

A photograph of a dense forest of rimu trees. The trees have long, drooping branches covered in thick, green moss. The forest floor is visible at the bottom, showing more green vegetation.

What is good open source?

Richard Littauer - <http://richard.social>

Who is this Richard Littauer, anyway

- Linguist and computer scientist
- Software developer
- Community manager
- Worked for: Hipcamp, MIT, Johns Hopkins, Protocol Labs, Open Source Initiative (OSI), Open Source Collective, the Digital Infrastructure Fund, GNOME...
- Currently:
 - CURIOSS
 - SustainOSS
 - Language consultant

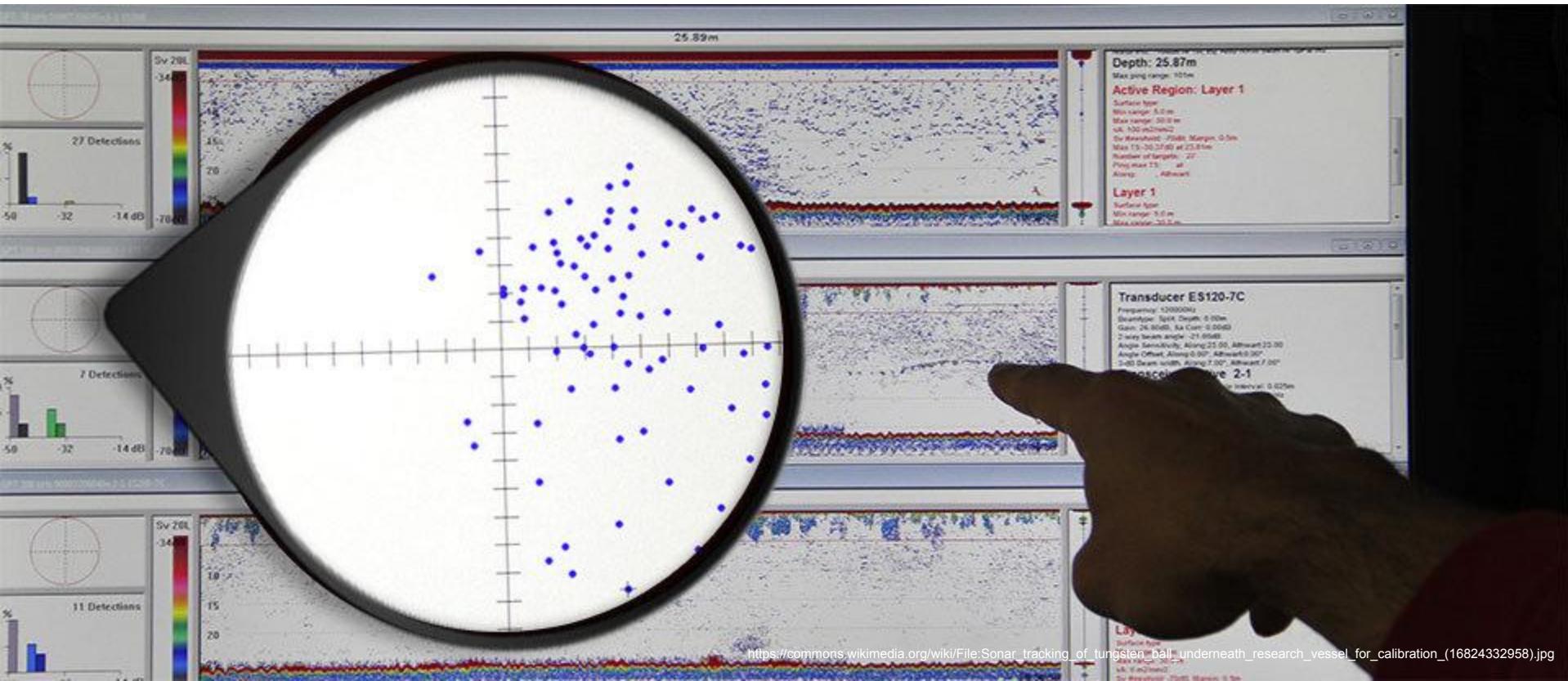
Also a PhD student



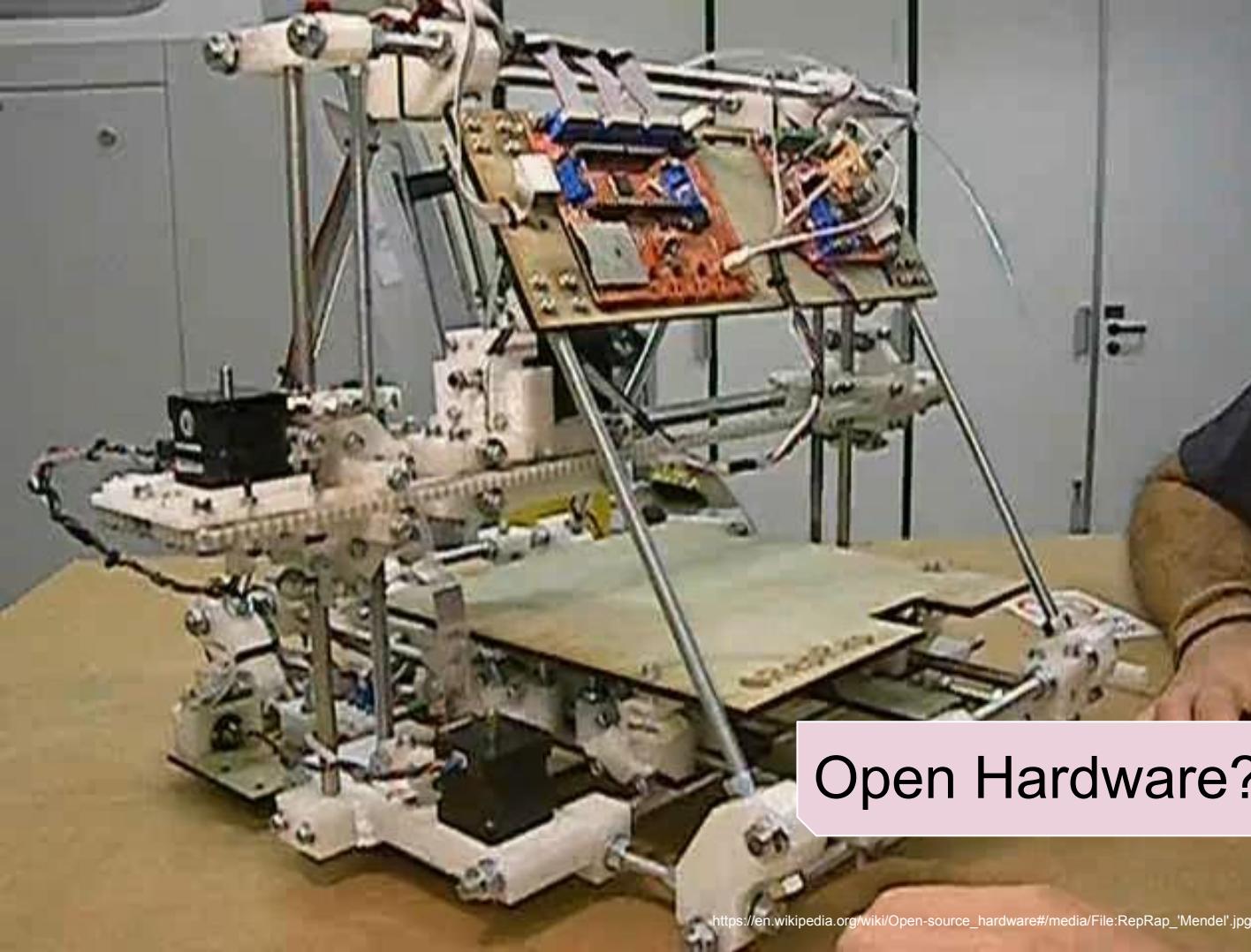
What is Open Source



Open Data?



[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sonar_tracking_of_tungsten_ball_underneath_research_vessel_for_calibration_\(16824332958\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sonar_tracking_of_tungsten_ball_underneath_research_vessel_for_calibration_(16824332958).jpg)



Open Hardware?



Creative Commons?

Gohsuke Takama CC BY 2.0

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative_Commons_license#/media/File:Aaron_Swartz_and_Lawrence_Lessig.j

Other opens

- Open Science
- Open Scholarship
- Open Education
- Open Government
- Open Strategy
- Open Innovation
- Open Platform
- Open Access
- Open Organizing
- ...

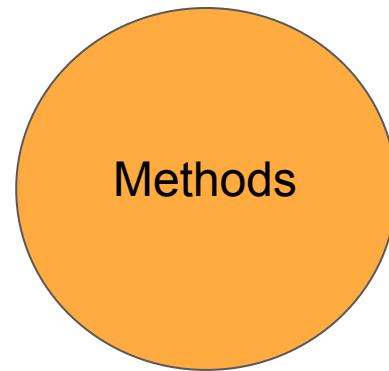
What we're going to cover

- Basic definition of open source
- What makes OSS healthy or sustainable

Open source:



or



MIT License

MIT License

Copyright (c) The dog I wish I had 2025

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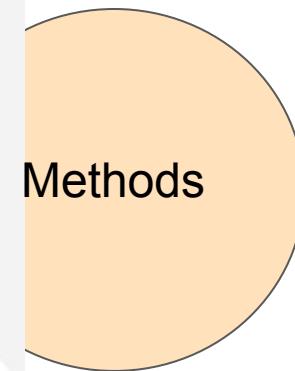
GPL

- "Copyleft" licenses
- Too long to fit on this slide
- Use it as much as you want, just publish your stuff as open, too.

Open source:



**open source
initiative®**



What about?



Organization for
Ethical Source

What about?

Open Source*



Source: Midjourney

How much open source?

10.7 million Packages

230 million Repositories

19 billion Dependencies

1.6 million Developers



How much open source?

GitHub

150+ million

Developers

4+ million

Organizations

420+ million

Repositories

90%

Fortune 100

The Value of Open Source Software

By: Manuel Hoffmann, [Frank Nagle](#) and Yanuo Zhou

Format: Print | **Language:** English | **Pages:** 42

Email Print Share

ABSTRACT

The value of a non-pecuniary (free) product is inherently difficult to assess. A pervasive example is open source software (OSS), a global public good that plays a vital role in the economy and is foundational for most technology we use today. However, it is difficult to measure the value of OSS due to its non-pecuniary nature and lack of centralized usage tracking. Therefore, OSS remains largely unaccounted for in economic measures. Although prior studies have estimated the supply-side costs to recreate this software, a lack of data has hampered estimating the much larger demand-side (usage) value created by OSS. Therefore, unique global data allows us to first estimate the supply-side value. We then calculate the demand-side value for widely-used OSS, finding that firms would pay \$8.8 trillion.

The top six programs—Linux, Apache, MySQL, Python, PHP, and Java—account for 96% of the demand-side value. Further, 96% of the demand-side value is created by only 5% of OSS developers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Frank Nagle

Strategy

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MORE FROM THE AUTHORS

JANUARY 2025 FACULTY RESEARCH

[AGENTS.INC: PATHWAYS TO GROWTH AT AN AI STARTUP](#)

By: [Frank Nagle](#) and Susan Pinckney

NOVEMBER 2024 FACULTY RESEARCH

[FEDEX CYBERATTACK \(B\): REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS](#)

By: [Hise Gibson](#), [Frank Nagle](#), Alicia Dadlani and Martha Hostetter

NOVEMBER 2024 FACULTY RESEARCH

[FEDEX CYBERATTACK \(A\): NAVIGATING THE NOTPETYA STORM](#)

By: [Hise Gibson](#), [Frank Nagle](#), Alicia Dadlani and Martha Hostetter

Why would you use Open Source?

Why would you use Open Source?

- You already are.

Why would you produce Open Source?

Why would you produce Open Source?

- Collaborate with others
- More eyes = less bugs
- Improve your CV
- Status and clout
- More adoption
- "Feels good"
- Security (never roll your own)

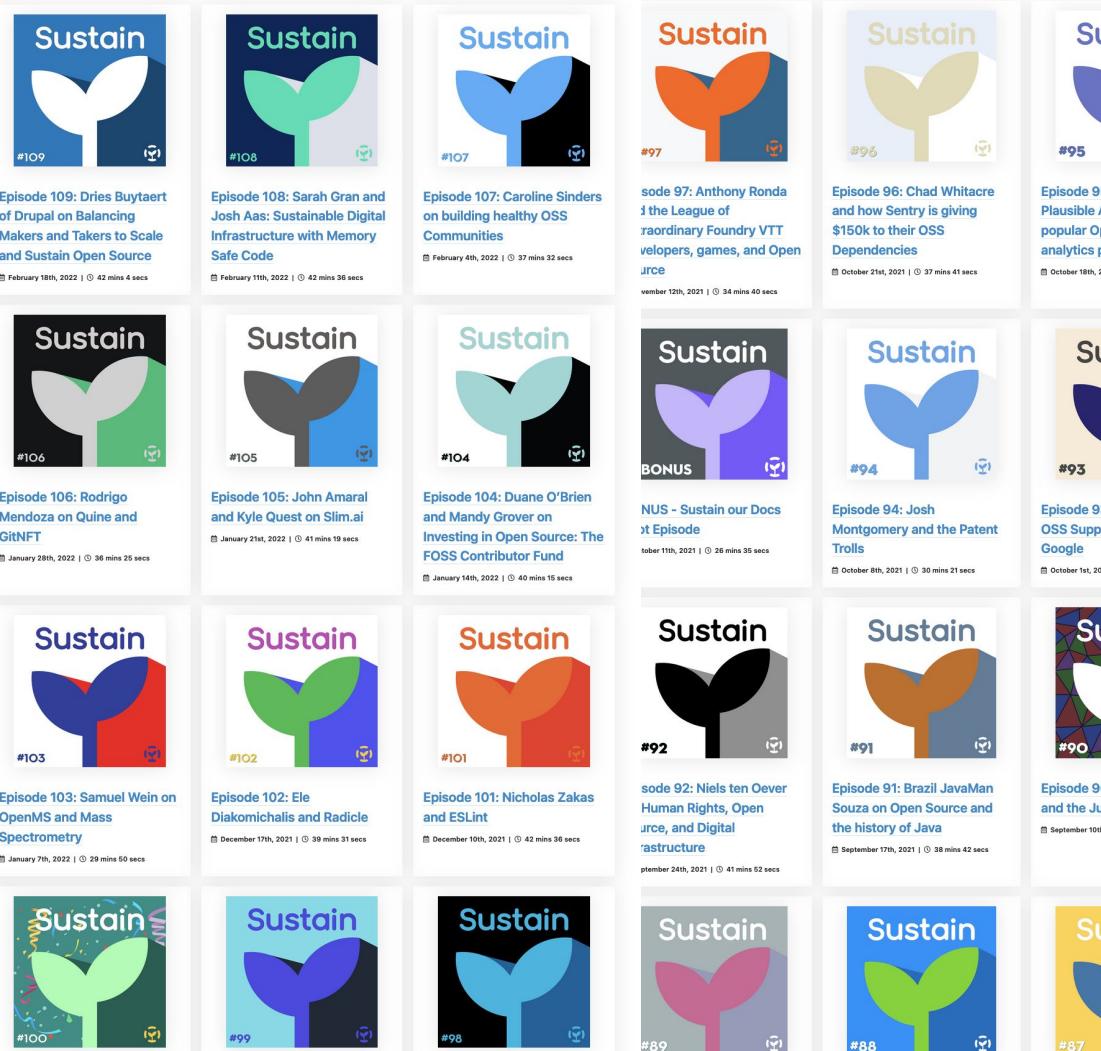
Why would you **NOT** use Open Source?

Why would you **NOT** use Open Source?

- Extractive use cases
- Poor expectation setting for users
- Too transparent (medical, indigenous rights)
- Too much work building community
- Business logic could be proprietary
- Security (never roll your own)

SustainOSS Podcast

- Over 300 podcasts
- Hundreds of guests
- Mostly about open source



master ▾ 2 Branches 0 Tags



t



RichardLitt Add slides

75b2b9e · 7 years ago 233 Commits

img	Finished edits	7 years ago
meeting-notes	chore: update to check string	7 years ago
proposal	Moving proposal to its own folder	7 years ago
reading-notes	Change apostrophes	7 years ago
.gitignore	Use a proper thesis style. Thanks @jonathanPoitz	8 years ago
.travis.yml	fix: links	7 years ago
LREC2016.zip	Archived to stop text issues	7 years ago
README.md	docs: Add note about where to find the file	7 years ago
abstract.tex	Edit document after Alexis's comments	7 years ago
acknowledgements.tex	Small fixes	7 years ago
case-studies.tex	Edits to the Naskapi section	7 years ago
colloquium_slides.key	Add slides	7 years ago
colloquium_slides.pdf	Add slides	7 years ago
commands.sh	Add all commands into a shell file	7 years ago
conclusion.tex	Finished edits	7 years ago
data.json	Add all commands into a shell file	7 years ago
declaration.tex	Use roman characters for initial pages	7 years ago

My thesis on "Open Source Code and Low Resource Languages" for an MSc in Language Science and Technology at Saarland University

nlp thesis dissertation saarland
endangered-languages nlproc lrl
saarland-university
low-resource-languages

Readme

Activity

20 stars

5 watching

4 forks

Contributors 2

RichardLitt Richard Littauer

fritzvd Fritz van Deventer

TeX 99.5% Shell 0.5%

Does sustainability matter for this repo?



perisoreus

Public

Pin

Unwatch 1

Fork 1

Star 2

main

1 Branch 1 Tag



t

+



Scripts used on files from various community science platforms, to study vocalisations in Perisoreus species

nlp ebird inaturalistcommunity-science xeno-cantoReadmeMIT licenseActivity2 stars1 watching1 fork1 tags

Contributors 2

 **RichardLitt** Richard Littauer **dbetchkal** Davyd Halyn Betchkal

Languages

Does sustainability matter for this repo?

 **RichardLitt** Tighten up figure

b409718 · 5 months ago  13 Commits

 **.gitignore** Adding sound files 6 months ago

 **558679851.wav** Adding sound files 6 months ago

 **585940541.m4a** Adding sound files 6 months ago

 **585940541.wav** Adding sound files 6 months ago

 **Figure.png** Tighten up figure 5 months ago

 **LICENSE** Init 7 months ago

 **README.md** Init 7 months ago

 **appendix-1.md** Add in appendix 6 months ago

 **create_figures.py** Tighten up figure 5 months ago

 **get_attribution_for_sic_jay.py** Init 7 months ago

 **get_data_from_macauley_library.py** Init 7 months ago

 **get_gryjay_species_comments.py** Init 7 months ago

master

22 Branches 223 Tags



bagder docs/libcurl: fix type and prototype problems in examples b1eebdf · 10 minutes ago 35,021 Commits

.circleci GHA: update wolfSSL/wolfssl to v5.8.0 4 days ago

.github docs/libcurl: fix type and prototype problems in examples 10 minutes ago

CMake build: enable gcc-15 picky warnings 3 hours ago

LICENSES copyright: update all copyright lines and remove year ran... 3 years ago

docs docs/libcurl: fix type and prototype problems in examples 10 minutes ago

include typecheck-gcc.h: fix the typechecks 5 days ago

lib scripts: fix perl indentation, whitespace, semicolons 3 hours ago

m4 build: enable gcc-15 picky warnings 3 hours ago

packages websocket: add option to disable auto-pong reply 2 weeks ago

plan9 copyright: update all copyright lines and remove year ran... 3 years ago

projects curltime: use libcurl time functions in src and tests/server last month

scripts scripts: fix perl indentation, whitespace, semicolons 3 hours ago

src lib: provide a getaddrinfo wrapper yesterday

Does sustainability matter
for this repo?

.git-blame-ignore-revs

copyright: update all copyright lines and remove year ran...

A command line tool and library for transferring data with URL syntax, supporting DICT, FILE, FTP, FTPS, GOPHER, GOPHERS, HTTP, HTTPS, IMAP, IMAPS, LDAP, LDAPS, MQTT, POP3, POP3S, RTMP, RTMPS, RTSP, SCP, SFTP, SMB, SMBS, SMTP, SMTPTS, TELNET, TFTP, WS and WSS. libcurl offers a myriad of powerful features

curl.se/

c http mqtt client ldap
library user-agent curl https
websocket ftp sftp libcurl scp
pop3 gopher transfer-data
hacktoberfest imaps transferring-data

Readme

View license

Code of conduct

Security policy

Activity

Custom properties

37.7k stars

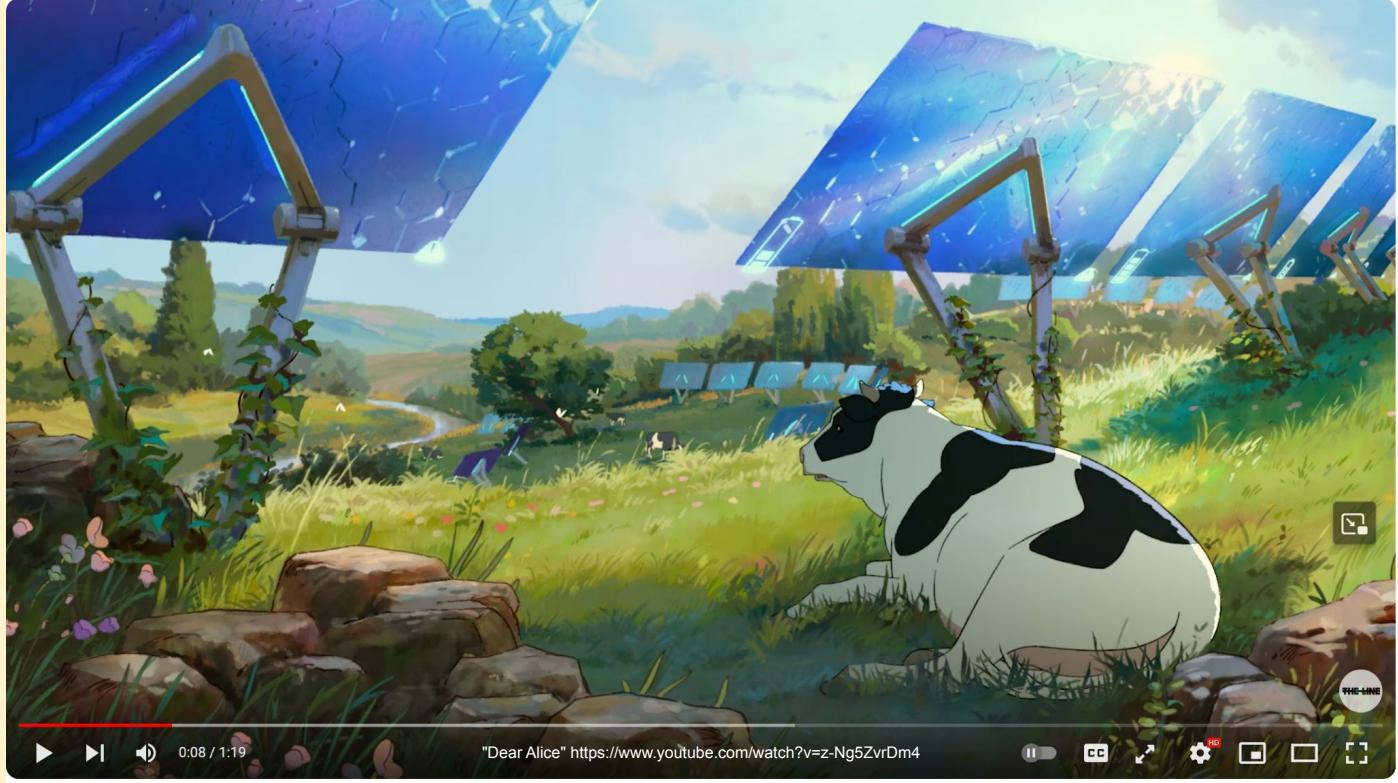
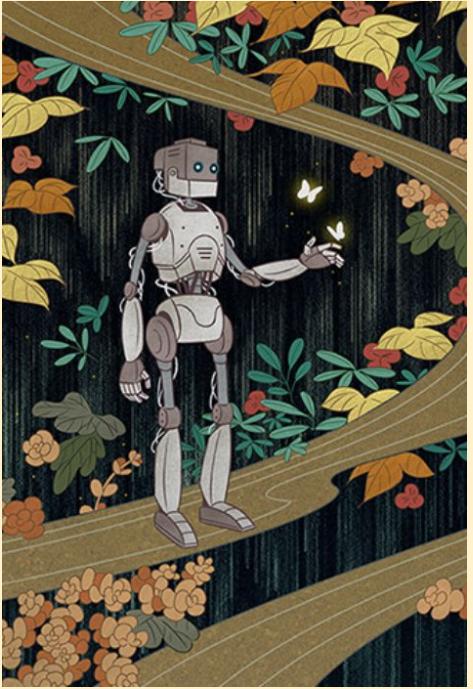
783 watching

6.7k forks

8.13.0 Latest
28 days ago

[Sponsor this project](#)

What is Sustainability?



<https://www.behance.net/gallery/127556565/Book-Cover-A-MONK-AND-ROBOT-BOOK>

"Dear Alice" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-Ng5ZvrDm4>



Where sustainability applies in FOSS:

- Projects
- Developers
- Communities
- Businesses
- Academia
- Ecosystems
- Environment



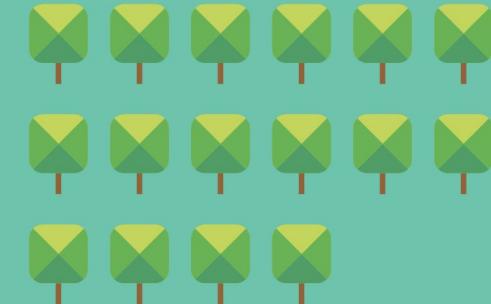
Sustain: FOSS Projects

- Growth
- Diversity
- Funding

Sustain: FOSS Projects

- Growth
 - More in than out
 - Pathways to maintainership
 - Product management and design planning
 - Goal: capturing market share of attention

New Seeds Planted in 2022



Barton County Library (MO, US)

Brimfield Public Library System (MA, US)

Central Skagit (WA, US)

Duplin County Library (NC, US)

Field Memorial Library (MA, US)

Gibsonville Public Library (NC, US)

Paige Memorial Library (MA, US)

Porter County Public Library System (IN, US)

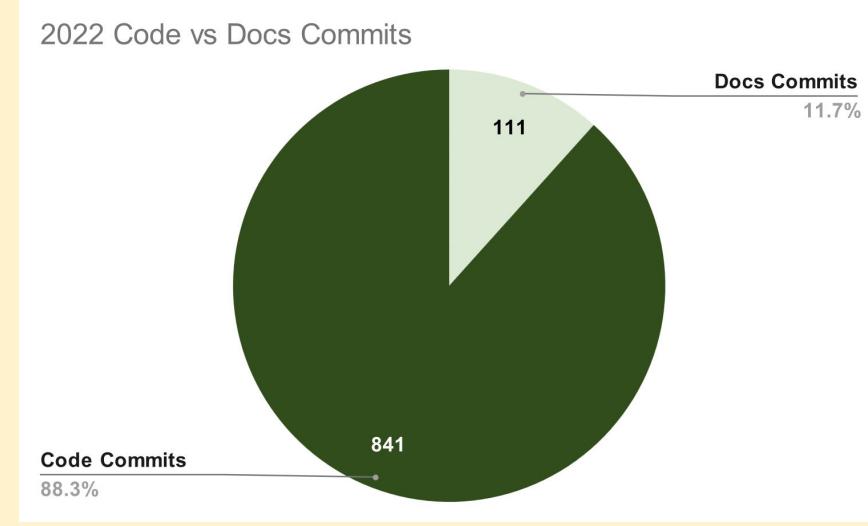
Ralls County Library (MO, US)

Reynolds County Library (MO, US)

St. Thomas Public Library (ON, CA)

Sustain: FOSS Projects

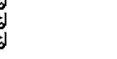
- Diversity
 - Welcoming community spaces
 - CoCs
 - Documentation
 - Moderation
 - Mentoring
 - Goal: towards some ethical destination



<https://evergreen-ils.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Annual%20Report%202022.pdf>

Sustain: FOSS Projects

- Funding
 - Funding for the project costs
 - Funding for the core maintainers
 - Lifestyle funding
 - Funding for all contributors
 - Non-fiscal sponsorships

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Sustain: FOSS Projects

- You can sell stuff:

Oxide PRODUCT ▾ RESOURCES ▾ COMPANY ▾ CAREERS 9 PODCASTS ▾ BLOG

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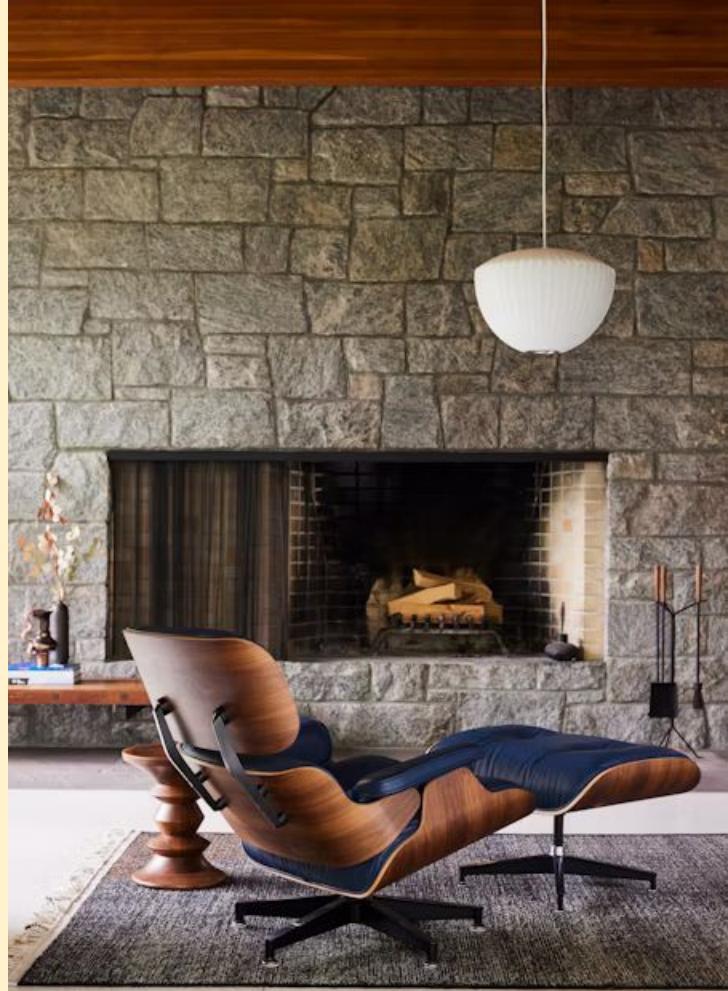
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Learn more



Sustain: FOSS Developers

- Satisfaction
- Career trajectories
- Mentoring
- Funds and recognition
- Avoiding burnout



Sustain: FOSS Communities

- Not always tied to a project
- Functionally similar to what we talked about above
- But at scale.



Sustain: FOSS Businesses and Corporate

- Focus: a bottom line
- Not pushing OSS onto your employee's private time
- Having advocates and marketing inside the company for open source
- Risk
- OSPOs
- "Collaboration"

**TALK OPENLY
DEVELOP OPENLY**

For open source practitioners committed to
Open Source Program Offices (OSPO).

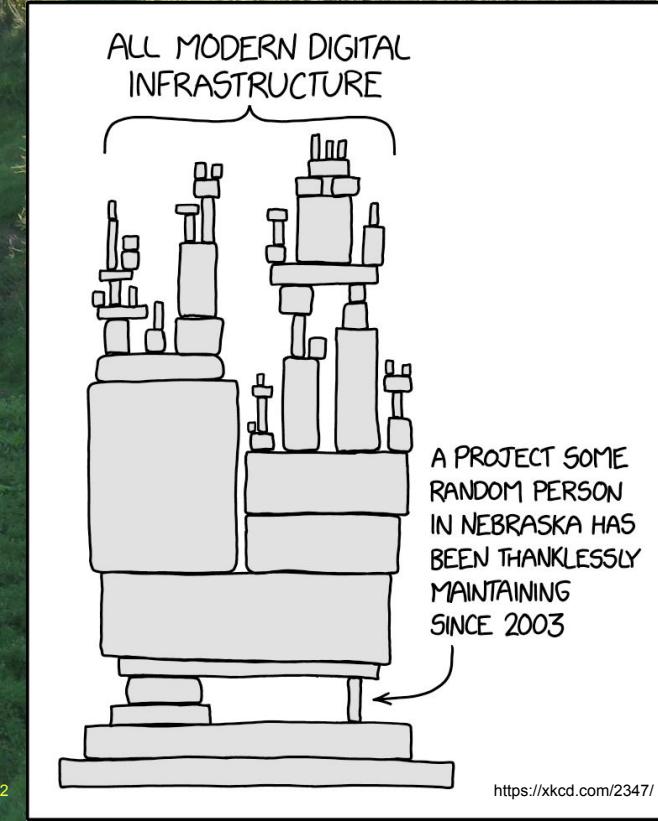
Sustain: FOSS Academia

- Not quite the same as industry or most open source
- Reproducibility
- Citations and altmetrics
- The project- or funding-based cycles of OSS in academia
- The student-graduation cycle of academia
- Where support comes from in the institution

Sustain: FOSS Ecosystem

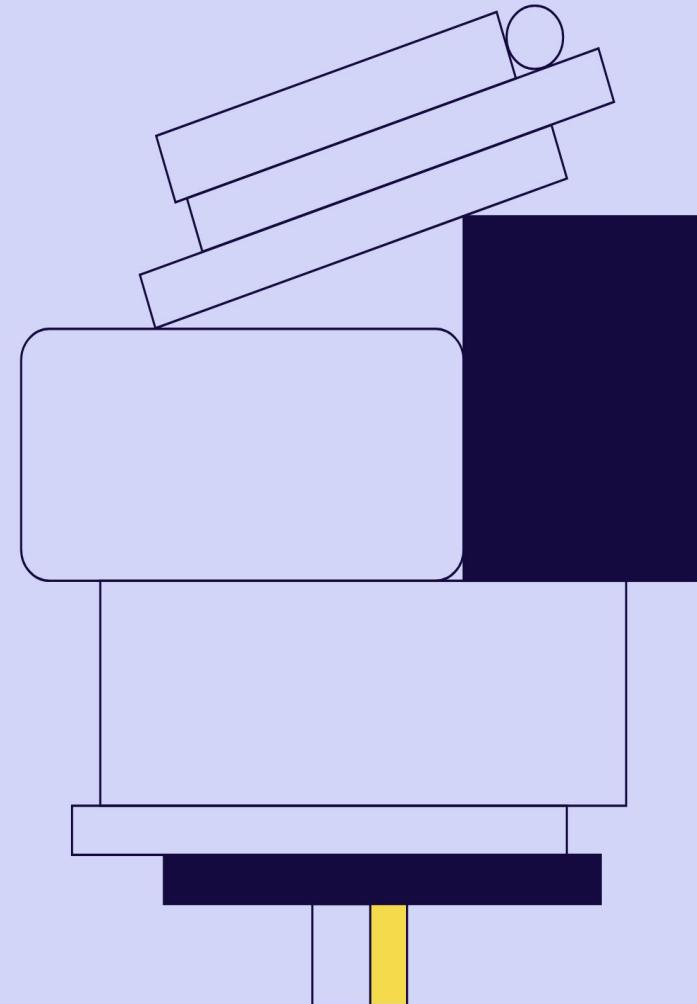
- Funding maintainers for their work
- Security and supply chains
- The "digital commons"

Gorse <https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/65500592>

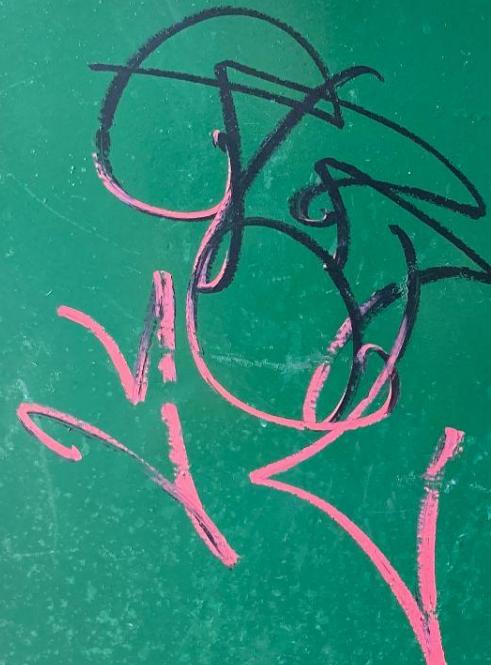


Sustain: FOSS Ecosystem

- Legal sustainability and licenses
 - Stopping proliferation
 - Open washing
 - Patent issues
- AI + open source
- Taxation and infrastructural funding
- The CRA and their ilk



Sustain: FOSS Ecosystem



Who will
stop
Chat
GPT

Sustain: FOSS & Environment

- Open source hardware
- Carbon-neutral data storage centers
- Reducing server costs
- Not using bitcoin
- Avoiding the conference trap

Evergreen Community Calendar

Today Apr 21 – 27, 2024

Print Week Month Agenda

Sun 4/21	Mon 4/22	Tue 4/23	Wed 4/24	Thu 4/25	Fri 4/26	Sat 4/27
oam	2024 Evergreen C	2024 Evergreen Online Conference	2024 Evergreen C			

Sustain: FOSS & the whole environment

- Tech for environmental activists
- Tech for environmental studies
- Use of tech for the planet as a whole



Sustain: FOSS & the rest of people

- i18n (it is available to everyone, regardless of language)
- g11n (is available to everyone, regardless of culture)
- a11y (is available to everyone, regardless of ability)

Sustain???

At this point, it should be clear that "sustainability" is being overused and is somewhat semantically bleached.



When you see "Sustain", ask:

- For what?
- For whom?
- For how long?
- From what original state?
- Why this term?

Sustain covers all manner of sins.

- Was it healthy to begin with?
- Were people treated well?
- Were practices ethical?
- What about all of the stuff we talked about above?

What does "sustain" mean, anyway?

- Temporal term
- It ignores:
 - End-of-life cycles for software projects
 - End-of-life cycles for software ecosystems
 - Boom-and-bust cycles for fads



"Sustain" fails to recognize:

- Current achievements
- Creative output
- The bigger picture.

The bigger picture:

- Life on earth is dying.
- Things are mildly OK for some humans right now.
- The heat death of the universe.

Red Azolla <https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/143949050>



The bigger picture:

Every piece of software you love will die and be forgotten.



Baldcypress <https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/146574140>

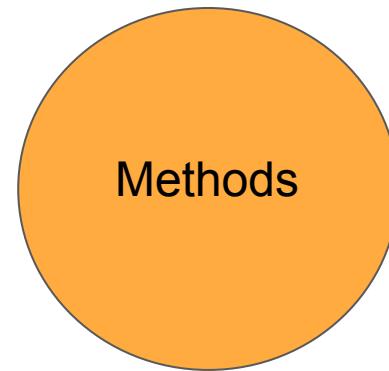
A dark, dense forest scene featuring a large, gnarled tree in the foreground. A bright, glowing opening in the center-right reveals a path through a garden with colorful flowers and a small stream. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and magical.

What can we do while we're here?

Let's get back to open source:

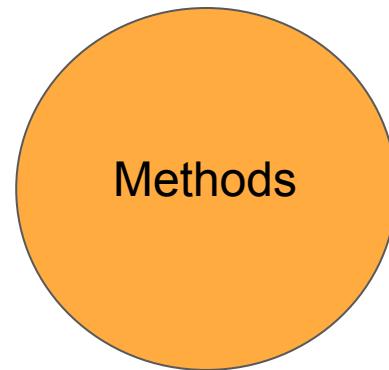


or



Using this definition:

"Open source is a verb, not a noun."



So what is open, then?

- Antitrust maneuvering
- Open washing
- Avoiding sign-off from bureaucrats.
- Over-the-wall throwing
- AI scraping
- Extraction



Nuance

62 lines (37 loc) · 5.4 KB

Preview

Code

Blame

Raw



Contributing Code to iNaturalist

iNaturalist is open source for the sake of transparency, to take advantage of stuff that's free for open source projects, and so volunteer developers can help us out with small coding tasks if they'd like to. Unlike many open source projects, we do not intend it as a tool one can fork and customize for different applications. Instead, we code with only one instance in mind: iNaturalist.org. We mention this mainly to set expectations. We can't / won't stop you from forking this repo to make a celebrity spotting platform, but don't expect us to merge any of that code into this repo.

Nuance

Open source?

Sure!

62 lines (37 loc) · 5.4 KB

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Conclusion

Not all open source communities are the same.

Conclusion

Not all open source is the same.

Conclusion

Not all open is the same.

"Open" from Midjourney



But...

Is this project OSI  approved: Yes or No.
Is it Open Source: Well...

Because this guy

- Ferdinand Saussure
 - Inventor of semiotics
-
- Denotation
 - Connotation



Because this guy

- Ferdinand Saussure
 - Inventor of semiotics
-
- Denotation => OSI
 - Connotation => Open source more broadly



Abstractions

- Depend upon shared context, values, and delegated authority
- Useful for talking to each each other



So, what matters?

- To act cooperatively and virtuously
- To make life more meaningful
- To reduce pain and suffering

Instead of saying "open source FTW", ask:

- Does my personal development life / project / ecosystem / business contribute to the happiness of myself and others?
- Does it recognize, validate, and protect basic living rights?
- Does it reduce harm?
- Does it increase capacity for wonder, awe, and joy?

What gets measured is what is valued.

- How are you measuring joy?
- How are you measuring wonder?
- How are you measuring impact on real lives?

How are you working towards improving those metrics?

A photograph of a small, colorful bird perched on a thin, bare branch. The bird has a dark cap, a white patch on its wing, and a mix of brown, yellow, and white feathers on its body. It is positioned in the center-left of the frame, surrounded by out-of-focus tree trunks and branches. A red speech bubble in the top-left corner contains the word "Thanks.".

Thanks.

A close-up photograph of a tree trunk with rough, textured bark. A red speech bubble in the bottom-right corner contains the word "Questions".

Questions?