



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

**International Workshop #1
April 26-27, Brussels**

Coordinator:

MERIT, University of Maastricht

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FLOSSWorld: Aims and objectives

- Strengthen EU participation in global research
- Build a global constituency of policy-makers and researchers on FLOSS issues
- Enhance global awareness of FLOSS:
 - human capacity building
 - policy and use in government
 - technical, organisational and business differences between regional FLOSS projects
- Period: May 1, 2005 to April 30, 2007



FLOSSWorld: Geographic scope

- Target countries (consortium partners):
 - Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, India, Malaysia, South Africa
- Related regions (outside consortium) include:
 - Japan, USA (original letters of support)
 - Others (expressions of interest): Uganda, Australia, Chile, Colombia, Iran



FLOSSWorld: Consortium - EU

- Coordinator: MERIT, University of Maastricht
Leading survey research tracks
- Oxford Internet Institute, Univ. of Oxford
Contributing to survey development/analysis
- FUNDECYT, Junta de Extremadura, Spain
Leading workshop and collaboration track
- Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Spain
Leading software project comparison track



FLOSSWorld: Consortium - regional

- *Argentina:*

- USUARIA, business IT user organisation
- Fundacion Via Libre, leading community organisation in Latin America

- *Brazil:*

- Natl. IT Institute (ITI), Office of the President of Brazil
- University of Campinas, top University



FLOSSWorld: Consortium - regional

- *Bulgaria:*
 - Internet Society Bulgaria
- *China:*
 - China Education & Research Network (CERNET) at Tsinghua Univ: largest network in China, under Ministry of Education, at top University
 - China Standard Software Company: one of the main FLOSS companies in China



FLOSSWorld: Consortium - regional

- *Croatia:*

- Multimedia Institute MI2: hosts SummerSource developer workshop
- Croatian Academic Research Network, under Science Ministry

- *India:*

- Centre for Development of Advanced Computing: largest group of IT labs in India, under Ministry of Information Technology



FLOSSWorld: Consortium - regional

- *Malaysia:*
 - MIMOS: govt-owned leading IT research organisation, author of national open source policy
- *South Africa:*
 - Council for Scientific and Industrial Research: Africa's largest R&D organisation
 - University of the Western Cape



FLOSSWorld: External support

- Not part of consortium, pre-project letters of support:
- *India:* National Assoc. for Software & Services Cos.
- *USA:* Stanford University Inst. Econ & Policy Research
- *Japan:* Mitsubishi Research Institute
- Open Society Institute / Soros Foundations
- UNCTAD



FLOSSWorld: Observers

- Observers, collaborators can participate in FLOSSWorld
- No funding, but they can get interim results
- They can participate in FLOSSWorld working groups, mailing-lists
- They can conduct FLOSSWorld studies in their own countries / regions
- FLOSSWorld will provide survey questionnaires, methodologies and analysis



FLOSSWorld: Observers

- Australia: New South Wales Government
- Chile: Centro de Software Libre
- Taipei: OSSF / Academica Sinica
- Colombia: SEAQ Servicios
- Costa Rica: ALAS Libre
- Iran: GNU/Linux Localisation Project
- Portugal: Madeira Tecnopolo
- Spain: Regional Government of Catalonia
- Uganda: Uganda Martyrs University
- MySQL



FLOSSWorld: 4 Track Workplan

- 1: skills development and employment generation: surveys of developers, employers and higher education insts.
- 2: study differences between regions in development methods, participation in global community, links to industry, quality of local FLOSS software



FLOSSWorld: 4 Track Workplan

- 3: survey attitudes, usage towards FLOSS and open standards in govt orgs.
- 4: conduct regional and international workshops and working groups to develop and build upon tasks 1-3, to create a global research/policy constituency



FLOSSWorld: 4 Track Workplan

- Research tracks 1-3 largely extend past EU studies to the 8 target countries
- Core design/analysis done by EU partners
- Regional issues, implementation addressed by regional partners
- Easily extended to regions outside the consortium



European projects: earlier research

- FLOSS project (EU 2001-2002): understanding developer community, business needs; software project details
- FLOSSPOLs project (EU 2004-2006): survey of developers, employers on skills learnt through FLOSS communities compared with formal degrees; survey of governments on use/non-use of FLOSS
- OSSWatch (UK 2004): survey of Universities and HEIs on FLOSS use



FLOSS findings: developers

- Main reason to join community: “to learn and develop new skills”
- Money is not a main reason to join community...
- ... but 30% earn income directly from FLOSS
- 20% earn income indirectly from FLOSS
- Most community developers are not very active (<5 hours per week; 1-2 projects)
- <10% developers most active, >20 hours per week, write >70% of all software code



FLOSSPOLS findings: developers

- Learn *many* technical skills, basic as well as advanced
- Learn many *non-technical* skills (legal, management/teamwork, general – e.g. English)
- Think they learn most things better from FLOSS community than from formal courses
- Think employers may accept *proven* FLOSS participation instead of formal degree



FLOSSPOLLS findings: employers

- Firms that use FLOSS are more positive about skills learnt from FLOSS communities, but...
- ...even firms that don't think FLOSS is important think many skills are learnt *better* in FLOSS communities than in formal courses
- Both types of firms think that *proven* FLOSS participation could be accepted if potential employee has no formal degree (“wrote a driver for Linux kernel” proves practical knowledge better than University computer science degree?)



FLOSSPOL findings: government

- 80% of European regional governments have *some* use of FLOSS
- ...but 30% say they don't use it, even when they do use FLOSS applications! (unaware use)
- ...and most use is not extensive: e.g. partial on server, not complete on desktop



FLOSSPOLLS findings: government

- Main reasons to use FLOSS:
 - Need to customise
 - Independence from vendors
- Main reasons *not to* use FLOSS:
 - Fear that no technical support is available
 - Fear that (re-)training costs will be high
- Fears are perhaps false:
 - Those with *actual FLOSS experience* don't report such problems with support and training



Relevance to FLOSSWorld

- Data available only on Europe, some other surveys also in US, Japan, elsewhere
- Are other regions similar to Europe? Same problems, same solutions?
- Are other regions similar to each other? Comparing China, India, Brazil etc...
- Are there common policy solutions possible?
 - Track 1: can FLOSS develop IT skills better
 - Track 2: can FLOSS help local software creation
 - Track 3: can FLOSS help IT in government?



FLOSSWorld schedule

- 1st regional workshops: Nov 05-Mar 06
 - Discuss research questions, interact
 - Buenos Aires, Beijing, Mumbai, Sofia (Bulgaria), Nairobi (Kenya)
- 1st International workshop: Mar 06
 - Brussels



FLOSSWorld schedule

- On-going survey and study:
 - Nov 05-July 06
- Analysis:
 - August 06-September 06
- 2nd regional and intl workshops:
 - Oct 06-Feb 07
 - Discuss survey results, policy issues
- Finalise recommendations: Feb-Apr 07



More information

- *Coordinator:* Rishab Ghosh, MERIT
rishab@dxm.org
- FLOSSWorld: <http://flossworld.org>
- FLOSS Project report (2002)
<http://flossproject.org/report/>