OpenOffice.org Community Survey Review

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I. Introduction

A. Background:

The primary business objectives of OpenOffice.org are to drive the standards in the open source community, build a community of open source developers and improve StarOffice. While there are multiple open source projects currently available, OpenOffice.org is the largest with 7.5 million lines of code and a current user base of over 2,500 subscribers. Its size introduces a new level of complexity for community participants while simultaneously making it difficult to for Sun to use previous open source projects for benchmarking or best practice references.

One of the primary success factors for OpenOffice.org is community growth. There is limited knowledge of who the community is and what their needs are. For this reason, community growth strategies are difficult to identify.

B. Survey Objectives:

The purpose of this survey is to gain a better understanding of the OpenOffice.org community. The primary areas of interest are:
1) Community demographics – where they live, what they do, etc.
2) Community participation – why they participate, how often and on what level
3) Community feedback on OpenOffice.org site – most valuable features and functionality, areas for improvement, wish list of future features
4) Overall information on community participation in open source – how often and why they participate in open source in general

Once there is a better understanding of the community, we can better determine the best strategies to build the OpenOffice.org community.

II. Methodology and Response Rate

The survey link was sent to 2,310 unique OpenOffice.org community subscribers via email. Specifically, it was sent to the Announce, Discuss and Developer email lists. In addition, the survey link was posted on the OpenOffice.org home page in the "Truly useful news" section.

Total responses were 466 after the incomplete data was removed. Approximately 50% of the survey respondents came from the home page. Subsequently, the response rate from the email lists was 10%. The remaining 50% came from OpenOffice.org.

Total Subscribers Emailed	Responses	Response Rate
2,310	232	10%

| Home Page Click–Throughs	Responses	Response Rate
Approximately 500	232	N/A

III. Community Demographic Information

A. Geographic Distribution
- It is an international community with only 34% of the responses coming from North America.
- There is strong representation from Europe, with France and Germany accounting for 19% of the respondents.
- The United States accounts for 27% of those that responded and Asia and Rest of World are 19%.

34%

47%

12%

7%

| ■ North America	■ Europe	■ Asia	■ Rest of World
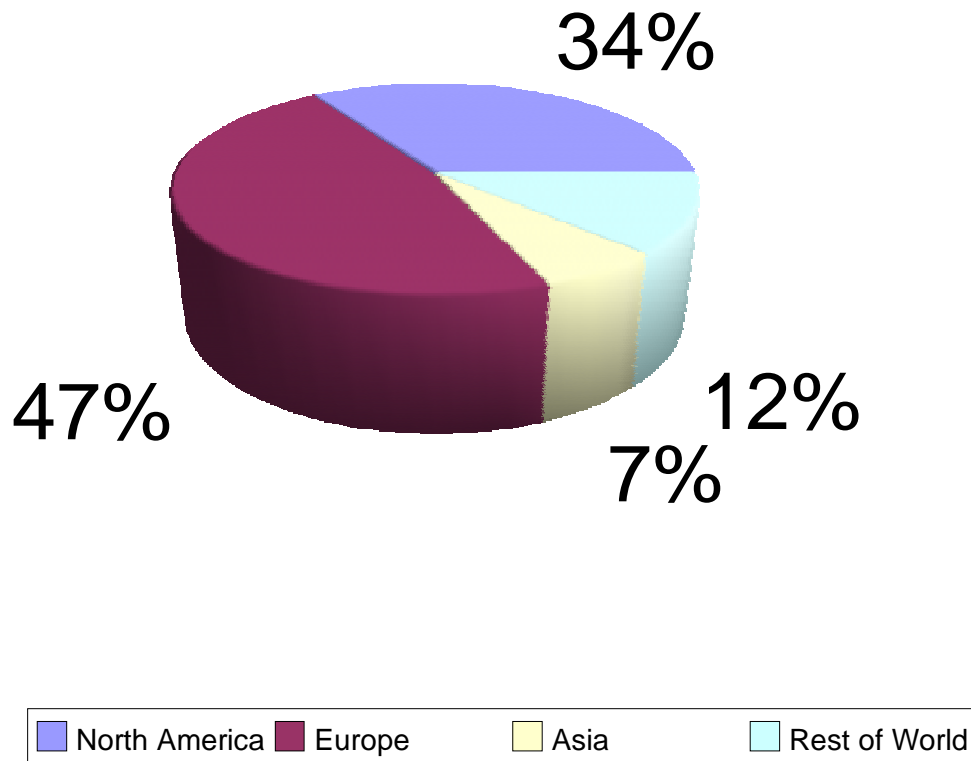
B. Industry Background

- Most community members (55%) come from the IT Services, Consulting/Systems Integration and Software industries.
- Over 20% categorize themselves as students or in education.
- Major industries that comprise the "other" category are e−commerce/Internet, hardware manufacturing, telecommunications and government/military.
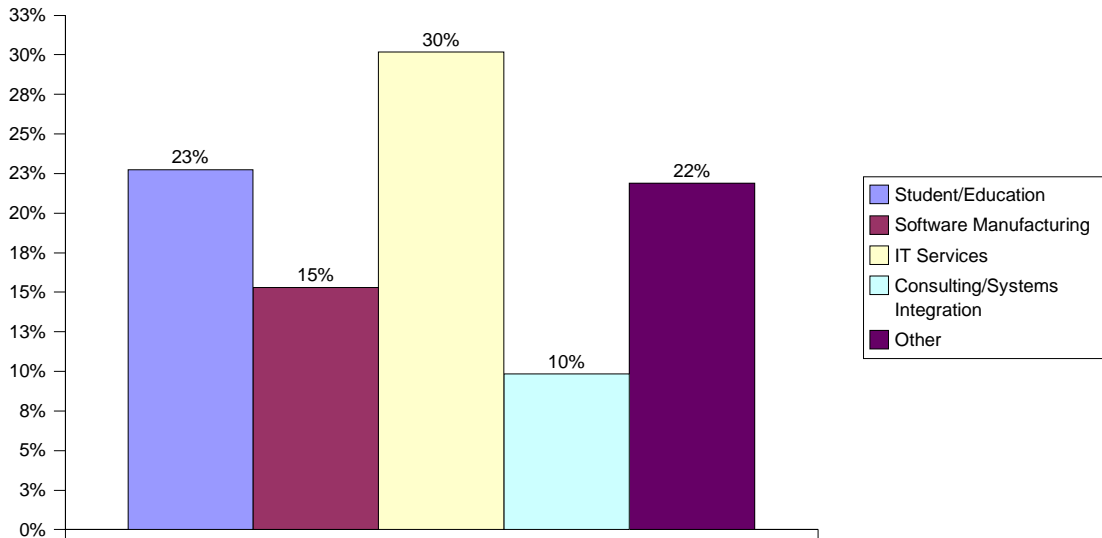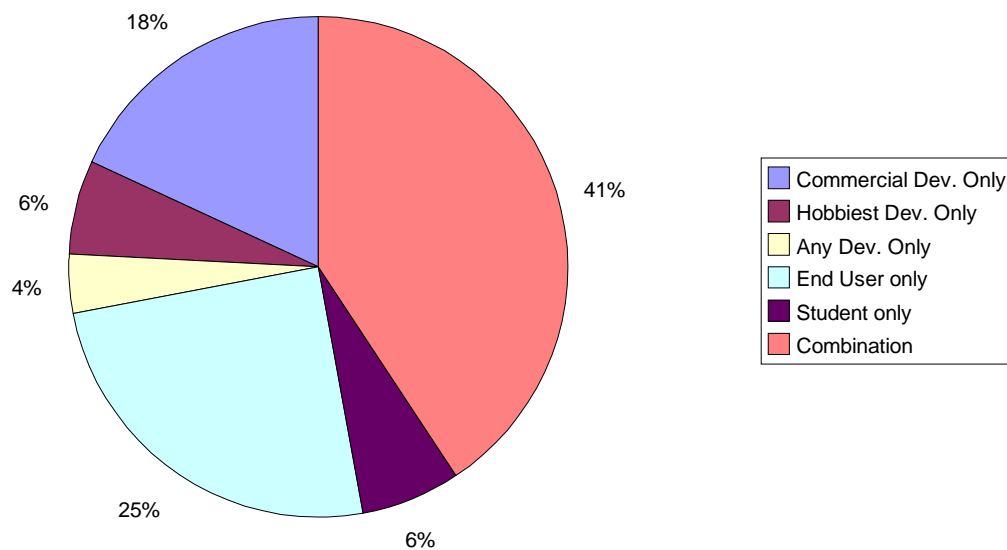

C. Company Size

- While many community members work for small business (43% have 1−100 employees), there is also a significant group, (17%) that work in large organizations with over 1,000 employees in the company.
- 23% are self employed or not employed at all.
- 30% are in companies with 1−25 employees.
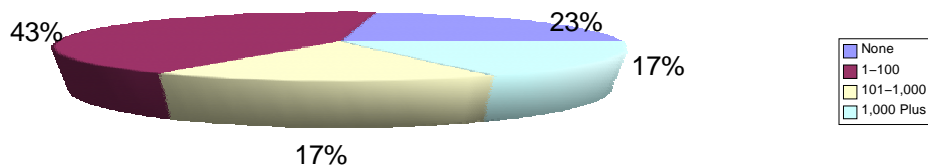
D. End User vs. Developer – How they describe themselves
- About 75% say they are a developer of some sort. There are more end users than we thought.
- 25% say they are only an end user and have no developing interest or skill.
- 28% indicate that they are only a developer – either commercial, hobbyist or both.
- 21% say they are a student among other things and 6% say they are a student only and do not participate as a developer or end user.
- 41% categorized themselves as some combination of developer, end user and/or student.

18%

6%

4%

25%

6%

41%

Commercial Dev. Only
Hobbiest Dev. Only
Any Dev. Only
End User only
Student only
Combination

Comments on how they describe themselves:
- Consultant
- Teacher/Researcher
- Network/System Administration

IV. OpenOffice.org Usage Information

<u>A. How they first heard about OpenOffice.org</u>
- The Web is the most common reference with 63% of respondents indicating it was there they first learned about OpenOffice.org.
- The next most common place was from friends at 8%.
- School and events were surprisingly low as a reference at 2% and 1% respectively.

<u>B. Why they use OpenOffice.org</u>
- Half as many people say they participate in OpenOffice.org for work purposes as for pleasure or personal reasons.

Why They Use OpenOffice.org

46%

9%

45%

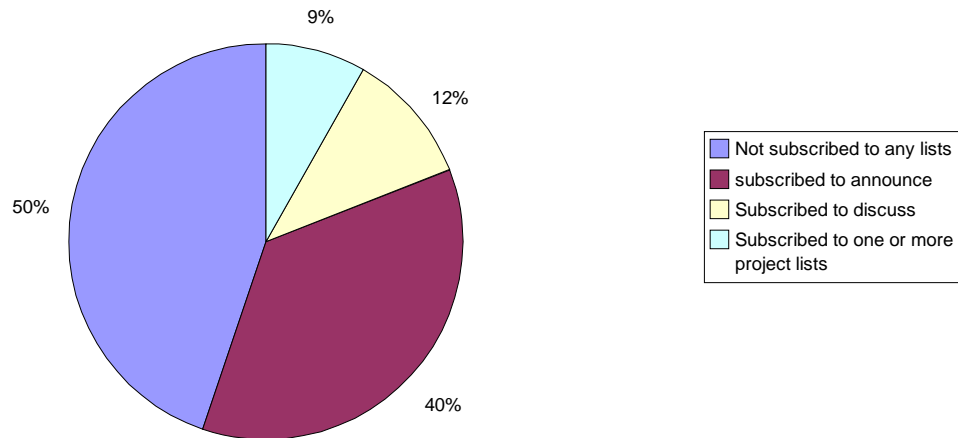|	
▨	Personal/Hobby
▨	Work
▨	Other
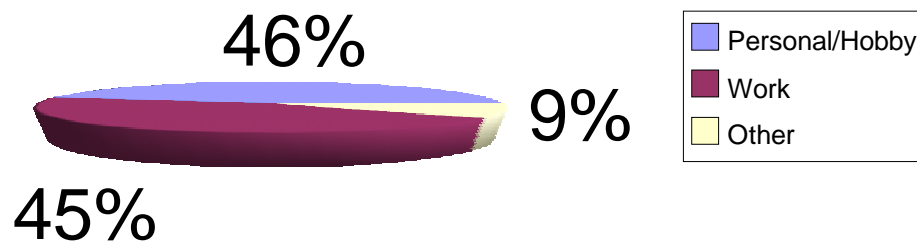
Comments on other reasons for participating are:
- For evaluation purposes
- For both personal and work–related projects
- Not using it yet
- I just check in occasionally for updates
- For school–related work

C. Subscriptions and Contributions at OpenOffice.org
- Surprisingly, 50% of those that responded said they are not subscribed to any OpenOffice.org lists.
- Only 4% say they contribute code, either often or occasionally.
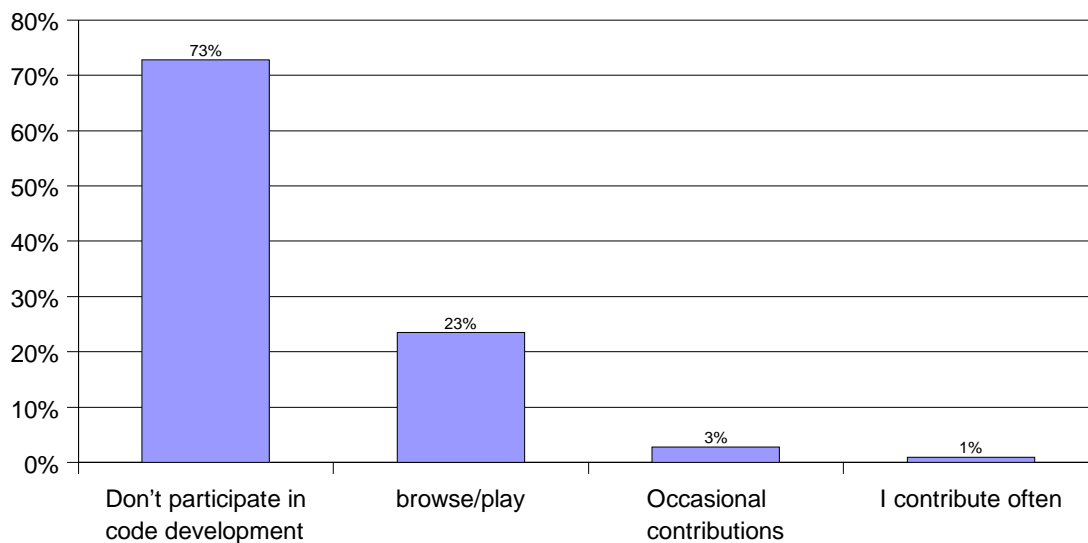- 61% say they spend less than 1 hour per week on OpenOffice.org related projects.

List Subscriptions

9%

12%

50%

40%

- Not subscribed to any lists
- subscribed to announce
- Subscribed to discuss
- Subscribed to one or more project lists

Comments on why so many are not subscribed in priority order:
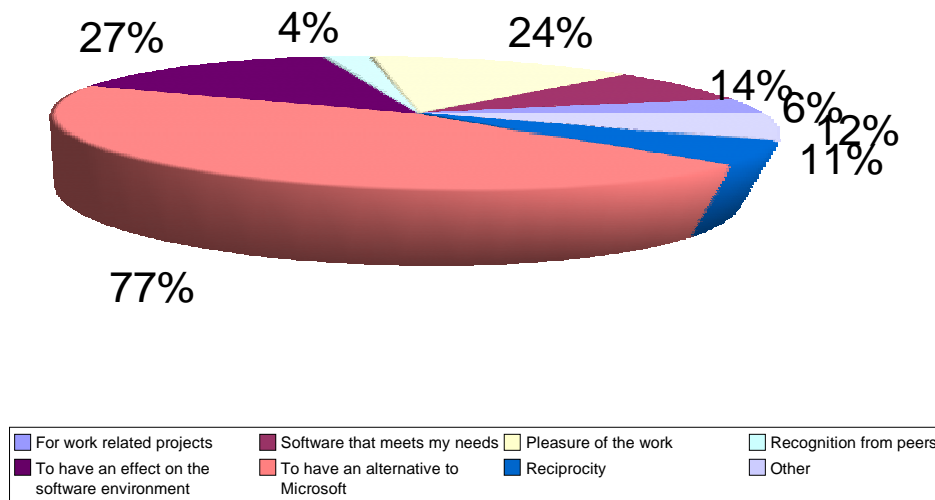- Lack of time
- Too much volume on the mailing lists
- Lists are geared towards developers
- The Web site offers enough information

Level of Contribution to OpenOffice.org

80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%

73%

23%

3%

1%

Don't participate in code development   browse/play   Occasional contributions   I contribute often

D. Motivation for participation in OpenOffice.org
- The most common motivation for the community is to have an alternative to Microsoft.
- Other frequently mentioned motivations are to have an effect on the software environment and for the pleasure of the work.
- Only 6% say their motivation is work−related

27%   4%   24%

14% 6% 2%

11%

77%

| For work related projects | Software that meets my needs | Pleasure of the work | Recognition from peers |
| To have an effect on the software environment | To have an alternative to Microsoft | Reciprocity | Other |

Other comments on why they are motivated to participate, (in priority order):
- To create a good/new software product
- To evaluate or just check−in
- Because it's free
- To learn

E. Participation in OpenOffice.org projects
- 74% of those that responded say they do not participate in any OpenOffice.org projects.
- Of the 26% that do participate, the most frequently mentioned projects are: Whiteboard Projects (19 people), Word Processing (17 people), Localization (14 people), Spreadsheet (11 people), UNO Developer Kit/Component Technology (10 people), API (10 people) and Porting (9 people).

F. Should OpenOffice.org be promoted? Where?
- 91% of the respondents said that the OpenOffice.org community should be promoted.
- Of those that responded, most suggested the web for promotion purposes. Many also suggested conferences, mailing lists and television.
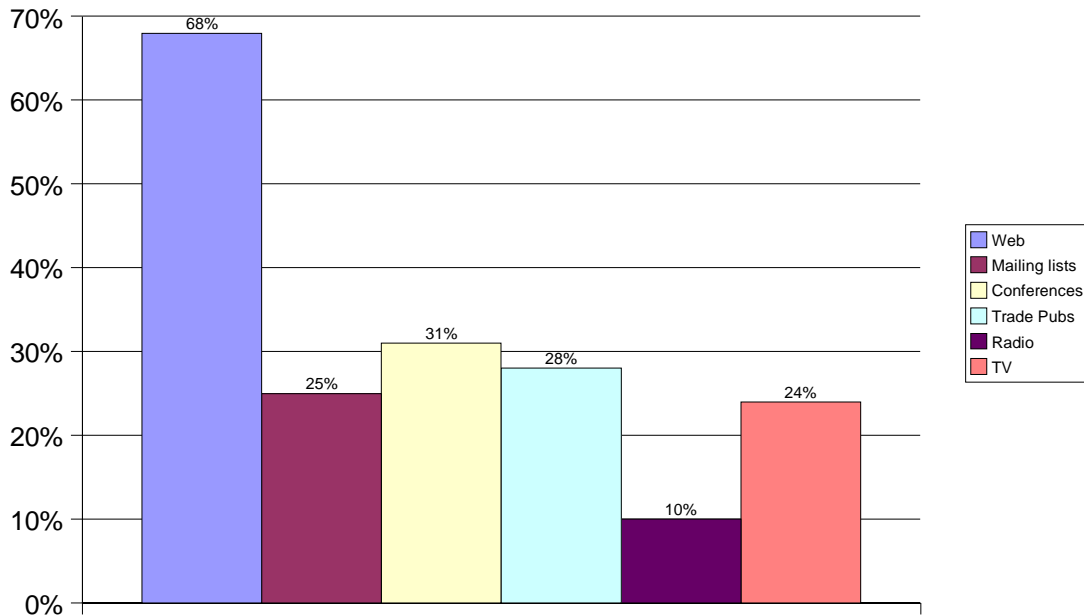
Comments on where OpenOffice.org should be promoted:
- Web sites: Other open source sites, general news sites, search engines/browsers, small business sites and technology sites
- Events: Linuxworld, CeBit and Comdex were more commonly mentioned
- Magazines: Small Business and technology publications
- TV: major networks, ZDTV and CNN

V. OpenOffice.org Web site Information

<u>A. How happy they are with the current OpenOffice.org Web site</u>
· In general, people are happy.
· 49% say they are happy or very happy with the Web site as it is.
· 92% are satisfied or above.
· Only 8% say they are unhappy or very unhappy.

Comments on Web site:
· More documentation and general information such as roadmaps and updates.
· More or improved features and functionality such as newsgroups, searchable archives.
· More updated news and information.
· Design and ease of use improvements.

<u>B. What aspects of the Web site are most important?</u>
· A lot of things are important, but relevant and valuable information seems to be most important at 54%.
· Ease of use/navigation (49%) and stability of the site (43%) are also valuable to the community.
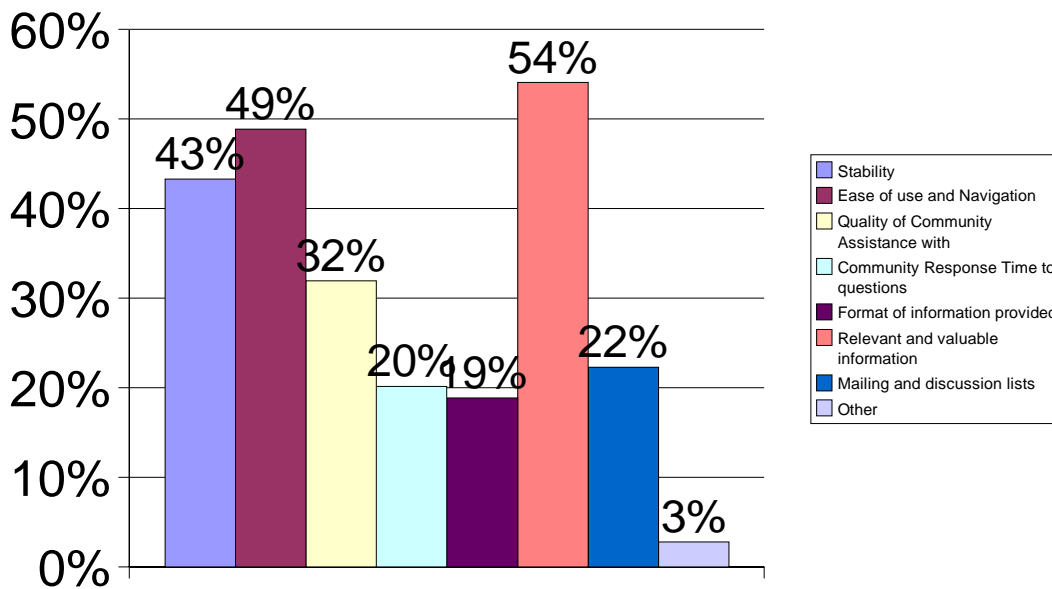

Comments on other things of importance to respondents:
· New features/functionality such as newsgroups and end–user learning orientation
· High quality software

C. What could be most improved on the Web site?
- 43% of the respondents indicate that documentation could be substantially improved.
- The community also says that web content could be updated more frequently.
- Response time and Issuezilla do not appear to be serious concerns.
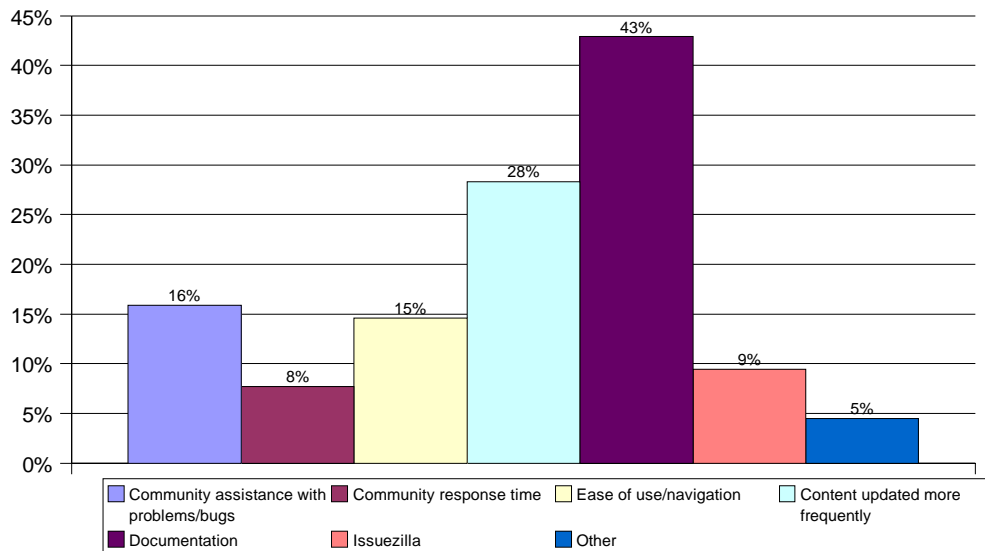
Comments on improvements:
- Add new or improve current features, information or documentation to the Web site such as project roadmaps, mailing lists and newsgroups.
- Various software improvements such as more frequent binary releases.

D. What future features should be implemented?
- 52% of the respondents say that searchable archives are important. This was the most frequent response.
- There is also an interest in personalization (22%), and targeted information based on member interests (28%).
- While 25% of the community is interested in newsgroups, chat does not appear to be as universally appealing. Only 9% say they would like IRC, unmoderated chat and 5% say they have an interest in moderated chat.
- 22% of the respondents say that native language content would be of interest.

Comments on future implementations:
- Web site specific comments – Documentation such as roadmaps, and online demos/tutorials.
- Software specific comments – Scheduled release dates, schedule/email functionality.

VI. Overall Open Source Usage and Contribution Information

A. How much does the community participate in other open source projects?
- 22% say they only participate in OpenOffice.org.
- 42% of the respondents say they participate in the code development of other open source projects or categorize themselves as active in other communities.
- 23% say they contribute code on other open source projects as opposed to 4% who say they contribute code to some extent at OpenOffice.org.
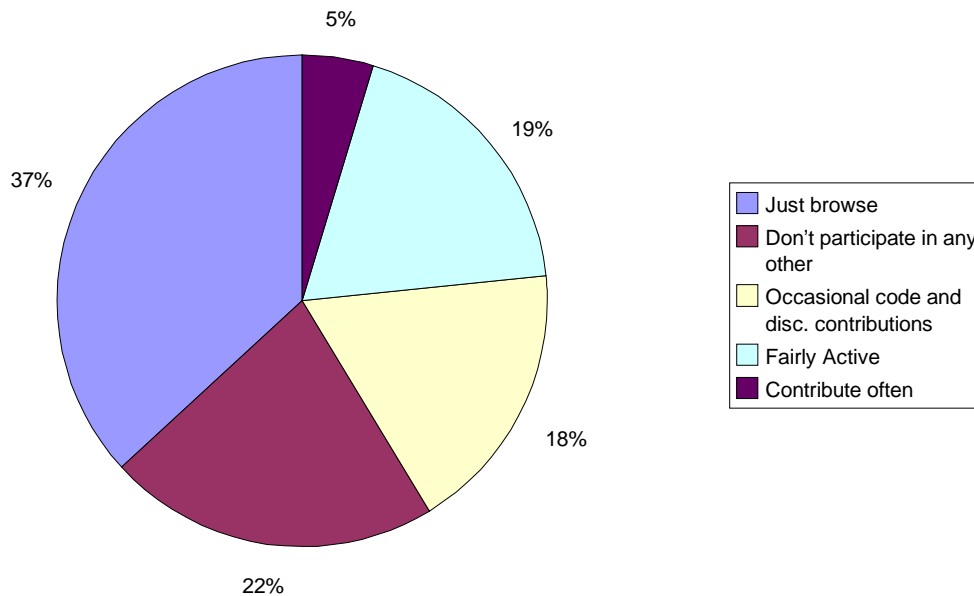
Other open source communities mentioned most often, (in priority order):
- Mozilla.org
- SourceForge
- Linux.org
- Slashdot.org
- KDE
- Freshmeat
- Gnome
- Apache
- Linux Kernel
- Linux Today
- GNU
- WINE
- Debian

B. Percentage of applications written which are open source
- 38% say they don't write any open source code, indicating again that that there is a large group of non–developers or they are developers with no open source experience.
- On the other hand, 31% of respondents say that over half the code they write is open source, indicating that there are many loyal open source developers.

C. Motivation for participating in other open source projects
- There are slight differences between the responses to this question and the one specifically related to OpenOffice.org.
- The anti–Microsoft motivation lower here with 61% versus 77% for OpenOffice.org.
- For the pleasure of the work is slightly higher at 41% compared to 24% for OpenOffice.org.
- Other major motivations are to have an effect on the software environment (39%) and to have software that meets their needs (26%).

Comments on motivation for participation, (in priority order):
- For learning and educational purposes
- Because it's free
- For good software

VII. Conclusions and Recommendations

A. Interesting Discoveries
- Community members are happy to have the opportunity to participate in the survey. They appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback and are interested in seeing the results. Over 50% of the respondents (252) volunteered their email address to be contacted for follow−up research purposes.
- A large number (50%) of community members aren't even on the mailing lists. They are simply checking in a on the web site occasionally for updates.
- If the web site is the primary point of contact and information for many community members, then the design, features and functionality of the web site are more important than initially assumed.
- Almost 65% of the community is located outside of North America.
- There are more end−users than we thought.
- The split of community members working on OpenOffice.org for work and for pleasure is 50/50. For many, it's a job requirement and for others OpenOffice.org is just something they do in their spare time.
- The major motivation for participation in OpenOffice.org is to have an alternative to Microsoft.
- Community members want to spread the word. 91% of the respondents say that OpenOffice.org should be promoted.
- Community members are contributing code often on other open source projects, but not on OpenOffice.org.
- Community members indicate that services or features customized to their needs and interests would be valuable.
- Over 20% of the community considers themselves to be some form of student however very few heard about OpenOffice.org through school.

B. Recommendations
- Continue to solicit community feedback in the form of surveys moving forward.
- Re−evaluate the community target segmentation and behavior definitions: lurker, poster, patcher, contributor, based on the knowledge that there are many that are not even on mailing lists.
- Although people are happy with the web site overall, changes can me made to accommodate recently discovered community preferences:
  - Design changes: Clutterless home page with clear links to relevant information and resources, most relevant information clearly labeled and centrally located.
  - Feature/Functionality changes: install a better search function, add newsgroups, update information for often, increase available documentation and install personalization features.
- Due to the international nature of the community, make more of an effort to support localization efforts. Native language content can be a long term goal.
- Have a place for end users to go. Add documentation and other information relevant to end users who visit the Web site. Create an end user FAQ and wish list to allow them the opportunity to provide feedback on functionality that benefits them. Enable

end users to contribute to design without writing code.
- Create a section on OpenOffice.org that highlights OpenOffice.org versus Microsoft issues, provides space for updates and possibly chat.
- Use the community to help promote OpenOffice.org. Encourage participation in other open source groups in order to tell others about the work being done on OpenOffice.org.
- Add weekly status updates to home page for a quick reference to visitors.
- Only 4% are currently contribute code, so we need to make it easier for lurkers to get involved. Modularizing the source code could be effective or promoting more knowledge sharing within the community.
- Create customized sections for community members on OpenOffice.org where they can check in occasionally for updates specific to their identified preferences.
- Target Information Management and Computer Science programs at Universities as an additional means of promoting OpenOffice.org.

VIII. Next Steps

- Share findings with community.
- Discuss recommendations and implications.
- Do follow up research on needs of end user community members.