



Talk is silver, code is gold? Contribution beyond source code in Drupal

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Who am I?

 Areas of interest: Free Software, Commons-Based Peer Production, social computing, Computer Supported Cooperative Work, Science and Technology Studies etc.



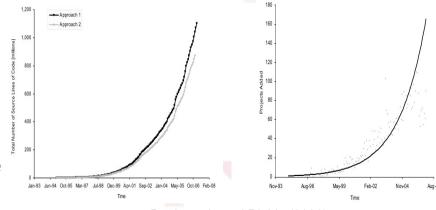
- Working as a Drupal developer for the past 5 years. Previously working with Django, Moodle, etc.
- Previous background in Computer Science (@URJC [Spain], @NTNU [Norway])
- Started PhD in Sociology @UniS [UK] in October 2013
- Collaborating with the FP7 EU project P2Pvalue (www.p2pvalue.eu)
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Outline

- Introduction: Drupal as a CBPP community
- Research questions
- Data and methods
- Findings
- Discussion
- Conclusion and future work

The growth and success of FLOSS

- Exponential growth in production of Free/Libre Open Source Software
 - (FLOSS)
- E.g. Deshpande and Riehle (2008):#LoC & #projects, period 1995-2006
- Increasing adoption of FLOSS, abundance of organisations participating (Future of Open Source 2015 survey)



Deshpande and Riehle (2008)

The annual Future of Open Source survey confirms what we all suspected: Open source has won infoworld.com/article/291464









Not only about the software...

- New ways of organising to produce software, in comparison with traditional software engineering practices (Raymond, 2001):
 - Source code publicly available at any time
 - Public testing, scrutiny and experimentation



What is Commons-Based Peer Production (CBPP)?

- **Spreading** to diverse areas: open science, open agriculture, Peer-to-peer urbanism, etc. (Fuster Morell et al., 2014). See http://directory.p2pvalue.eu
- A new model of socio-economic production in which groups of loosely connected individuals cooperate with each other to produce meaningful products without a traditional hierarchical organisation (Benkler, 2006)











What are the commons?

The commons: as a resource or good shared by a group of people that
may be subject to social dilemmas, such as over-exploitation or free-riding.

(Hess & E. Ostrom, 2007)

- Classification of goods according to:
 - Excludability: feasible to prevent its access to it
 - Rivalry: its use or consumption prevents or affects the consumption by others

	Rival	Non-Rival
Excludable	Private goods. E.g.: bread	Toll goods. E.g.: cable TV
Non- excludable	Common Pool Resources E.g.: fish taken from the ocean	Public goods E.g.: lighthouse Free Software

V. Ostrom and E. Ostrom (1999)

What are the commons?

- Furthermore, some of these goods are **anti-rival**: the more people use them, the more utility each person receives (e.g.: Free software).

 Weber (2004)
- One more dimension, the scope of the ownership: "Those goods that belong to everyone and no one at the same time, therefore not following the rules of the market"

 Lafuente et al. (2007)

The Drupal goods as a commons

- Anti-rival: its use by a person increases the value for other users
- **Non-excludable**: accessibility is protected as part of the licenses applied for the code, the contents created in the community, etc.
- Global: the ownership does not belong to any individual or state, as protected by the licenses chosen (exception: the trademark)



Drupal community as a CBPP community

- Ongoing discussion on the differences between CBPP, peer production, the delimitation criteria,
 etc.
- Drupal as a community whose mode of production (Fuster Morell et al., 2014) is:
 - Collaborative process
 - Peer-based: different levels of structure depending on the process, but not mainly based on contractual obligations nor coercion
 - Commons-process: process driven by the general interest, results in openness of the resources
 - Favouring reproducibility: via Free Software or Creative Commons licenses, exchange of practices, etc.

Contribution activities as unit of analysis

- Understand processes and dynamics: how do these communities organise themselves?
- Previous studies looked either at the individuals or at the whole community
 (e.g.: motivations to contribute, structure of the community, etc.). Huang, Le &
 Panchal (2011), Sims, J. P. (2013), Nordin (2014)
- Looking at contribution activities as unit of analysis, drawing on Activity
 Theory (Engeström, 1987) as a framework
- Implies to understand deeply what contribution means: stage 1

Contribution

- A blurry notion: meanings constantly evolving as part of negotiation processes between the participants
- Critical in CBPP communities focussed on digital commons: economy of contribution [not based on direct reciprocity]
 rather than gift economy [based on direct reciprocity] (Wittel, 2013)

Contribution: "code-centrism"

- "Code-centrism":
 - In FLOSS literature: typically looking at source code as main notion of contribution
 - In FLOSS communities: "Talk is silver, code is gold"
- What about other contributions?
- Affective labour as the "lifeblood" of the commons (Bollier, 2014): the immaterial labour present in social interaction which creates or modifies emotional experiences (Hardt, 1999)



Research questions

- RQ1: What type of activities are perceived as contributions in the Drupal community? Do the "official" meanings match the ones of the members of the community?
- RQ2: How are the identified activities represented in the main platform of collaboration in an individual level?
- RQ3: Can some of these activities be understood as sources of affective labour and what relevance do they have? Are there any differences on how they are perceived between members with different degrees of experience?

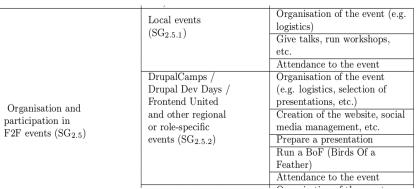
Data and methods

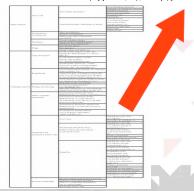
- Ethnographic methodological approach: online and offline
- Triangulation of data collection methods:
 - Participant observation (6 months): online participation, 13 events, etc.
 - Documentary analysis: Drupal Planet as "native" starting point. 2 years archive (3,266 documents). See http://www.davidrozas.com/lab/drupal_planet_archive.php
 - Semi-structured qualitative interviews (4): London and Madrid
- Analysis supported by CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data AnalysiS)

"[...]organise talks, meetups or just hang out with Drupalistas to drink some beers and have a talk, are also very important activities, and very positive for the community."

Drupal developer, 7 years. Original reply in Spanish.

- Two main types emerged, according to the focus of action:
 - "Object-oriented": source code, documentation, translation, etc.
 - "Community-oriented": usage & support, online community management, training & mentoring, organisation & participation in F2F events, etc.
- Suggestive, not exhaustive, list









- Analysis of main platform shows that "community-oriented" ones are less visible
- From them, this affects
 especially local/regional F2F
 events

User support

Even the most gifted Drupal developers were new once, and chances are someone has helped you at some point along the way. No matter your skill level, you can give back by sharing what you know with other users needing support. It's a nice thing to do, and who knows? You might learn something, to be

Find out how to help with user support.

Documentation

Whether you're interest on providing fine-grained API documentation, writing step-by-step tutorials for the handbook, or producing multimedia

with documentation

Translations

al languages, from Afrikaans to Turkish. If you know another language, you can offer your skills to help maintain Drupal core and contributed module translations.

Find out how to help with translations

Testing

If you have a keen any or detail, or even just a knack for breaking things, you can help Drupal with testing. Good testing directly contributes to the stampy or provided in a second of the project.

and out how to help in testing.

Design and Usability.

Find out how to help with Drupal core UX or visit the Drupal Usability group.

Donations

Want to help but don't have the time? Want to say "thank you" to the folks who have put work into making Drupal what it is? Want to ensure that Drupal's infrastructure stays healthy and strong? Why not consider a monetary donation?

Donate now or find out how to help with donations

Development

Drupal thrives on develorer contributions, in the form of both contributed modules and patches to core. Helping out in development helps the project according to the project of the proje

out now to me ith developmen

Themes

ugn? Line and breathe XHTML and CSS? Contribute your knowledge to Drupal in the form of themes!

Find out how to help with themes.

Marketing

Help get the word out about Drupal! Put your graphic design skills or marketing savvy to work in promoting Drupal and spreading the word!

Learn more in the Drupal marketing group

- Offer empirical evidence of the need of widening our understanding of contribution activities
- This lack of visibility is also reflected in the main platform of collaboration





- Profiles are key elements in the generation of perceptions by other users in FLOSS (Marlow, Dabbish & Herbsleb, 2013)
- Source of public references, significant role in the process of status attainment in FLOSS communities (Stewart, 2005)



Drupal Answers

Current Role(s): PhD Student University of Surrey

IDC: drozas

Professional Info

Companies Worked For University of Surrey, Educatic, Infosys, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Solusoft

http://www.davidrozas.com http://www.surrey.ac.uk/sociology /people/phd/david rozas linder htm

Personal Info

Gender: male

Languages spoken: English

I am a free software enthusiast and I have been learning and having fun with Drupal and its community since 2010.

I am currently studying a PhD under the supervision of Professor Nigel Gilbert and Dr Paul Hodkinson. My research concerns individual involvement and group dynamics of Commons-Based Peer Production communities, focussing on the Drupal community as a case study. More info: http://www.surrev.ac.uk/sociology/people/phd/david_rozas

History

Member for 5 years 2 weeks Over 100 edits Documentation

Areas of Expertise: Site builder Developer

project manager Drupal Events: DrupalCon Copenhagen 2010

DrupalCon Amsterdam 2014

Projects

FB Likebox (79 commits)

OScience (51 commits) Patterns (47 commits)

Patterns Installation Profile (41 commits)

Patterns Client (16 commits) Patterns Server (15 commits)

Total: 249 commits

You Rock! Thank you for

purchasing a Drupal Association membership. Your support has helped us to support the Drupal

Your membership will expire on Nov 08, 2016.



drozas helps support and grow the Drupal community with the Drupal Association.







I contributed Drupal patches I contributed Drupal modules I contributed Drupal installation

I contributed to Drupal issue nuelles

I contributed Drupal

documentation

I contributed Drupal translations I provide Drupal-related services

- Inequality in the representation of "community-oriented" activities
- Affecting specially to "organisation and participation in local/regional F2F events"
- Some Drupalistas try to overcome these limitations





Examples of "object-oriented" contributions reflected in the profiles

History

Member for 9 years 5 months

Documentation Over 1000 edits

Projects

Drupal cor (6486 commits)

Poll (from core) (2557 commits)

Spark (160 commits)

Quiz (102 commits)

Drupal Module Upgrader (92 commits)

Pants (76 commits)

Revision Moderation (74 commits)

Organic groups (72 commits)

Documentation (60 commits)

Webchick's test profile (52 commits)

Drupal 7 to 8 Module Upgrader [dead] (51 commits)

Localization contributions

Spanish

1124 approved translations

History

Member for

4 years 4 weeks

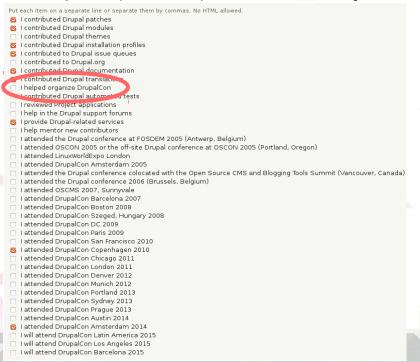
Primary profile

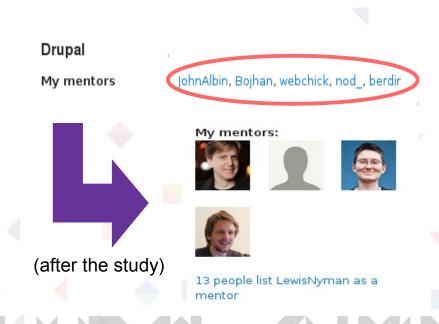
Profile on https://www.drupal.org/





Examples (the few) of "community-oriented" contributions reflected in the profiles





Use of "open fields" to try to overcome these limitations

Bio:

Read more at www.chandeepkhosa.com, email hello@chandeepkhosa.com, or call 07962 382 442.

I am a freelance Drupal Site Builder & Front End Developer looking for new freelance projects in London and have been developing websites with Drupal since 2007.

I have been very involve (in training and mentoring w b developers, particularly young people, gesting them into concers specialising in Drupal. I have helped to support the Drupal community by speaking at camps and conferences on topics including e-Commerce & responsive web design.

- -- Drupal community --
- 🕏 Founding & organisi 👩 Drupal West London
- ঐ Mentoring apprentices & creating open source curriculum for learning Drupal - Open Drupal
- \$ Speaking (C Drupal camps on Drupal Commerce, Responsive web design & Open Drupar http://chandeepkhosa.com/?q=speaker
- ☼ Organising & facilitating a BoF (birds of a feather) session at DrupalCon Amsterdam 2014 https://amsterdam2014.drupal.org /bof/open-drupal-drupal-apprenticeships-...
- ☆ Contributing & reviewing front end patches during sprints at Drupal Dev Days Szeged, Drupalaton & DrupalCon Amsterdam

- Descriptive account of how identified activities are represented
- Empirical evidence of the uneven representation of some contribution activities, affecting specially the "communityoriented" category

- Analysis focussed on organisation and participation in F2F events – most clear example of affective labour (immaterial, creation and modification of emotional experiences)
- These contribution activities play a relevant role in the sustainability of the community: "come for the software, stay for the community"

"[...]indeed, the fact of attending these meetups [referring to local events], it was really good. Because you realise there are people behind the source code, right? There are people behind the modules. And you meet people that can tell you this kind of personal stories.[...] And then, it stops being something anonymous, it becomes something yours."

Drupal developer and devop, 1.5 years. Original reply in Spanish.

• Drupal **becomes a community**, avoid barriers, increases the will for reciprocity, etc.

"[...]friendships are developed, and seeing people in-person helps a lot. I believe so, the idea of... having F2F meetups and get to know each other in-person is essential.[...] In the IRC you will talk about certain things, but after a day cycling 50 or 60 kilometres [referring to the "Tour de Drupal"], [...]there will be more interaction for sure, and a bigger friendship [...]"

Drupal developer, 7 years. Original reply in Spanish.

• As the engagement with the commons increases, **affective relationships develop** (friendship). Commitment, sense of community, avoid to burnout, etc.

"Because the community is growing, then you have less of a sense of community. But I think the solution to that is to have smaller local communities.

So, you know, as the worldwide community grows, then you start finding, like whereas before it might have been 50 people worldwide, now you have like 50 people in your part of London, or wherever."

Drupal themer and developer, 11 years.

 Local activities help to scale up the sense of community, as it grows

- Existence and relevance of affective labour
- Different types of emotional experiences which foster collaboration. Vary according to degree of experience
- Not only understood as a type of contribution; not only unequally represented; they are key for sustainability

- Role of F2F in FLOSS and hacker culture (Coleman, 2013, p. 73), having "affective, moral, economic and political
 - dimensions"
- "[...] people embark on decisions and actions they probably would not have considered otherwise. Some hackers decide to formally apply to become a Debian developer, while longtime developers decide not to quit the project." (Coleman, 2013, p. 71)

- Additional evidence, but furthermore: framing them as contributions
- Empirical evidence of **lack of visibility** in main platform of collaboration:
 - Main sections related to encourage contribution
 - In an individual level: user profiles

"metrics such as code commits used to gauge contribution by Open Source literature and by Drupal.org itself paint an incomplete picture of the types of contributions that actually happen in the Drupal project" (Nordin, 2014, p. 43)

- Filling Nordin's (2014) gap:
 - The role of local events
 - Scaling up the sense of community
- Additional evidence of the lack of visibility

- Connecting to major literature on commons, through affective labour.
- The participation "transforms the local subjectivities" of Drupalistas, as in non-digital domain: community-based forest in Odisha (Singh, 2013)
- Shaping subjectivity: becoming a "commoner" through "commoning"

- Not only socio-cultural reasons:
 - Need of exploring new dimensions of value in CBPP communities (e.g. P2Pvalue, Open Value Network)
 - Incorporate them in socio-technical systems in concise, useful and distributed ways [e.g. Sabir, (De Filippi, P. & Hassan, S. (2014))]

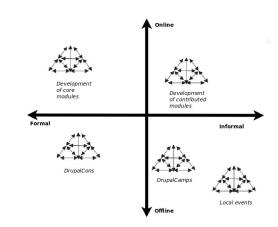
Drupal community working on that direction:
 improve how these activities are represented in the user
 profiles at Drupal.org, to "[...] go beyond code creation activity
 and into more community-oriented stuff, since that's also a
 huge part of what makes Drupal healthy." (Drupal.org, 2014a)

Conclusion

- Need to broaden our understanding of contribution
 activities in FLOSS communities, beyond "object-centric" ones
- Lack of visibility of "community-oriented" ones and its relevance
- Need to keep on exploring conceptualisation and incorporation of value in CBPP communities

Future work

- Exploring some of these contribution activities in depth, drawing on Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987) to understand organisational dynamics: decentralisation, formalisation
- Tensions between entities and activity system
- Understanding better "community-oriented" contributions using digital methods









Future work... researching in a "Drupal way"

- Giving back to the community as researchers:
 - List of publications, dissemination, discussions, BoFs, etc.
 - Network of "Drupal researchers" (https://groups.drupal.org/research-about-drupal-community)
- I would love to count on your help!
 - Looking for Drupalistas to interview (around 1 hour)
 - Surveys
- Feedback, thoughts, please ping me!
 - · @drozas
 - drozas@surrey.ac.uk



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Any questions/feedback?

Thanks!

¡Gracias! Danke!

¡Gràcies!

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