

FLOSSing proprietary code

Seminarbeitrag, Beiträge zum Software Engineering

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I propose to present two papers on private-collective innovation¹ where private companies enlist the help of the FLOSS community to build a commercial product. Shared development costs via community contributions as well as boosted organizational learning are obvious benefits. But what are the drawbacks? The second paper focuses on the developer as a link between the company that employs him and the community.

“Extending private-collective innovation: a case study”

M. Stuermer, S. Spaeth, and G. Von Krogh. “Extending private-collective innovation: a case study.” In: *R&D Management* 39.2 (2009), pp. 170–191

- private investment model of innovation vs. investment of resources to create public goods
- characterized by non-rivalry and non-exclusivity in consumption, intellectual property rights are forfeited and the resulting innovation is offered to the public for free
- case study of Nokia Internet Tablet shows benefits and costs
- study conducted semi-structured interviews, allowing participants the opportunity to narrate stories

Presentation

- introduce private-collective innovation model
- previously known benefits when following the model
- bring attention to hidden costs
- describe study/interviews, why was the product a suitable subject

¹Stuermer, Spaeth, and Von Krogh are using the term *innovation* in the tradition of Schumpeter [2, Ch 3.B, p. 83] as being a new combination of production factors (invention) and its immediate adoption.

- present findings: benefits, costs, strategies to mitigate costs
- provide 2-3 anecdotes from the interviews

“Champions of revealing – The role of open source developers in commercial firms”

J. Henkel. “Champions of revealing – The role of open source developers in commercial firms.” In: *Industrial and Corporate Change* 18.3 (2009), p. 435

- the link between firms engaging in open source software (OSS) development and the OSS community is established by individual developers
- double allegiance to firm and OSS community
- developers expose the firm to the risk of losing intellectual property
- study done using interviews and large-scale survey
- focus on potential principal-agent problems between developer and employer
- biggest problem for companies: the Free Software ideologist

Presentation

- introduce topic, actors, principles (e.g. “Free Software ideology”)
- programmer as bridge between two worlds
- bring attention to principal-agent problems (information asymmetry and potentially diverging interests)
- describe study/interviews, why was the product a suitable subject
- present findings: revealing code may be in firm’s best interest, management overestimates the risk and underestimates the benefits of openness
- provide 2-3 anecdotes from the interviews

References

- [1] M. Stuermer, S. Spaeth, and G. Von Krogh. “Extending private-collective innovation: a case study.” In: *R&D Management* 39.2 (2009), pp. 170–191.
- [2] J.A. Schumpeter. *Business cycles*. Vol. 100. Cambridge Univ Press, 1939.
- [3] J. Henkel. “Champions of revealing – The role of open source developers in commercial firms.” In: *Industrial and Corporate Change* 18.3 (2009), p. 435.