Free / Libre Open Source Software
A Sustainable Approach to Information Technology

As a public service, the GOSLING community (Getting Open Source Logic INto Governments) has prepared this information package to raise awareness amongst Members of Parliament regarding the significant benefits of the creation and use of Free / Libre Open Source Software (FLOSS) within government operations. Organizations choose the free open source approach for a range of reasons, among them to achieve cost savings over time partly due to no license costs, to exercise due diligence in security management, to realize faster implementation, to enjoy greater flexibility, and to adhere to international standards.[1] Please find below additional information about free / libre open source software:

- <u>What is it?</u> Free / libre open source is a proven business model under which software is developed and licensed as a shared knowledge asset amongst contributors and distributors world-wide. It is free to use, modify, and distribute.

- <u>How is it relevant to me?</u> The Government of Canada spends billions each year on custom software development, software licenses, and integration of proprietary systems and standards. Governments world-wide have been depending on FLOSS for decades, and the trend continues to increase. During your work as an MP, we encourage you to ask the public service where they are including free / libre open source approaches in their acquisition, use, production and distribution of software. We hope you might encourage further investigation of its benefits within the Canadian Government.

- <u>Where can I find out more?</u> More info can be found below, in the associated inserts of this package, and at the address in the document footer (where these documents are posted).

Did you know?

- The Bank of Canada uses and contributes to FLOSS to analyze credit rates and monetary statistics [2].

- The International Space Station runs almost entirely on FLOSS in order "to maximize the awareness and impact of NASA research" [3].

- At the height of the SARS crisis in 2004, a Canadian lab run entirely on FLOSS beat the rest of the world in the race to map the SARS genome[4].

- The online National Atlas of Canada is built entirely on FLOSS[5].

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1 Why Open Source Software? Look at the Numbers!, David Wheeler, 2005-11-14, http://www.dwheeler.com/oss_fs_why.html#tco
2 http://www.bank-banque-canada.ca/pgilbert/software.php In a recent news item from IT business.ca, Chris Pratt, IBM Canada's manager of strategic initiatives, was reported as saying "the Bank of Canada provided a good illustration of a mixed open source and proprietary enterprise."
3 http://opensource.arc.nasa.gov/
4 http://www.linuxjournal.com/article/6977 http://athena.bioc.uvic.ca/sars/index.php?page=tools
5 http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/dataservices/web_map_service.html

- The Government of Canada website, www.canada.gc.ca is run on the Apache FLOSS web server. Over 60% of all the web servers on the Internet run Apache[6].

- Canada plays an important role in the development of FLOSS Geographic Information Systems GIS that are used worldwide[7].

- SchoolNet, a partnership with the provincial and territorial governments, the education community, and the private sector, promotes the effective use of information and communications technologies in learning, and as part of this mission, it provides a FLOSS Resources Centre[8].

More Information

- Treasury Board Secretariat's reference Page on free / libre open source software: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/fap-paf/oss-ll/oss-ll_e.asp

- A directory of links to "Open Source Software Solutions and Support Providers" that can provide various levels and types of FLOSS services and support: http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inict-tic.nsf/en/h_it07356e.html

- The final report by e-Cology Corporation on its study of "Open Source Software (OSS) in Canada", September 2003, which was jointly contracted out by Industry Canada, Public Works and Government Services Canada, and Treasury Board Secretariat: http://www.e-cology.ca/canfloss/report/CANfloss_Report.pdf

  From the executive summary: "*The overall goal of this report is to raise the level of understanding of why and how the Open Source paradigm and its products, services and communities are important to Canada, both domestically and internationally.*"

- "Open Source and The Voluntary Sector", a report commissioned by the Information and Communications Technology Branch of Industry Canada: http://www.openflows.org/article.pl?sid=03/05/29/1349220
  From the executive summary: "*OSS provides exciting opportunities for voluntary organizations that wish to increase the quality and scope of their computing infrastructure without straining their budgets.* "

- "Free / Open Source Software: Government Policy", Government and Policy Primer, http://www.iosn.net/government/foss-government-primer/foss-govt-policy.pdf
  Preface: "*This primer surveys the motivations of countries implementing FOSS, summarizes steps involved in formulating a policy, lists some possible strategies to use in implementing the policy and touches on cross-sectoral issues unique to FOSS policies. Its target audience is national policy-makers and their advisers.*"

- Wikipedia: English - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_software
               French - http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logiciel_librew

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6 http://news.netcraft.com/archives/2006/08/01/august_2006_web_server_survey.html
7 http://www.directionsmag.com/article.php?article_id=2194&trv=1
8 http://www.schoolnet.ca/home/e/opensource.asp