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**DAP**

The Information Technology community is a loosely knit community consisting of anyone who has ever used or produced anything involving computers. There are many different professions in the Information Technology field. Computer programmers develop Information Technology systems. Penetration testers break into the computer systems computer programmers develop. Systems administrators manage systems, so they stay available. Finally, and most importantly, there are computer users who provide invaluable feedback for programmers and system administrators to improve computer systems. As this feedback loop would suggest, the value system of the Information Technology community is solely focused on improving technology for users. In the last five years, the Information Technology field has with new technologies like DevOps and Artificial Intelligence. Fortunately, much of this research is free online (more on this later).

Unlike many other communities, the information technology community tries extremely hard to democratize research. Generally, the best resources in the community are open-source and free projects that are on GitHub (add stack OF here). Being on GitHub means anyone can use them, but more importantly, anyone can contribute to them. This open-source community is the practical side of the community. Of course, there’s a theoretical side of the community that writes research papers that the practical side uses. The practical community is extremely prolific, but it takes more time to implement research than write papers about it so if you can’t find any projects that are implementing an idea, the research community is a great place to find useful opinions about a topic. The research community uses ACM, IEEE, Defcon, stack overflow and others to publish their research.

Information technology research is generally designed to solve a problem. Therefore, IT research is evaluated by if it works and does what you need it to do. Theoretical research is an exception to this rule. Good theoretical research provides a deep understanding of a field but reading it is often taxing on the reader. Unfortunately, bad theoretical research is also taxing on the reader and doesn’t provide insights. For this reason, avoiding theoretical research is often best. Open source and closed source are the two major schools of thought in information technology. Major players in open source technology include Richard Stallman, who wrote GNU, and Linus Torvalds, who wrote Linux. The closed source figures are usually more well known. One notable name would be Bill Gates. Although Gates is well known and his contributions should not be understated, I believe the contributions of open source developers have made a larger impact overall.

The practical side and the theoretical side have very different standards for documentation. Generally, the theoretical side poses stricter rules and takes years to get a paper published. This often includes many years of research and reviews. One of the tools used on the theoretical side, is LaTex, which is a text formatter, often used for documentation. The practical side is much laxer. A project needs documentation to be useful. This does not mean it needs to be perfect or must follow a strict set of rules for someone to be able to use said technology. A common standard in documentation is a READ.me file. Its so common that GitHub will automatically parse and display it if a directory contains it. READ.me is written in Markdown, which is a tool like LaTex, but much simpler.

It is clear from my earlier musings that I lean towards the open source practical side of information technology. I prefer open source practical technology because anyone can access it, and everyone can build off each other’s findings. There are endless ways to solve a problem and it is helpful having different points of view contribute. I enjoy seeing how other people approach tasks that I’ve struggled with and have learned a lot by doing this. The practical collaboration tools I’m using are open source, otherwise a company could simply take them away. Throughout my research, I will apply the “does it work for my problem?” test to the documentation including README.md files of the collaboration tools I’m researching.