



Free Libre Open Source Software Master

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Master Thesis

Trade-Off Analysis of Open Source Web
Mobile App Frameworks

Author: Esther Parrilla-Endrino

Tutors: Prof. Gregorio Robles, Prof. Daniel Izquierdo

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Summary

The main goal of this analysis is to perform a trade-off of some of the most popular FLOSS¹ Web² compliant frameworks used for development of mobile apps.

In my daily work I play the role of Technical Manager who coordinates the development of both standalone and web solutions for the Aerospace field, therefore I have no possibility of working in projects related to mobile apps implementation which is one of the most interesting activity nowadays.

For that reason I wanted to dedicate my Master Thesis to this kind of solutions, by doing the exercise of performing a deep search in the existing FLOSS mobile app frameworks, selecting a couple of the most popular ones and then comparing their capabilities using a well-formed system like Open-BRR brings to me the opportunity to learn more about these developments and this knowledge could be useful in the future for my professional career.

¹<https://www.fsf.org/about/what-is-free-software>

²<http://www.w3.org/html/wg/drafts/html/master/>

All the work done for this Master Thesis is Open Source material licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License³, it has been developed using GitHub repository and can be downloaded from the following url:

`https://github.com/eparrillae/eparrillae-mswl-thesis/tree/master/
MasterThesis/thesis`

³<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>

Chapter 1

Overview

Nowadays mobile devices such as mobile phones, tablets etc... have become the preferred tools for communicating with each other, for that reason there are lots of JavaScript/AJAX libraries and frameworks specifically built for the Mobile Web. These solutions enable web developers to quickly and easily create HTML5¹/CSS3² based mobile apps that work on Android, iOS and BlackBerry devices, and produce a native-app-like experience inside a browser.

The fact that all frameworks taken under consideration in this study are Open Source solutions is a consequence of different subjects I studied during the Master Thesis and the idea that this kind of solutions bring more benefits to the development community instead of closed solutions.

¹<http://www.w3.org/html/wg/drafts/html/master/>

²<http://www.w3.org/TR/CSS/>

Chapter 2

Objectives

The objectives of this Master Thesis were defined and agreed with my tutors and can be summarized in the following list:

- Select a couple of representative Open Source web-based frameworks for developing mobile apps from the existing solutions currently available in the market.
- Set a checklist of points to be analyzed for each solution in the form of well-defined metrics that can be properly measured.
- Analyze each solution using the OpenBRR methodology, setting different weights and scores for each category according to this model. Spreadsheets shall be used for automating this process.
- Summarize pros and contras of each solution.

- Perform a comparison of the results for each solution taking as a baseline the final version of each spreadsheet and also applying a SWOT comparison analysis on top of OpenBRR.

Chapter 3

Selected Frameworks

The following frameworks have been selected among the most popular existing ones:

- jQuery Mobile: <http://jquerymobile.com/>
- Sencha Touch: <http://www.sencha.com/products/touch>

Chapter 4

OpenBRR Analysis

4.1 What is OpenBRR?

The Business Readiness Rating model (OpenBRR)[[1](#)] is intended to help IT managers assess which Open Source software would be most suitable for their needs. Open Source users can also share their evaluation ratings with potential adopters, continuing the virtuous cycle and “architecture of participation” of open source.

The initiative is lead by the Carnegie Mellon West University, Spike Source, Intel and O’Reilly’s Code Zoo and offer proposals for standardizing different types of evaluation data and grouping them into categories.

The framework suggests the following metrics to be analyzed and evalu-

ated:

- Functionality
- Usability
- Quality
- Security
- Performance
- Scalability
- Architecture
- Support
- Documentation
- Adoption
- Community
- Professionalism

The model is composed of the following phases:

- Phase 1 - Quick Assessment: defining and ranking of metrics and categories according to their importance within the product that is going to be evaluated.

- Phase 2 - Target usage assessment: Set the necessary category and metric weights according to the project's goals.
- Phase 3 - Data collection and processing: Gather data for each metric used in each category rating, and calculate the applied weighting for each metric, spreadsheets are used for this purpose.
- Phase 4 - Data translation: Use category ratings and the functional orientation weighting factors to calculate the Business Readiness Rating score and publish the software's Business Readiness Rating score.

The Business Readiness Rating model offers a trusted and open framework for software evaluation, this model aims to accelerate the software evaluation process with a systematic approach, facilitate the exchange of information between IT managers, result in better decisions, and increase confidence in high-quality open source software.

4.2 Data Sources

For analyzing the different HTML5 mobile app frameworks and provide a reliable comparison, data from different sources will be used. In this section I present the most important ones; other sources will be referenced or explained directly (for example using a footnote) when the corresponding fact, metric or argument is discussed.

Official websites

The official websites of the selected frameworks provide reliable information about their functionality, history, documentation and support. These sites are listed below:

- jQuery Mobile: <http://jquerymobile.com/>
- Sencha Touch: <http://www.sencha.com/products/touch>

Other data sources

Ohloh metrics will be taken into account. Ohloh[6] is a free public directory of open source software and people, owned and operated by BlackDuck Software Inc., a consulting company specialized in gathering and providing information about open source software projects. Some metrics present in Ohloh site are provided by Ohloh specific tools and others are provided by gathering the information provided by Ohloh users for their own projects or the projects they are interested in.

Chapter 5

Results Comparison

I am going to follow the “Business Readiness Rating for Open Source (Open-BRR)” whitepaper[1] to apply this model to the evaluation of the different solutions.

5.1 Phase 1: Quick Assessment

This first phase has been applied by performing a deep search of the existing HTML5 frameworks for developing mobile apps through the Internet.

5.2 Phase 2: Target Usage Assessment

This second phase consists in setting the category and metric weights according to our requirements. The canonical OpenBRR model recommends to focus in not more than seven categories, but in order to provide a more general overview, I will consider the twelve categories present in the model.

If we were considering all the categories equal in importance, we should weight each one of them with 8,33%. Our assessment will consider this number, in order to weight more than 8% the categories considered relevant for the company, and less than 8% the categories considered not so relevant for the company.

The most important selected categories have been **functionality**, **usability** and **community**. Each one of them have been given a weight of 12%, so together they reach 36% of the total evaluation.

The OpenBRR model provides no ready-to-collect metrics for **functionality**, allowing the evaluator to create them in a tailored way according to the customer's requirements.

Support and **documentation** are also desirable aspects, that ensure the liveness of the community of any piece of software, and also guarantee usability since good instructions and advices smooth out the difficulties of any tool. For this reason these two categories have been weighted with 10%. With the same arguments we could consider **adoption**, but we also need to know that there are two influent factors in adoption: on one hand, we

need time for any tool to be widely used. On the other hand, “trends” have also influence in the IT world; and certain companies or tools come in a particular time to the crest of the wave, but quickly sink into obscurity due to the dynamism of the technologies environments. So adoption have been scored with 9%, still over the mean, but not so much.

About **security**, the given weight has been 8% as we have not defined specific requirements on this purpose, but it is a desirable feature specially for the future when new developers come to the community.

Performance and **architecture** are two categories weighted under the mean (6%)

The less important categories for this evaluation are **quality**, **scalability** and **professionalism**. These categories have been weighted with 5%, which makes a sum of 15% of total evaluation.

In conclusion, in table 5.1 I present the categories and their resulting weights for our evaluation.

5.3 Phase 3: Data collection and processing

For filling the different scores assigned to each category defined previously I have used the OpenBRR baseline spreadsheet provided to the students of Master on Libre Software 2011-2012 (Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid,

| Rank | Category | Weight |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Functionality | 12% |
| 2 | Usability | 12% |
| 3 | Quality | 5% |
| 4 | Security | 8% |
| 5 | Performance | 6% |
| 6 | Scalability | 5% |
| 7 | Architecture | 6% |
| 8 | Support | 10% |
| 9 | Documentation | 10% |
| 10 | Adoption | 9% |
| 11 | Community | 12% |
| 12 | Professionalism | 5% |
| | TOTAL WEIGHT | 100% |

Table 5.1: OpenBRR Target Usage Assessment for HTML5 mobile apps frameworks

Spain). For more information about this topic you can visit the MSWL Project Evaluation Subject's Moodle site in:

<http://docencia.etsit.urjc.es/moodle/course/view.php?id=125>.

This spreadsheet has an initial set of metrics for each OpenBRR category, allowing to ponderate each metric and providing a normalized score according to the possible values obtained in measurements.

Category weights have been introduced in the sheets. Each metric within

5.4. PHASE 4: REPRESENTATIVE METRICS AND THEIR SCORING²¹

each category should have a weighting factor to differentiate the metric's importance withing that particular category.

Each metric has been measured searching the Internet and getting the needed information from official mailing lists or websites and referencing that link in the corresponding "Raw score" cell with a "comment" in the cell. When a reference is not provided, it means that that metric could not be found or the own tool command line help or main website announces that aspect so it is easy to find.

For the unknown data, I have assigned the worst possible normalized score to the corresponding metric, so the results is not biased by unreliable information.

5.4 Phase 4: Representative Metrics and their Scoring

After collecting all the data and normalizing using the OpenBRR spreadsheet, scores for each category and a global score is automatically calculated. The resulting work can be downloaded from this URLs:

- jQuery Mobile spreadsheet: https://github.com/eparrillae/eparrillae-mswl-thesis/tree/master/MasterThesis/thesis/OpenBRR_Templates/BRR_Template_jQuery.ods

- Sencha Touch OpenBRR spreadsheet: https://github.com/eparrillae/eparrillae-mswl-thesis/tree/master/MasterThesis/thesis/OpenBRR_Templates/BRR_Template_Sencha.ods

5.5 SWOT Analysis

Chapter 6

Conclusions

6.1 Lessons Learnt

6.2 Future Work

Appendix A

Appendix A

Bibliography

- [1] **OpenBRR: Business Readiness Rating for Open Source (White paper)**

<http://docencia.etsit.urjc.es/moodle/mod/resource/view.php?id=4343>

- [2] **jQuery Mobile**

<http://jquerymobile.com/>

- [3] **Wikipedia jQuery Mobile**

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JQuery_Mobile

- [4] **Sencha Touch**

<http://www.sencha.com/products/touch>

- [5] **Wikipedia Sencha Touch**

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sencha_Touch

- [6] **Ohloh**

<http://www.ohloh.net/>

- [7] **FLOSSMetrics**

<http://flossmetrics.org/>