Running Head: SAMPLING ORGANIZATIONS PRODUCTS

A Sampling of Organizations, Products, and Research

in the Open Source Software World:

An Annotated Bibliography

Heather Braum

School of Library and Information Management

Emporia State University, Kansas

Introduction and Overview

Before introducing this topic, a couple of definitions need to be given. Proprietary

software is software that is commercialized (for-profit license) and usually is closed code (only

company employees can edit it/see it/improve it). Open Source Software (OSS) is software that

is open, usually free (but not always), and licensed under one of many Open Source licenses,

usually those recognized by the Free Software Foundation (GNU-GPL is the most common).

OSS is a movement against proprietary software companies. Instead of the companies

owning the code and restricting the license, OSS software code is open to the user community to

be improved; no one entity owns it. OSS can greatly help the global community in a variety of

ways, especially helping countries overcome high licensing fees or uncustomizable software that

is currently unavailable in a particular language. Most of the citations that appear deal with the

general OSS community, but a couple are more geared toward the library world.

Citations

Canonical, Ltd. (2008). Ubuntu 8.04 [Computer software]. Retrieved April 30, 2008, from

> **http://www.ubuntu.com/**

1. Authority of the author: The Ubuntu Operating System is written by coders around the world,

   all committed to providing the best possible OS. The community of programmers gives the

   software its authority. Canonical, Ltd., is the company that sells commercial support for

   Ubuntu and hosts the Ubuntu website.

2. Relevance: Ubuntu, now in version 8.04 as of April 2008 (code name, Hardy Heron), is one

   of the best known desktop distributions (distros) of Linux. Many Linux distros are command-

   line-based, have a limited GUI (Graphical User Interface), or require extensive technical

skills in order to produce a usable interface. Ubuntu is user-friendly out of the CD and is available in numerous languages around the world. Not in your language? No problem. Contact the user community and someone will most likely know how to get it into your language. On top of that, the user community is available in a variety of languages.

3. Contribution to GII: The Ubuntu Operating System is an alternative computer operating system that is free to run. All a user needs is a computer with a little power. Ubuntu was its chosen name, meaning "Humanity to others" or "I am what I am because of who we all are." The Ubuntu OS is what the GII is all about; it provides access to a powerful operating system that anyone can use around the world. The software is available in numerous languages, as well. Because it is guaranteed to always be free, as well as guaranteed updates every six months, users around the world are guaranteed a product that will continue to update and still be able to compete with those with proprietary software around the world.

4. Coverage: This piece of software has an impact around the world, due to its availability for no price (other than already have the necessary computer hardware) and due to its availability in numerous languages.

5. Point of view/bias: As this is a piece of software, its bias is that the Ubuntu OS only runs software built to run on a Linux OS. Software is available to run certain Windows platform programs on Linux, but these can be complicated to run and take great technical expertise. Bias is also obviously against proprietary software, especially Microsoft, as Ubuntu's purpose is to be free and "open" code.

Electronic Information For Libraries. (2008, April 1). *eIFL: Free and open source software (FOSS)*. **Retrieved April 30, 2008, from** http://www.eifl.net/cps/ [sections/services/eifl-foss](http://www.eifl.net/cps/sections/services/eifl-foss)

1. <u>Authority of the author</u>: eIFL is a nonprofit organization committed to working with libraries in the developing world and includes the member countries of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Croatia, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, Jordan, Kenya, Kosova, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malawi, Mali, Moldova, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Palestine, Poland, Russia, Senegal, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Syria, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

2. <u>Relevance</u>: According to its website, "eIFL.net is a not for profit organisation that supports and advocates for the wide availability of electronic resources by library users in transitional and developing countries" (http://www.eifl.net/cps/sections/about). eIFL-FOSS spends its time helping libraries to find alternatives to proprietary software.

3. <u>Contribution to GII</u>: In the library world, eIFL-FOSS Its core activities are negotiating affordable subscriptions on a multi-country consortial basis, supporting national library consortia and maintaining a global knowledge sharing and capacity building network in related areas, such as open access publishing, intellectual property rights"

4. <u>Coverage</u>: eIFL-FOSS covers the developing world in the eastern hemisphere; according to its membership list, it is not present in North or South America; its main focus is on free and open source software for the library world.

5. <u>Point of view/bias</u>: eIFL-FOSS is focused on free and open source software, not proprietary software, for libraries in the developing world.

Free Software Foundation, Inc. (2008, April 8). *Free software foundation.* **Retrieved**

     April 30, 2008, from http://www.fsf.org

1. <u>Authority of the author</u>: The Free Software Foundation is a nonprofit donor-supported charity based in Boston, MA and founded in 1985.

2. <u>Relevance</u>: According to its website, the FSF "has a worldwide mission to promote computer user freedom and to defend the rights of all free software users." The FSF publishes the GNU General Public License, the license that a majority of OSS uses. It campaigns against proprietary software and works with UNESCO to maintain the free software directory (http://directory.fsf.org/).

3. <u>Contribution to GII</u>: The FSF, along with the OSI, governs Free/OSS around the world. They work with coders, software developers, countries, and users to develop free software policies to help provide software to all users. Free software is driven by the idea that users have the right to run, copy, distribute, study, change, and improve the software -- all around the world.

4. <u>Coverage</u>: The FSF covers the world, as software licensed through its GNU GPL is used through the world. It also has partner organizations in Europe (http://www.fsfeurope.org/), Latin America (http://www.fsfla.org/svnwiki/), and India (http://fsf.org.in/).

5. <u>Point of view/bias</u>: The FSF is biased against proprietary software, as its chief end is to lobby against proprietary software in favor of free software.

Ghosh, R. A. (2008, February 11). *Free/libre/open source software: Policy support,*

*related research***. Retrieved April 30, 2008, from http://flosspols.org/**

research.php

1. Authority of the author: Rishab A. Ghosh is a senior researcher at the United Nations

   University and was the project leader for the Free/Libre and Open Source Software project

   (http://www.flossproject.org/).

2. Relevance: FLOSS-POLS is an EU project that has three tracks, including government open

   source policy, gender issues in open source, and the efficiency of open source software. This

   is webpage includes research presentations from 2003 to 2008 dealing with open source

   issues.

3. Contribution to GII: These presentations provide a summary of OSS policy around the world

   and the issues facing OSS and the global community. They provide a starting place for

   gaining an understanding of the variety of issues facing the world in the OSS community.

4. Coverage: The presentations cover 2003-2008 and cover a variety of issues dealing with OSS

   around the world.

5. Point of view/bias: As these are presentations files or outlines, some interpretation has to be

   applied to understand the author's intentions of the research presentations. The subject matter

   is only on open source software.

Koha Development Team. (2008). Koha ILS [Computer software]. Retrieved April

   30, 2008, from http://www.koha.org/

1. Authority of the author: The Koha Development team has produced the Koha ILS software,

   originating from New Zealand.

2. <u>Relevance</u>: Koha is the first OSS Integrated Library System (ILS).

3. <u>Contribution to GII</u>: As libraries are created in the developing world (and also the developed), they are unable to afford the expensive proprietary systems that probably aren't written in their language, or serve their unique information needs. Koha closes this gap and provides an ILS to the worldwide library community. Programmers and coders around the world are quick to develop features, and users have the opportunity to contract with a company for support and other services.

4. <u>Coverage</u>: Koha is available in a variety of languages, and users worldwide can participate in the translation of the staff/OPAC sides of the system.

5. <u>Point of view/bias</u>: As this is a piece of software, its bias is obviously against proprietary software, especially large ILS corporations.

Krishnamurthy, M. (2008). Open access, open source and digital libraries: A current trend in university libraries around the world. *Program: electronic library and information systems*, *42*, 48-55. Retrieved April 30, 2008, from Emerald Full-text database.

1. <u>Authority of the author</u>: M. Krishnamurthy is the Senior Assistant Librarian at the Indian Statistical Institute. He has presented and published numerous times on open source software in digital libraries.

2. <u>Relevance</u>: OSS is increasingly being used in the library world; this article summarizes OSS use in digital libraries.

3. Contribution to GII: This article shows how OSS has been implemented in libraries around

    the world, an important part of the GII. It shows how OSS can benefit the countries and make

    the libraries more efficient and stronger.

4. Coverage: This article covers digital library use of OSS software in libraries around the

    world.

5. Point of view/bias: This article only looks at digital libraries around the world and open

    source software.

Lewis, J. A. (2007). *Government open source policies, August 2007*. **Washington:**

> **Center for Strategic and International Studies. Retrieved April 30, 2008,**
>
> **from http://www.csis.org/index.php?**
>
> **option=com_csis_pubs&task=view&id=4009**

1. Authority of the author: James A. Lewis is the director and senior fellow of the Technology

    and Public Policy Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. He has

    published all four versions of this report.

2. Relevance: Governments are an important part of the GII. If OSS is being widely used

    around the world, more people and companies may be more willing to also use OSS. Also,

    anyone wanting to know how technology is progressing in countries will find this report

    useful to track OSS usage. This report shows which countries have been at the forefront of

    beginning to adopt OSS-friendly policies.

3. Contribution to GII: This report shows that OSS is being used in governments around the

    world at the national and local levels and also that Open Source policy is being developed. If

    governments begin to understand the way the OSS community is built and take part in the

OSS community, they might reap some benefits and apply the practices of the OSS

community to their own practices. This will only benefit the nations and the global

community.

4. <u>Coverage</u>: This report is good through August 2007, and covers the countries of Argentina,

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia,

Costa Rica, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, EU, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Hong

Kong, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Netherlands,

Norway, OECD, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, S. Korea,

Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan,

Tanzania, Thailand, UK, Ukraine, United Nations, United States, Venezuela, and Vietnam, as

well as many local cities. The report also provides additional sources of information.

5. <u>Point of view/bias</u>: This report only covers governments and not all countries are included.

Only governments providing information about their software use/policies are included.

Mozilla Foundation. (2008, April 29). *Mozilla.org -- home of the Mozilla project*.

   Retrieved April 30, 2008, from http://www.mozilla.org/

1. <u>Authority of the author</u>: The Mozilla Foundation supports the Mozilla software projects

(available at www.mozilla.com). It is a nonprofit organization with partners all around the

world.

2. <u>Relevance</u>: Web browsers are the most widely used computer tool around the world and

Mozilla's banner software program, Firefox, has driven the innovation in the Web browser

world and more in general, in the OSS world. It has shown that open source products can

easily compete with proprietary alternatives, as well as provide more access to users in other languages, traditionally not supported by proprietary corporations.

3. <u>Contribution to GII</u>: The Mozilla Foundation's contribution to the GII cannot be measured. They are a true example of how the GII should work. Thousands of computer coders from around the world collaborate together to make Firefox, Thunderbird, and other Mozilla software projects better. They communicate without regard to profit, gender, location, or background. It's only about the end-result: the software program and making life easier for the end-user.

4. <u>Coverage</u>: Mozilla applications are used around the world. Firefox has been downloaded over 500 million times and is available in over fifty different languages for three different operating systems.

5. <u>Point of view/bias</u>: As this is a piece of software, its bias is against proprietary software, especially Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Outlook Express, in favor of its own products, Firefox and Thunderbird. Every program that Mozilla produces is a free and open-code alternative to a proprietary software program of some kind (Songbird, instead of iTunes, for example).

Open Source Initiative. (2008, April 30). *Open Source Initiative*. Retrieved April 30, 2008, from http://www.opensource.org

1. <u>Authority of the author</u>: Open Source Initiative (OSI) is the nonprofit corporation that serves as the stewards of the Open Source Definition, that governs the OSS community.

2. <u>Relevance</u>: The Open Source Definition is what governs the OSS community. Without this definition or governing body, no one around the world would have commonly agreed-upon standards of what open source looks like.

3. <u>Contribution to GII</u>: OSI's contribution to the GII is that it governs the overall definition of what Open Source is. Countries do not individually determine Open Source characteristics; the OSI has already done so. The governing principles of the Open Source Definition include free distribution, source code availability, allow derived works, integrity of the author's source code, no discrimination against persons or groups, no discrimination against fields of endeavor, distribution of license, license must not be specific to a product, license must not restrict other software, and license must be technology-neutral.

4. <u>Coverage</u>: Every product that calls itself Open Source must follow the principles outlined by the OSD and be one of the OSI-recognized Open Source licenses that follow the OSD.

5. <u>Point of view/bias</u>: The OSI is biased against proprietary software and closed code programs. It for all software to be open.

Weerawarana, S., & Weeratunga, J. (2004). *Open source in developing countries*. Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish International Development Authority. Retrieved April 30, 2008, from http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp? f=SIDA3460en_Open+SourceWEB.pdf&a=3055

1. <u>Authority of the authors</u>: The authors are cofounders of the Lanka Software Foundation, a nonprofit foundation in Sri Lanka that promotes OSS in Sri Lanka.

2. <u>Relevance</u>: This article looks at OSS in the IT industry in developing countries around the world and why OSS IT policy should be implemented, to the countries' benefit.

3. <u>Contribution to GII</u>: Much of the GII is geared toward bringing up the developing world onto an even playing field with the developed world. This report shows how OSS-IT policy can do just that.

4. <u>Coverage</u>: This report covers OSS usage in IT in the developing world and strategies for implementation.

5. <u>Point of view/bias</u>: This report may be a little out of date, providing a bias of time. This report is also written from the point of view of developing countries and against proprietary software.

<div align="center">Summary and Conclusion</div>

The citations provided cover a variety of organizations, software, and research articles dealing with the OSS community. This is not at all an exhaustive list. The ten citations barely scratch the surface of what the OSS community has to offer the global world. It is to be hoped that this will provide a good starting point for someone wanting to gain a beginning knowledge of what the OSS world looks like and how it can help the global community.