

OSS Watch “reinvented”?

The world has changed, is it time
for OSS Watch to change?

Key Activities

- 2003 - 2006
 - “You need a policy with respect to open source”
- 2006 - 2008
 - “Open source is software released under an OSI approved licence”
- 2008 - 2010
 - “Sustainable open source is openly developed software”

What are the key activities for
2010-2012?

New funding proposal needed by
March 2010

Evaluation of current activities

Legal advice

- Largely routine enquiries
- We are not lawyers
 - OSS Watch advice often overruled by lawyers
 - Legal departments often ignore non legal issues
 - E.g. Oxford recommends CUDDL (incompatible with most other licences)
- Hand off to JISC Advance?
 - Real legal advice?
 - Need to understand and communicate licence impact on community
 - can be separated from legal issues

Procurement Support

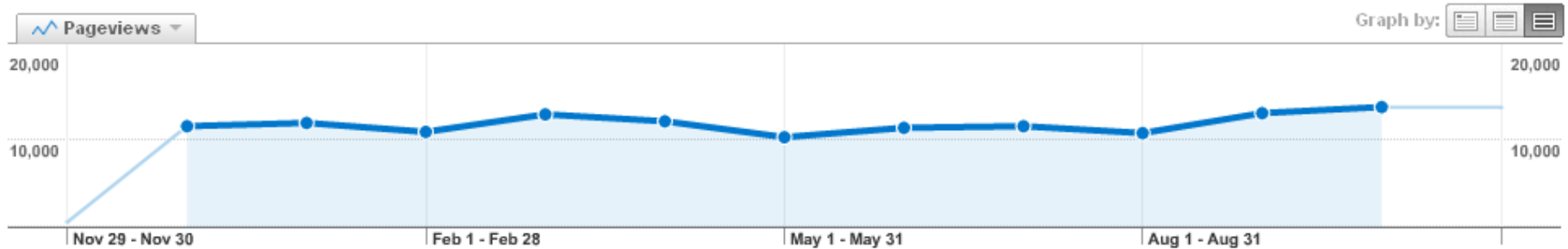
- Policy in place in > 55% of institutions
- Open source only considered equally alongside closed source in 15%
- Why no level playing field?
 - Lack of professional suppliers? Lack of reach?
 - Escalate to Business Innovation and Skills?
 - Niche market?
 - Shared services?

Materials Production

- Web

- 8,000 – 10,000 visits, 12,000 – 14,000 unique views per month

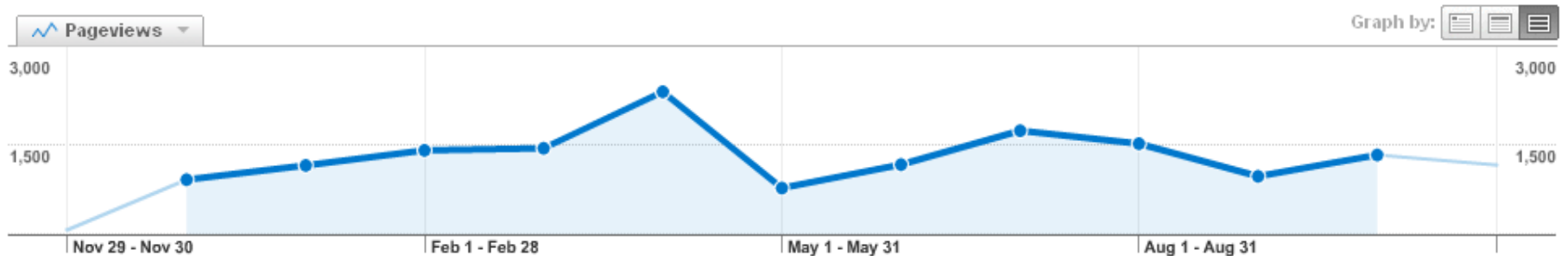
Nov 29, 2008 - Nov 29, 2009



- Blog

- 800-1000 visits, 1,100 – 1300 unique page views per month

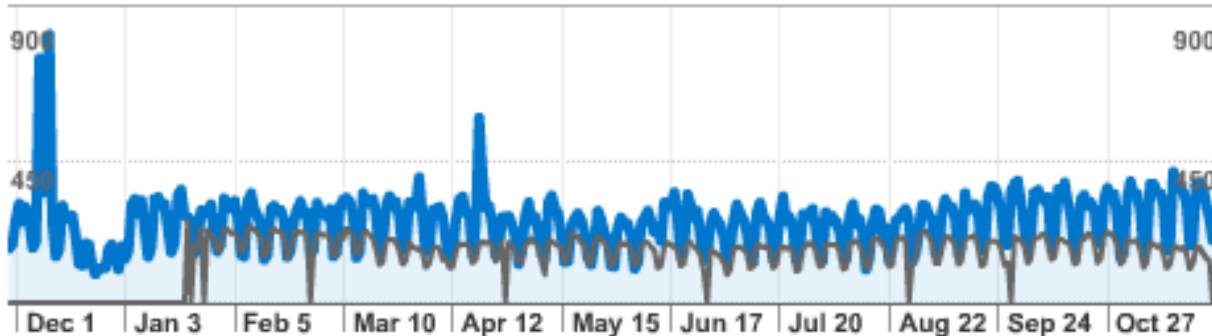
Nov 29, 2008 - Nov 29, 2009



Comparison with Similar sites

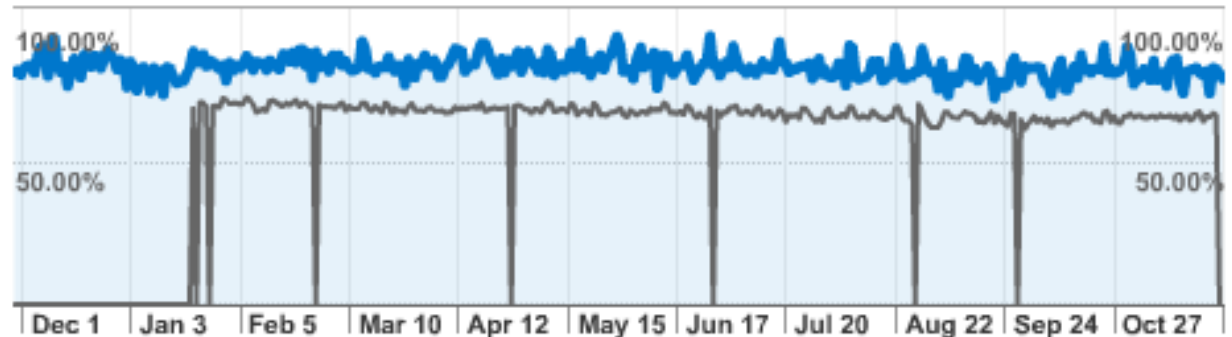
The Good

Comparing: Open Source sites of similar size [?](#) [Open category list](#)



94,001 Visits

Benchmark: 53,264 (+76.48%)

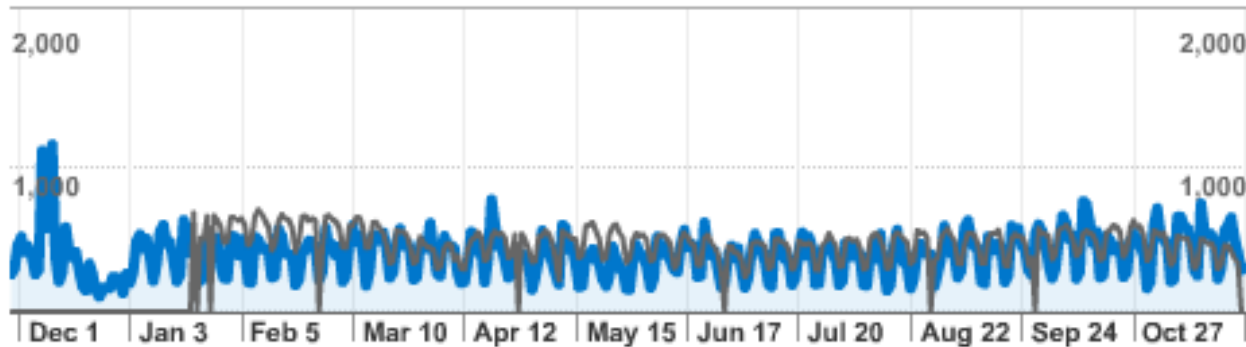


83.57% New Visits

Benchmark: 67.81% (+23.24%)

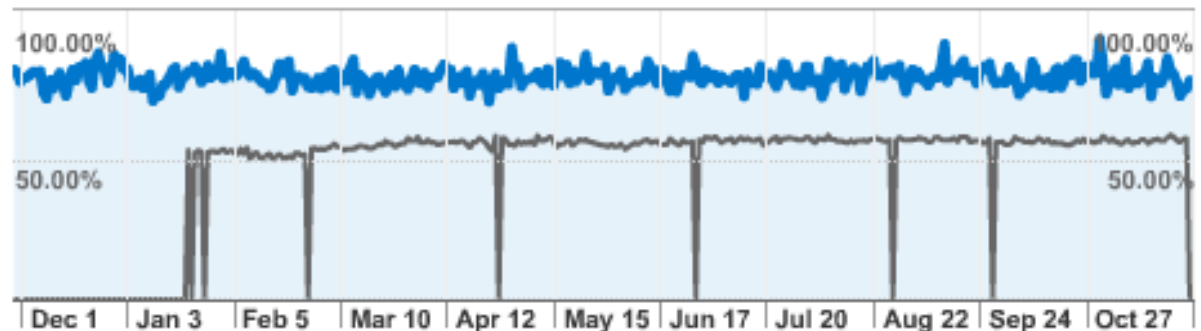
Comparison with similar sites

The Bad



144,190 Pageviews

Benchmark: 146,265 (-1.42%)



80.21% Bounce Rate

Benchmark: 56.53% (+41.89%)

Consultations

- Legal
 - Unable to say “use X” (we’re not lawyers)
 - Leads to frustration
 - IP management in projects often ineffective despite our advice
- Sustainability
 - Presenting theory not helping practice
 - Community development usually avoided
- < 5% proposals consult with OSS Watch

Sustainability of Software

- Strategic projects (mentoring) very successful, for example:
 - Apache Wookie (Incubating)
 - opening innovation
 - Opencast Matterhorn (13 international inst.)
 - Mellon Foundation funding
 - Study Bar (Southampton)
 - new centre of expertise?
 - Maavis (Sheffield)
 - technology transfer funding
 - Shuffl (Oxford)
 - Rapid innovation project with third party contributions
- Lack of internal resources/skills
 - Attempting to create community leaders

Community Development

- Lack of community leadership
 - Academic leadership does not mean community leadership
- Strategic projects are producing leaders
 - But not fast enough
- Need to demonstrate academic benefits for community leader role
 - Case studies working well
 - need more

Open Innovation

A focus for the sector

Idea

Implementation

Operation

Barriers to Innovation

Barriers to Idea Generation

- Starting point
 - Finding a point to start from
 - Avoiding “not invented here”
 - Software production secondary to research interests
- Sharing expertise
 - Connecting expertise
 - Avoiding “it’s my research”

Barriers to Internal Implementation

- Building on previous software outputs
 - Often poorly managed
 - Often invisible
 - Often unclear IP position
- Cost analysis
 - Often cheaper to hack a solution to the research problem than to build a real solution on others work
 - Prototyping rather than implementation

Barriers to External Implementation

- All of the above, plus
- Prototypes not build on one another
 - No central expertise
 - No point of contact for all work
- Lack of openness in projects
 - Limited transparency of knowledge
 - Limited transparency of skills
 - Significant coordination overhead

Barriers to Operation

- Knowledge transfer models are patent led
 - e.g. ISIS in Oxford routinely recommend the re-writing of open source components
- Academics often uninterested in exploitation
- Mistrust of commercial engagement in research activities

Opportunities we see

Opportunities for OSS Watch: Analysis

- What's hot in research?
- What problems are relevant in the commercial sector?
- Valuable software outputs in the sector
 - Measured in terms of Sustainability Maturity Model

Opportunities for OSS Watch: Incubation

- Incubation
 - Communities
 - Common problems
 - Complimentary Expertise
 - Research Outputs
 - Hand outputs off to most appropriate home
- Open development mentoring
 - Project leaders
 - Students

Opportunities for OSS Watch: Exploitation

- Clearing house for software outputs
- Independent management of software outputs
- Collaboration space
- Legal umbrella

Open Questions

Widening the questions to narrow
the opportunities

Open Questions: Focus

- Maintain a software focus?
 - What about open content?
- Maintain a broad focus?
 - Specialise in a domain area?
- Maintain legal advisory?
 - Specialise in community?
- Theoretical focus or practical support?
 - Are materials important?

Open Questions: Implementation

- More hands on support?
 - Mentoring
 - Software development
- Engage students?
 - Teaching FOSS development models
 - Students in research projects
- Engage with third party projects?
 - Mentoring upstream contributions

Open questions: A Foundation?

- For incubation?
 - Move on to a new home outside the sector
 - Incubating what?
 - Communities
 - Software
 - Business ideas
- As an independent home?
 - Shared services support
 - Commercial collaboration

Open Questions: ???????

**What should the key activities
be for 2010-2012?**

Answering the questions

- Round table discussion until lunch (12:30)
- 1:30 – 2:00 3 groups discussing issues of interest to group
- 2:00 – 2:30 Feedback and round table
- 2:30 – 2:45 Individual top priorities
- 2:45 – 2:55 AOB
- 2:55 – 3:00 Date of next meeting (telecon)
 - Suggest last week of Feb
- 3:00 - ????? Beer, coffee and food
 - for those with time to spare

Group 1

- John Norman
- Jo Shields
- Paul Walk
- Scott Wilson

Group 2

- Lou Burnard
- Matthew Dovey
- David Flanders

Group 3

- Stormy Peters
- James Governor
- Steve Loughran