

Getting Involved in Open Source

**Responsible Users and
Effective Contributors**

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Talk Rules

- There are none
- Open discussion
- Interrupt me



(Ok, maybe there are a couple of rules...)

Open Source Overview

Proprietary Software

- Not much to discuss...
- Black box
- Closed-off development process
- Exclusive control
- Car with its hood welded shut

Proprietary Software == No Rights

- Users must complain when something's broke
- Cannot fix on your own
- Cannot modify on your own
- Restricted usage
- Frequently, don't even own it
- Company ceases? You're screwed

Example: John Deere (Wired)

Open Source

- No black box
- Source code is publicly viewable
- Does *not* explicitly grant:
 - Ownership
 - Modification rights
 - Redistribution rights
- *Not* implicitly free of cost
- *Not* implicitly "open" development processes

Open Development

- Transparency
- Open processes
- Open discussions (mailing list, forums, etc.)
- *Not* implicitly open source

"Free" Software

- Open source, plus...
- Free as in speech (freedom), not as in beer
- *Still not* implicitly free of cost
- Freedoms:
 - *Run* for any purpose
 - *Study* the code
 - *Redistribute* copies
 - *Improve* the code
- Freedoms tweaked by license differences (whole other talk)
- Typically (*hopefully*) includes "open development"...
- ...but not always (at least not always done *well*)

FLOSS Software

- Good: FOSS ("Free Open Source Software")
- Best: FLOSS ("Free/Libre Open Source Software")
- FLOSS emphasizes "freedom" over misleading "free"
- Talk assumes FLOSS over OS...

FLOSS Religion



FLOSS Religion

- Not Free == Not Ethical
- Appreciate the mentality, but...
- IMO
 - FLOSS == superior engineering
 - Proprietary != The Devil
 - No Ownership == The Devil

FLOSS Superiority

- Control & ownership
- Superior engineering
 - More eyes == less bugs
 - More eyes == stability
 - More eyes == security
 - Community == new features
 - Breadth of features (ex: [Apache Camel](#))
- Speed (ie, not waiting for a fix)

"The Open Source Way"

- Not limited to software
- Openness, collaboration, transparent communication
- Meritocracy (best ideas win)
- Community service
- opensource.com

Open Source Your Projects

- Obvious: beneficial to the software community
- Rarely detrimental to your competitive edge
- Again: superior engineering
- Again: potential new features

Why should I get involved?

- Necessity
- Community
- Increased opportunities (both individually and for the company)
- Better understanding of the specific tool
- Professional network
- Resume & personal brand

FLOSS Users

Proprietary Software Users

- Purely a customer/consumer
- No control
- Request and wait on fixes/features

"Bad" FLOSS Users

- Continue to act like proprietary users
- "WHY HASN'T THIS BEEN FIXED YET?!"
- "*YOU* need to fix this!"
- Threaten to use a different project
- Talker, not "doer"
- Encounter bug -> abandon or workaround

"Bad" FLOSS Users: Bug Reports

- "It doesn't work."
- "I don't have time to create a test case."
- "Here's my entire application, zipped up."
- "I know this was rejected before, but opening again."
- "Bump."
- "I know this branch is 10 years old and not maintained, but fix this and release?"

Effective FLOSS Users

- Entirely different mentality
- ~~Customer/Consumer~~
- *Contributor*, not user
- Vital part of the *development process*
- Everyone has different priorities...
- ...and yours may not be mine
- Willing to discuss and be open
- Simple issues -> immediately fix and contribute
- Lighten up
- Finish what you start
- Appreciate it? Tell us! Goes a long way.

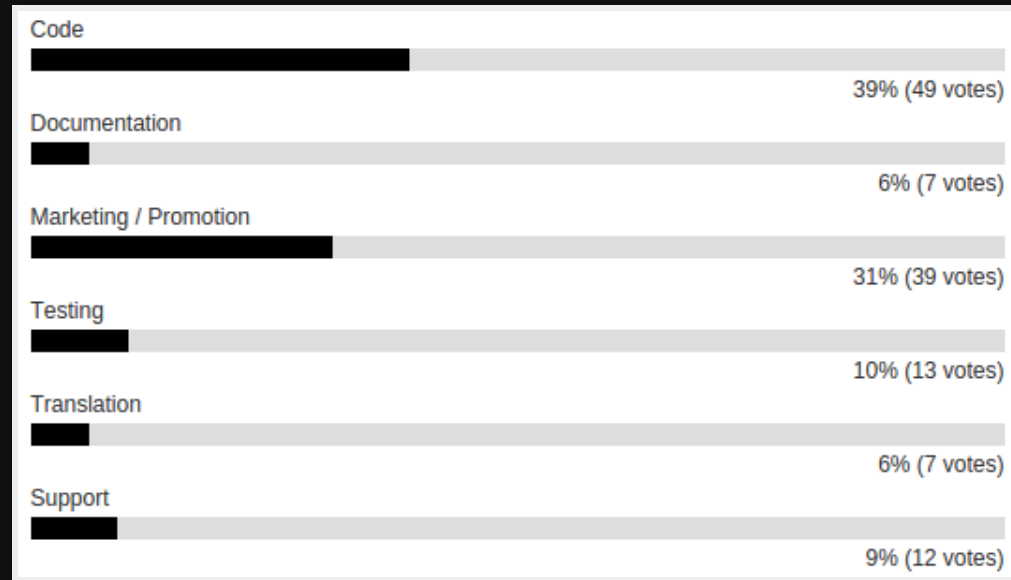
Effective FLOSS Users: Bug Reports

- Encounter bug -> don't ignore it (responsibility)
- Search before opening
- Verbose, but precise
- Logs, stacks, thread dumps
- Clearly separate facts vs. speculations
- Study the code
- <https://hibernate.atlassian.net/browse/HHH-8765>

Effective FLOSS Users: Bug Reports

- Test cases are king!!!
- Minimum: *Enough* code fragments and config details
- Better: Small, standalone reproducer
- Best: Pull request, adding test case to existing testsuite

How to Contribute



(<http://opensource.com/business/15/4/how-do-you-contribute-open-source-projects>)

NOT A CODER



CAN STILL CONTRIBUTE

memegenerator.net

Ways to Contribute

- Code (of course)
- Weigh in on discussions
- Documentation
 - VERY HELPFUL
 - Often over-looked
 - Again: Simple issues -> immediately fix and contribute
- Translation
 - Most large-scale projects have internationalization support...
 - ...but very few languages

Ways to Contribute

- Marketing
 - Social media
 - Blogs
 - Website and branding (frequently open source as well)
 - Presentations
 - Vital, but also over-looked
 - Many teams simply don't have adequate time available

Ways to Contribute

- Testing
 - For large projects, single most helpful thing you can do
 - Attempt to reproduce/analyze bug reports
 - Can't emphasize that enough
 - Seriously
 - Guys, seriously...
 - Hibernate has 2000+ open issues
 - (Please send help...)
 - Test alpha/beta releases (and provide *good* bug reports)

Ways to Contribute

- Support
 - User forums
 - Mailing lists
 - Chat
 - StackOverflow
 - Again: Limited time available

Ways to Contribute

- Most importantly: Be a good and responsible user!
- FLOSS does *not* work without it

**Discover Projects
to Help**

Discover Projects to Help

- Most important: You use it (@ work, on-the-side)
- Scratches an itch
- Need a capability
 - Could do it from scratch...
 - ...but Project X is close (missing a few things)
 - Add to it!

Discover Projects to Help

- Not unlike startups: requires passion to be effective
- Community driven: What would be the most *enabling*?
- Humanitarian Free and Open Source Software (HFOSS)
 - Lots of momentum
 - Large number of efforts
 - Whole new level of *passion*
 - <http://opensource.com/life/15/2/getting-involved-hfoss>

