

# Free essay about understanding free software developers: findings from the floss

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Open Source Software or Free Software (OSS/FS) has attained bad reputation in the past years that needs to be corrected at the earliest. Numerous global computer programmers have invested their time to develop OSS, and it is crucial to understand the contributions of these programmers, and appreciate their efforts they put in creating the software that was distributed freely. It becomes extremely necessary to understand the practices, and motivational factors of these developers, which can be achieved through a survey. Initially, an examination of users and developers gave a broad base of hard data on OSS/FS. Throughout the survey, the measurement pointers, as well as monetary factors were applied.

The developers were surveyed from the FLOSS (Free/Libre/Open Source Software) project, and the survey was inclined to factors such as the developer's participation in the F/OSS community, their views and opinions of the other developers in the community, motivational factor, interaction with the other developers in the community, and their contribution to the F/OSS community. Though so much of documentation has been maintained for F/OSS, there is no existence of the observed data. Much has been written about the effect of the open software in the community, but only a few models are developed that describe the working procedure of the system, and functioning of the community without any monetary factor involved in it.

F/OSS does not emphasize much on the monetary factor, but it is necessary to know how the other factors are measured without any money being involved. In the absence of money, other activities of the programmers must be used to measure and create the actual observed data. Measurement is

difficult and unclear in the creation of free software through shared networks as this process involves economic activities, and it is astonishing to know that money is avoided as a mode of interchange. Due to the absence of the initial data for surveying, FLOSS has three types of surveys. Firstly, the survey that is analytic of the overall population. The second survey replicates an already available subset of the population that provides understandings of that subset where responses may be a result of the predefined process, and thus not reveal the common population, and in the third survey the surveyed people are selected haphazardly from the common population. The third survey is generally used for the FLOSS developers. As it is difficult to obtain the observed data, it is necessary to rely on secondary sources for data, such as surveys from institutions that use free software. FLOSS conducted such surveys in such institutions using the traditional database and public census records. Hypothetical models were created by FLOSS to determine motives of developers, their interaction structure, and also predict their discrete and group behavior. The FLOSS conducts surveys through sampling, and later the response rate is validated to know if the respondents are actual developers. The vital aspect in any survey is to know the demographics of the respondent as it is the initial point of the survey. The survey resulted in many respondents being the masculine gender with nearly 60% respondents in the age group of 16-25 years. The FLOSS survey prioritized the difficult issue; the motivational factor, as to how the developers contributed to the community in a sequence of multi-dimensional questions. The motivational reasons provided by the respondents made FLOSS to organize the survey into four motivation classes

such as social/community motives, career or monetary concern, political motives, and purely product-related motives. The survey showed that the developers are interested to be a part of FLOSS to “ learn and develop new skills” and “ share knowledge and skills” as the top reasons.

Overall, the outcomes of survey depict that the empirical or observed data is critical in the creation of prototypes and propositions regarding the formation, organization, and activity of the free software developer community. FLOSS has tried several other methods due to the absence of the first-hand data, to gather the personal and neutral inputs on developer activity to appreciate the motivations, and measure the rewards by contributing to whatever extent they can to the interesting form of production and interchange; the open source software.