

Benefits and Opportunities in Adopting Open Source

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Catalyst IT

Our Mission:

“Making Open Source the Preferred
Technology used in New Zealand”

Open Source: A Natural Way To Work

- Even before “OSS” we did things this way
- Handing over code to our clients
- Cost effective development
- Cost effective scalability
- Cost effective infrastructure

2006

- Operating for nearly nine years
- Over 55 staff
- Over 95% of our work uses open source technologies
- Six directors each with over 20 years of software development experience
- A profitable business with a straightforward business model

Our Clients Using Open Source Technologies Extensively

- NZ Registry Services – Shared Registry System
- Electoral Enrolment Centre – Electoral Roll
- Open Polytechnic – On-line Course Management
- Fairfax – stuff.co.nz & others
- Telecom New Zealand – Mobile solutions

... and also

- NZ Racing Board
- Chief Electoral Office
- State Services Commission
- Plumbing World
- Ministry for the Environment
- Upper Hutt City Council
- Hawkes Bay DHB
- Open University UK
- NZ Press Association
- Victoria University
- Damwatch
- Domain Name Commissioner
- Parents Centres NZ

Open Source in Action

- Shared Registry System
- Electoral Enrolment System
- Open Polytechnic

“Delivering complex and critical business systems to large New Zealand organisations built on free open source software.”

NZ Registry Services – The SRS

- Client had been burned by a previous development
- A business to business system
- Accuracy, Reliability, Security & Redundancy were critical success factors
- Non-competitive infrastructure system
- The canonical repository of .nz domain information

Electoral Enrolment Centre

- 'Mike' manages the electoral roll
- Registrars of Electors maintain roll from dispersed locations
- Data entry, Data matching, Roll generation
- Accuracy, Security, Redundancy & Performance were critical
- The entire business depends on its operation
- Weren't specifically looking for an open source based solution

Further OSS at EEC

- Firewall and VPN
- Office Servers
- Linux Desktops
- An election

Open Polytechnic

- Evaluation of existing open source LMS
 - Technology
 - Community
 - Functionality
- Selection of Moodle
- Close integration with core Moodle development team
- Significant influence on product evolution

What Is It Doing?

- Core Business Applications
- Database
- Operating System
- Desktop
- Secure Networking Environments
- Search Engines
- On-line Education
- Development Tools
- VoIP
- Email
- Internet Infrastructure
- Proxies, Firewalls, DNS, Web servers

Issues for Open Source Adoption

- Licensing Questions
- Enterprise Readiness
- Legacy Application Migration

Licensing Issues

- Different from Commercial Licenses
 - Compliance is much cheaper
 - Impositions are greatly reduced
- Fewer technical implications on
 - Architecture
 - Scaling
 - Granularity

Enterprise Readiness

- Major drive for FOSS over the last 4-5 years
- From the operating system upwards
- Moodle: A good product, but lacked some enterprise support
 - Functionality was good
 - Performance issues
 - Security issues

Open Source is ready for the enterprise

Approaches to Legacy Applications

- Run under an emulation
- Server based reimplementation
- One standardised client interface
- Remote desktop approaches
- Sometimes an opportunity to
 - Centralise control
 - Manage quality

Other General Challenges

- Marketing
- Supportability Perceptions
- Reasonable Caution
- Who to learn from
 - Us!
 - Other agencies
 - Overseas examples

Benefits of Open Source Adoption

- Collaboration vs Competition
- Collaborative Tools
- Consortium Approaches
- Choice & Flexibility
- Encouragement of Open Standards
- Community & Culture

Collaboration vs Competition

- Combining value from many projects
- NZ Economy
 - Scaling
 - Very good at adding value
- Suppliers compete on service offerings and expertise
- OSS reduces the cost of entry to the market even further.
- Koha – A New Zealand success story

Choice & Flexibility

- Long term availability of code
- Client choice of support organisation
- Breadth
 - Solutions
 - Toolsets
- Interfaces
- Client Control vs Vendor Control
- Pick and choose appropriate solutions

Open Standards

- A good idea
- Open Source is regularly better at them
 - SQL, VPN, SCORM, SMTP, HTTP, HTML, CSS
 - Inter operation with friends, versus enemies
- Good Interfaces
 - Projects stick to their knitting
 - Focus on core competency
- Interoperability Benefits
- Tools can focus on their specific areas of expertise

Do what you do well – don't try to do everything

The Culture of Open Source

- Focus is on the client and the solution
- Thinking about community relationships
- Collaboration with diverse experts
- Crosses over into internal culture
- Cross fertilisation between projects
- Shared Success
- Control of your own destiny and risks
- Input into development direction

Conclusion

Our experience, and our clients experience, give us the confidence to recommend it to you.

Questions

Open Source

The best technology for New Zealand

Open Source

The best technology for the world