Short Essay on Open Source and Open Data Opportunities and Challenges

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Collaboration between developers is a very important factor for the success of a project. Open source can be seen as a way to support this collaboration and achieve better quality when developing software. Other key aspect that defines a project success is the information that is transmitted to the user. As we live in a world where knowledge is never too much, getting large amounts of data to handle in applications we are developing is essential. This is were open data comes to make the difference, as it provides resources to work on. But how can we relate this two concepts? What opportunities do they bring to us? And why are they so important in the modern world?

Let's start by exploring the definition of open source. Open source software can be seen as software where any developer is allowed to view the source code, modify it and contribute to the source. Unlike enterprise software, open source software doesn't have a cost becoming accessible to any person who wants to make use of it. Other similar concept is the one of open data. As the name says, open data is data that is public and made to be reused and republished. This two concepts are dependent of each other in a way that open data without being treated by software is just a set of raw numbers that may not make sense to the end user, and software almost always needs data to have a purpose.

The main advantages of this two phenomenons is the transparency that they both provide, giving to the user a sense of trust. This is why some companies are starting to adopt this techniques to increase customers trust. Avoiding corruption is also a positive consequence of this two methodologies, especially open data, that provides real data to anyone who wants to see it. Other great advantage of working with open source and open data is the many ways that we can facilitate users interaction with the system when consulting data. We say this because if we give to the user a raw set of data he will have trouble interpreting the information, but by using open software it becomes easy to reuse code that better displays the data that the user wants to consult.

But not everything is perfect in both open source and open data as the main challenge stands in not everyone collaborating as much as it should. Most people take advantage of the fact that it's free, build on top of it, and never give back or don't even credit the

authors. This is the big problem in open source community as it completely depends on everyone giving something back to increase it's growth. Other challenge, specially concerning open data, is trying to convince private sectors to open their data, as some companies are very afraid that by doing that their competitors may steal something. But this can be fought by making companies understand the value that they will gain in the future, because they will allow that other persons build on top of that originating a better product.

The main conclusion of this essay is that by helping each other we achieve more. Open source is a proof of this fact and open data is starting to proof that too. By recurring to this two methodologies we are allowing the development of better software that can improve our lifestyle. But also in the future we need to start asking the same ethical questions to open data as we do to open source, because we live in a world where privacy is more important than ever, and assuring that our private data is secure is crucial.