Co-creating common code
Contributing to the common good

Strengthening Free and Open Source Software for the benefit of all

> 'Most of the systems and networks you rely on when browsing, mailing and chatting are built on open source.'

Over the last two decades the use of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) has become increasingly popular. Despite many people not considering themselves members of the open source user community, almost everyone interacts with open source software on a daily basis. Some well-known examples of open source software include Firefox, Linux and Android.

This ubiquity of open source becomes even clearer when we turn to the infrastructure of the Internet: most of the systems and networks you rely on when browsing, mailing and chatting are built on open source. But it does not stop there, open source software is everywhere you find computers: from entire factories to cars, coffee makers, televisions and pacemakers.

European institutions are also embracing free and open source software, and are doing so in an increasingly proactive way. Amongst the benefits of open source software are the economic advantages of code reuse and the sharing of development costs. However, for public institutions there are more fundamental arguments for embracing the open source model:

1. The creation of quality employment and opportunities for local innovators;

2. Investment in software published as open source creates publicly accessible and available value;

3. Increased accessibility to public services, as open source saves having to buy proprietary software to interact with government agencies;

4. Increased interoperability through open standards and reference implementations, easing the interconnections and interaction between government agencies, private organisations and citizens;

5. Increased public transparency.

EUROPEAN UNION

EU-FOSSA
Free and Open Source Software Auditing

Safe for use

Even though the code of open source software is freely available for anyone to study and fix, in recent years some major security issues have been discovered in widely used open source software. These incidents have taught us that the security and integrity of open source software cannot be taken for granted.

EU-FOSSA

The EU-FOSSA initiative, launched by the European Commission at the instigation of the European Parliament, aims to increase the security and integrity of critical open source software. It does so by:

- Arranging and facilitating security audits,
- Setting up bug bounty programmes,
- Organising hackathons and conferences, and
- Engaging and participating in developer communities.

These actions:

- Directly improve the quality of the audited code bases,
- Empower developer communities, and
- Establish long-term relationships with developer communities.

Since the very same software used by the European institutions is also widely deployed in society, we are already benefiting from these investments. In addition, the EU-FOSSA project is expanding its scope to a wider range of software projects and communities.

Our code, made public

As an enthusiastic user of free and open source software the European Commission feels it has a responsibility to contribute and give back to the open source communities. As such, the European Commission, and specifically the EU-FOSSA project, is part of an open source strategy whose aim is to ensure that the EU will make more use of free and open source software, contribute to a thriving FOSS ecosystem and be an active member of the FOSS community.

The EU-FOSSA project believes it is vital for the European economy and the sustainability of digital government to foster the open source ecosystem and participate in the community. Improving the security and integrity of open source software is important both for the European institutions and the broader user base. By investing in open source software we ensure that the returns are available to all and can be further built on in the future.

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