

OpenMRS: A Lesson in Open Source Software Development and the Challenges It Can Present

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OpenMRS is a digital medical records system designed to allow for easy access and usage of records in developing countries, and the community relies on the software to connect volunteer medical personnel with individuals in need of healthcare. Throughout the semester, the authors explored the cycle of Free Open Source Software (FOSS) through the development of the OpenMRS application as well as a part of its Documentation team. After joining OpenMRS as debuggers, the authors learned quickly that the project had a substantial need for better documentation practices both within the code itself, as well as on their various website pages. The authors experienced first-hand how this need can affect people's decision to continue working on a project or not, and decided to commit themselves to working on documentation fully for the rest of the semester in order to avoid others having the same experience they did.