

OSS Watch activity

August 08 – December 09

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What we do

- National innovation centre supporting open source in HE and FE
- JISC-funded since 2003 (4th period of funding)
- We do: provide advice free of charge to HE and FE on procurement, engagement, development, legal aspects of open source
- We don't do: advocacy, lawyer-like legal advice, teach programming, develop software for others, recommend specific software

How we do it

- Content creation and management
- Liaison and collaboration
- Studies
- Conferences and events
- Business and community engagement
- Project registry
- Project support

Content creation and management

- Raise awareness of open source software and open development by publishing high quality educational resources
- Monthly briefing notes
- Quarterly externally commissioned pieces
- Yearly summary documents
- All docs reviewed every 6 months through quality assured publication process
- Monthly newsletters, weekly blogposts, wiki articles

Content creation and management

- 15 briefing notes on topics related to:
 - Open development
 - Governance models
 - Licensing and IPR management
 - Business models and exploitation routes
 - Sustainability models
 - Evaluating and procuring open source

Content creation and management

- 5 publications of commissioned content from specialist authors
 - Sustainability case studies (e.g. TexGen)
 - Reviews of open source awareness within JISC communities (e.g. VRE program report)
 - Interviews with software foundations (ASF, FSF)
- 3 summary documents on open development, licensing and IPR management, open source procurement
- 4 newsletters, 71 blogposts, wiki articles

Liaison and collaboration

- Align OSS Watch activities with complementary work in other educational support services & funding bodies
- Assisted Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council with defining their approach to open source
- Worked with Teaching Open Source community to create mentoring program for students and teachers
- 22 days consultancy in EC-funded project to embed open development practices in education
- Working to embed existing content in a textbook on production and management of open source software

Studies

- Determine the state of open source awareness and development to target OSS Watch activity and inform the sector of future opportunities
- Bi-annual national survey of open source use in UK HE and FE
- Latest completed in 2008; next due 2010

Conferences and events

- Organized 5 workshops on topics related to open development, business and sustainability, open source procurement
- Well attended 30-50 participants each
- 4 'expert workshops ' (to inform our strategy): open and agile development, business and community engagement, profiling open source communities, procuring open source

Conferences and events

- Provided speakers for 25 third-party open source events
- Organizing 1st edition of a bi-annual UK-based open source conference in summer 2010
- aim: explore open source opportunities and challenges identified by OSS Watch stakeholders

Business and community engagement

- Create links between business communities and open development work in UK education
- Support academic-based open source projects with consultations on BCE issues
- 10 f2f project consultations + many more phone and email enquiries

Business and community engagement

- Initiated engagement with related services (e.g. JISC Legal, CETIS, TechDis, Isis Innovation)
- Assisted education-focused organizations in their engagement with open source development or exploitation (e.g. OU Research Services)
- Facilitated key engagement of academic project at Bolton U with Apache Software Foundation developer communities

Project registry

- Develop and manage an open source RDF/XML project registry tool to increase community building within UK academic sector
- Early development attracted contributions from 3rd part in Australia
- Over 500 project records, mostly collected from JISC projects website
- Recently recruited staff to develop tool and build community

Project support

- Research and showcase open development best practices within educational R&D projects
- Conducted 19 f2f consultations on resource requirements for sustainable open source software - some at bid writing stage
- Many more via phone and email

Project support

- Assist small set of projects willing to develop software using viable sustainability models
- Identified and provided support to several 'strategic projects' including:
 - OpenCast Matterhorn: Mellon-funded international podcasting initiative – helped identify and build open governance model
 - Wookie: widget engine based on W3C specification based at Bolton University – accepted in Apache Software Foundation Incubator

Sustainability

- Develop and implement an OSS Watch building plan, with the intention to make the service fully sustainable
- Completed 1st phase of business modelling consultation; 2nd phase ongoing
- Conducted external review of OSS Watch market positioning
- Issued tender for replacing CMS with tool allowing better engagement with community

Project management

- Submitted 2 six-monthly reports to JISC
- Selected new Advisory Committee with reps from main stakeholder groups
- Ongoing staff and project management
 - Weekly team meetings
 - Monthly individual meetings

Overall

- We are doing very well in all these areas, considering the resources allocated
- We are making an impact: academic sector is changing its attitude to open development
- Educational market is ripe for opportunities we can seize and develop in many directions
- Which of these should be the main focus for the next two years?