



FLOSSWorld

Final activity report

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Project Information

Title: Free/Libre/Open Source Software: Worldwide Impact Study

Acronym: FLOSSWorld

Project type: EU FP6 SSA

Contract no: INFSO-IST-015722

Start date: May 1, 2005

Duration: 24 months, extended to 26 months

Project Officer: Michel Lacroix, DG INFSO, Unit D3

Consisting of :

- 1 UM NL: University of Maastricht – MERIT/Infonomics)**
- 2 OII UK: University of Oxford – Oxford Internet Institute)**
- 3 FUND ES: Government of Extremadura –FUNDECYT**
- 4 URJC ES: Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid**
- 5 USUA Argentina: USUARIA**
- 6 FVL Argentina: Fundacion via libre**
- 7 ISOCBG Bulgaria: Internet Society Bulgaria**
- 8 CERNET China: China Education Research Network**
- 9 CS2S China: China Standard Software Co., Ltd**
- 10 CDAC India: Centre for Development of Advanced Computing**
- 11 MIMOS Malaysia: MIMOS Bhd**
- 12 CSIR South Africa: Council for Scientific and Industrial Research**
- 13 UWC South Africa: University of the Western Cape**
- 14 MI2 Croatia: Multimedia Institute MI2**
- 15 CARNET Croatia: Croatian Academic Research Network**
- 16 ITI Brazil: ITI**
- 17 CAMP Brazil: University of Campinas**

1. Project execution

The EU is already a leader in the usage and development of Free/Libre/Open Source Software, and the FP5 FLOSS and FP6 FLOSSPOLs project made it also a leader in research in this field. The FLOSSWORLD project aims to maintain this lead in a competitive global environment, expanding previous European experience to regions outside Europe together with consortium partners from third countries. The project aimed to:

1. study FLOSS as a skills development environment
2. understanding regional differences in FLOSS software development
3. survey the government use of FLOSS in participating third countries.

While all areas have a focus on studying the impact of policy and providing policy recommendations, they are designed to measurably further the understanding of FLOSS by addressing specific, critical topics of relevance to the effective functioning of e-government and emerging networked organizations.

The FLOSSWORLD project advances the state of knowledge on these issues by providing the first source of empirical data in the areas addressed.

The main objectives of the project were:

1. to disseminate information on the project;
2. organise 10 regional and 2 international workshop;
3. initiate international collaboration efforts
4. plan execute surveys of developers, employers, HEIs, governments;
5. disseminate results of the project

All these objectives were successfully met.

Summary of project activities and outcomes

In recent years, libre (free, FLOSS) software has developed as a novel form of collaborative production. Since its origin as a collaboration between individual volunteers, it has seen tremendous success, both in terms of the commercial and technical strengths of the produced software itself, but also as a model of organisation and development: FLOSS is arguably one of the best examples of open, collaborative, internationally distributed production and development that exists today. This international aspect has resulted in tremendous interest in the domain of FLOSS from around the world, from all communities: government, policy, business, academic research. The EU, thanks in part to its support for projects such as FLOSS and FLOSSPOLs, is currently the world leader in FLOSS development and proactive policies, as well as research on the subject of FLOSS. There is thus a great potential in enhancing existing levels of international cooperation on this topic.

This proposed project primarily aims to strengthen Europe's participation in international research in FLOSS and open standards, and to exploit research and policy complementarities providing mutual benefits for such international cooperation. It proposes to meet this aim by building a global constituency of policy-makers and researchers. By the end of the project, it is expected that Europe's leading role in research in the area of FLOSS will be enhanced, and strongly embedded in a global network of researchers and policy makers. It is expected that the project will greatly enhance the level of global awareness related to FLOSS development and industry, human capacity building, standards and interoperability and e-government issues in the geographical regions represented by the consortium partners. The project will also result in a stronger, sustainable research community in these regions.

However, a general risk with broad constituency-building exercises is that they tend to lose momentum very rapidly after initial workshops and meetings – unless specific actions are taken to sustain a focus. FLOSSWorld proposed to do this through the execution of three global empirical studies of proven relevance to policy makers and researchers in Europe and developing countries:

1. Human capacity building: investigating FLOSS communities as informal skills development environments, with economic value for employment generation
2. Software development: what are the regional and international differences – technical, organisational, business – between FLOSS projects across countries?
3. e-Government policy: what policies and behaviour do governments around the world adopt towards FLOSS, open standards and interoperability?

These studies were empirical in nature and survey-based, and (2) also included technical analysis of software produced by regional FLOSS projects. Studies built upon the methodology and experience – as well as the data set – of the skills-development and employer surveys and e-government/FLOSS survey in the on-going FLOSSPOLS project, its predecessor the FLOSS project, and especially for (2) the more technical CALIBRE project. The FLOSSPOLS project was ranked highest in its category by evaluators in the 1st IST Call, and the CALIBRE project was given the highest absolute score of the entire 2nd IST Call of the EU's FP6 research funding programme, demonstrating the importance of these issues. The skills-development and e-government surveys of FLOSSPOLS (focussed on the EU15 countries) are the first and largest of their kind in the world, and are expected to deliver results by the end of 2004; the quantitative measurement studies of FLOSS projects in CALIBRE and FLOSS demonstrate the unique proven expertise of MERIT (UM) and URJC, the two CALIBRE partners present in the consortium for FLOSSWorld.

FLOSSWorld addressed the problem of constituency building as “building by doing” – through workshops and discussion on the technological, socio-economic and policy issues related to FLOSS with a specific focus on the implementation and results of the two studies. This dialogue was at global and regional levels. Focusing on the implementation of the studies led to an awareness of and exchange of information on many of the socio-economic and policy issues related to FLOSS, human capacity building and economic growth, international FLOSS development and standards/interoperability. Focusing on the results of the studies led to increased international dialogue on these issues and encourage further research and policy development with the awareness of the international context and knowledge provided by the studies.

The project performed the following tasks (details are in the work package descriptions):

1. quantify the degree and impact of skills development within FLOSS developer communities, based on a survey of developers, higher education institutes and industry (HR managers at employers) to quantify on the economic benefits of skills developed.
2. study inter-regional differences in FLOSS development by surveying local developers, examining the organisation and links to industry of local projects, and using analytical software metrics tools to identify technical & structural differences between projects from various regions.
3. survey attitudes towards and usage of FLOSS and open standards/interoperability in public authorities at various levels in each target region.
4. conduct a series of workshops and working group activities in order to build an international research and policy development constituency: this will involve regional and international workshops and focused working groups from the represented target regions. A first phase focuses on actual collaboration by implementing tasks 1 to 3, the second phase focuses on analysis and building concrete future collaborations. Global dissemination is part of this task.

Dissemination

A major objective of FLOSSWORLD is dissemination of information about the project and publicising results of the project. This has been achieved through the participation of consortium members as invited speakers in several international conferences, as well as extensive coverage in specialised and mainstream press, as detailed in the next section.

Project website:

www.flossworld.org

Consortium structure

Partic. Role*	Partic. No.	Participant name	Participant short name	Country	Month enter project**	Month exit project**
CO	1	University of Maastricht – MERIT/Infonomics)	UM / MERIT	NL	1	26
CR	2	University of Oxford – Oxford Internet Institute)	OII	UK	1	26
CR	3	Government of Extremadura – FUNDECYT	FUND	ES	1	26
CR	4	Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid	URJC	ES	1	26
CR	5	USUARIA	USUA	Argentina	1	26
CR	6	Fundacion via libre	FVL	Argentina	1	26
CR	7	Internet Society Bulgaria	ISOCBG	Bulgaria	1	26
CR	8	China Education Research Network / Tsinghua University	CERNET	China	1	26
CR	9	China Standard Software Co., Ltd	CS2C	China	1	26
CR	10	Centre for Development of Advanced Computing	CDAC	India	1	26
CR	11	MIMOS Bhd	MIMOS	Malaysia	1	26
CR	12	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research	CSIR	South Africa	1	26
CR	13	University of the Western Cape	UWC	South Africa	1	26
CR	14	Multimedia Institute MI2	MI2	Croatia	1	26
CR	15	Croatian Academic Research Network	CARNET	Croatia	1	26
CR	16	Instituto Nacional de Tecnologia da Informacao	ITI	Brazil	1	26
CR	17	University of Campinas	CAMP	Brazil	1	26

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2. Dissemination and use

Dissemination of knowledge

Overview Table

Planned / Actual dates	Type	Audience	Regions addressed	Size of audience	Partner involved
April 20, 2005	Conference presentation	Public sector, policy makers	Africa	100	MERIT
April 29, 2005	Conference presentation	Researchers	Taiwan	50	MERIT
June 1, 2005	Conference presentation	General	Latin America	1500	MERIT
Sep 26, 2005	Seminar presentation	Policy makers	Latin America, Asia, Africa	50	MERIT
Nov 8, 2005	Conference presentation	Business, researchers	China	200	MERIT
Nov 10, 2005	Conference presentation	Researchers, students, practitioners	Taiwan	300	MERIT
Nov 16, 2005	Conference presentation	Policy makers, researchers	Global	200	MERIT
Nov 24-26, 2005	Workshop	*	Latin America	30	USUA, FVL, FUND, ITI, CAMP
Dec 16-17, 2005	Workshop	*	East Asia	30	CERNET, CS2C, MERIT
Jan 12-13, 2005	Workshop	*	South, Southeast, West Asia	30	CDAC, MERIT
Feb 26-28	Workshop	*	Africa	50	CSIR, UWC, FUND, MERIT
Feb 26-28	Conference presentation	Policy makers, businesses, community	Africa	300	MERIT
Feb 26-28	Conference presentation	Policy makers, businesses, community	Africa	300	CSIR
Mar 4, 2006	Conference presentation	Researchers	Croatia		CARNET
Mar 7, 2006	Conference presentation	Policy makers, businesses	Malaysia, East Asia	500	MERIT
Mar 6-8, 2006	Conference	Policy makers, businesses	Malaysia, East Asia	500	MIMOS
Mar 24-26, 2006	Workshop	*	Southeast Europe	30	ISOCBG, MI2, CARNET, FUND
April 21, 2006	Conference presentation	Researchers, practitioners	Croatia		FUND
April 26-27	Workshop	*	Global	70	All partners
July 10, 2006	Workshop	General, Public, businesses	Europe, India, LatAm,	100	MERIT

Planned / Actual dates	Type	Audience	Regions addressed	Size of audience	Partner involved
		researchers			
October 24, 2006	Workshop	Policy makers, academics, businesses, community	China,	50	CERNET CS2C, MERIT
Jan 10 2007	Workshop	Policy makers, community, businesses, researchers	India,	30	CDAC, MERIT
Apr 17, 2007	Conference presentation	Policy makers	China,	300	MERIT
Apr 19, 2007	Conference, conf pres	Academics, community, business	Africa	200	UWC, MERIT, CSIR
May 9-11, 2007	Workshop	Policy makers, community, businesses, researchers	Global	70	All partners
Aug 24, 2007	Conference presentation	Policy makers, Public Sector, researchers, business	Africa, global,	500	MERIT
Sep 17, 2007	Conference presentation	Policy makers	Global	200	MERIT

Descriptions for dissemination activities: press and publicity:

Press coverage of launch activities

Press release on conference sent to over 30 major publications from the general and IT trade press. Articles were carried in over 50 publications including *eWeek* and the VNUNet newswire service. Through newswire syndication they were reproduced in several IT publications worldwide, with a lower-bound estimate of readership of 100000. Some of these articles in various languages are listed on the FLOSSWORLD website publicity page.

Mainstream press coverage included an article (May 4, 2005) in the *Malaysia Star*, a leading Malaysian newspaper; an article (June 29, 2005) in the *Indian Express*, one of India's leading daily newspapers, quoting CDAC FLOSSWorld partner M Sasikumar and describing FLOSSWorld, as well as an interview on with Rishab Ghosh in *La Nacion*, a leading Argentine newspaper in June 2005.

The initial publicity led to the number of results on Google for “FLOSSWorld” going from about 50 to over 50 000 within the first 2 months of the project. This public awareness has been sustained, as without further publicity the Google count remains over 32000 today.

Descriptions for dissemination activities: conference presentations:

Conference presentations describe the FLOSSWorld project or disseminate information about the project hypotheses and goals (e.g. understanding skills development among FLOSS developers).

Presentation by Luis Casas Luengo (FUND) at “Dani otvorenih racunarskih sustava i Hrvatska konvencija korisnika Linuxa DORS/CLUC 2006”, (Days of Open Systems and convention of Croatian Linux users), April 19-21, 2006.

7th Asia Open Source Symposium, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, March 6-8, 2006, organised by MIMOS and including FLOSSWorld publicity and distribution of questionnaires.

“Sustaining a software ecosystem with FLOSS: skills and local economic growth”

Presented by Rishab Ghosh, 7th Asia Open Source Symposium, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, March 7, 2006

Presentation by Igor Velimirovic (CARNet) at the "Open...as a library" conference in Croatia, March 4, 2006.

"The Economics of Free Software - and why it matters for developing countries",

Presented by Rishab Ghosh, World Summit on Information Society, UNU-INTECH Parallel Event, Tunis, November 16, 2005

"Free/Libre/Open Source Software skills and employment",

Presented by Rishab Ghosh, International Conference on Open Source ICOS 2005, Taipei, November 10, 2005

"Open Source in European Government and Global Collaboration in European Research",

Presented by Rishab Ghosh, International Forum on Open Source Software, Shanghai, November 8, 2005

“Free/Libre/Open Source Software Worldwide impact study: FLOSSWorld”

Presented by Rishab Ghosh, Seminar on “Contributions to the Development Agenda on Intellectual Property Rights”, Maastricht, Sep 23-26, 2005

“FLOSS as a learning environment”

presented by Rishab Ghosh at International Free Software Forum, Porto Alegre, Brazil, June 1-4, 2005

“European research in FLOSS”,

Including description and skills/government surveys, presented by Rishab Ghosh at EuroTaiwan2005, April 2005, Taipei.

“FLOSS as a learning environment, and FLOSS in European government”,

presented by Rishab Ghosh at International FLOSS and Free Knowledge Conference, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Pretoria, South Africa, April 20, 2005