either vbscript or with business object or else for their all day work.

- Most of the scripts are buggy,

- No one is able to use the code from some one else.

A practical case

Option 1: Free Software has to be GPL

X's diagnostic:

▫ They don't have the right tools (so to say GPL licensed software, that ensure the 4 freedoms of FS) to be able to share the knowledge.

▫ Code production is not centralized and cannot therefore be maintained because no one knows who does what .

A practical case

Option 1: Free Software has to be GPL

X's solution :

It is FS, so it is better than proprietary solution.

(4 freedoms of FS)

▫An intranet using LAMPS (Linux Apache Mysql PHP | Perl | Python SSL) so that code can be centralized and easily maintained, and is OS independant and securely accessed.

▫Rewrite existing code in PHP.

▫They propose technical assistance and formations for the accounting department.

A practical case

Option 1: Free Software has to be GPL

Two month later :

- Those people's job is accounting, they do not wish to learn PHP.
- They cannot improve these tools by themselves
- X's developers have no clue on accounting so they are not efficient.
- Workers always complain to the webmaster it does not work (the way they want).

A practical case

Option 1: Free Software has to be GPL

Results one year later:

The accounting department chooses to replace X's solution with sexy proprietary software they can use.

A practical case

Option 1: Free Software has to be GPL

Explanation

▫ Pingot had no more understanding of their own tools, and relied heavily on X for both infrastructures and services: **X has achieved to do proprietary software with GPLed softwares.**

▫ They were not able to build efficient solution since they did not acquire/**share the knowledge** with Pingot accounting department

A practical case

Option 2: we do (Free) Software

Y's diagnostic :

- Free Software is only about technology, what they need are methods for sharing their knowledge.
- Free Software has good technologies to offer, but no methods.

A practical case

Option 2: we do (Free) Software

Six month later :

- They have less and less jobs,
- Big corporations (IBM, the big 5-4,...) provide Free Software technologies and become their direct concurrents.

One year later

- The company is liquidated.

A practical case

Option 2: we do (Free) Software

Explanation :

Y failed to evaluate Free Software assets correctly. They could have sold one of the Free Software most valuable asset: **methods**.

A practical case

Option 3: we do Libre Software

Z diagnostic :

- They have the knowledge of their tools,
- But they don't have the methods to share it.

A practical case

Option 3: we do Libre Software

Z's solution:

- Highlighting through practical code reviewing the benefit of sharing the code.
- Setting up a light CMS (Content Management System).
- Coaching people for the use of it in full analogic technology (code reviewing, use of tools, coaching...).
- Spot a gifted developer and coach him for animating the dynamics.

A practical case

Option 3: we do Libre Software

Six months later:

- Pingot accountants, with the help of knowledge sharing, can focus on accounting.
- A new release of their tools is out. For compatibility reasons with their suppliers they have to upgrade. Now their code is to be thrown: they are angry, and are studying the use of LAMPS.

A practical case

Option 3: we do Libre Software

Explanation:

They tasted Libre Software methods of sharing, they are now ready to use and adopt it properly.

At first LAMPS solution was GPL licensed softwares, now it is «Libre Software».

Coming soon...

▫Pause

▫Proof by example: newcoming initiatives:

▫ Libroscope

▫ Entrouvert.org

▫ Yinternet.org

▫Conclusion

Proof by example

«La propagande par le fait»

Newcoming initiatives:

- Entrouvert.org
 - Libroscope.org
 - Yinternet.org
- Conclusion

Libroscope.org

Structure

Goals

Methods

Contents

Conclusion

Call for contributions

Libroscope.org

Structure :

- 1901 law association
- SPIP CMS => libroscope.org
- Collaborative ring of writers (3 friends at first).

Libroscope.org

Structure :

- Collaborative project to identify and share experiences (practical cases).
- Developing reflexion on Free Methods.
- Sharing references to understand one another.
- Presenting the interest of Free Methods through the actuality.

Libroscope.org

Our values :

- Collaborative methods.
- Practical cases.
- Plurality of contents
- Applying to ourselves the methods we promote.
- References.

Libroscope.org

Collaborative methods

- Make them test free methods.
- We say what we do, we do what we say, and peer review/transparency will ensure it (we apply the methods to ourself).

Libroscope.org

Practical case

- This is an improved business school method for teaching.
- They can choose their methods (practical cases do not rely on one best way)
- We can seduce with success stories
- We can promote LS projects.

Libroscope.org

The plurality of contents.

- Ex: *BSD and Linux equally representative of LS values but opposed in organizational forms.
- We learn more from our mistakes than our success (F. Nietzsche)

Libroscope.org

The plurality of contents.

- Rules and values will emerge more easily from several projects than one.
- We don't want them to focus on cookbooks, but understand HOWTO do it.

Libroscope.org

The plurality of contents.

There is no such thing as *one best way*,
since *there is more than one way to do it*,
so we give them the freedom
to choose the choice of a *GNU generation* :)

Libroscope.org

Samples

Reflexions :

Is the Linux project an innovative form of organization?

Libroscope.org

Samples

- Yinternet.org Free methods apply to fair trade and lasting development (in 2 weeks)
- SPIP The success of an easy to use CMS (in 1 month)
- Tuxfamily.org the other side of shared infrastructure (in 1 month).

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The future

- English speaking articles.
- LS experiences of success/failures in organization.
- Increased collaboration with other initiatives.

Proof by example conclusion

Initiatives :

- Today they are already new initiatives coming.
- There is a demand for Libre Software methods (IEEE, tools *à la savannah*...)
- This is the very moment for contributing to a Free Method initiative.

Conclusions

Proprietarization is a matter of methods

«*Don't beat the bad drum*» : license is not the magic bullet against proprietary software.

Our methods might not be the magic bullet either, but the first step to the license.

«*Don't beat the bad drum (bis)*» : United Linux VS United Libre Software because values shared in Open Source and Free Software communities are the same.

Conclusions

Peopleware (Tony De Marco)

- Companies want to have lasting technologies for sale or use.
- New Technologies get outdated while men stay.
- > Strong interest in adopting Free Software collaborative methods.

Conclusions

La morale de la morale

The Free Software community and companies have converging interest today (IP, DMCA...).

This is the very moment to promote/adopt Free Software methods.

Libre Software may prove helpful for:

- fair trades initiatives
- N/S cooperation
- Transparency (democracy, companies...).

Methods is like software, so to say it is like sex, it' s better ... when it is free and fun.

References

Coming soon on www.libroscope.org