

Technology Transfer - with Open Source

End of Programme Meeting

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Introduction

- Andrew Savory, andrew@luminas.co.uk
- David Casal, david@luminas.co.uk

Summary

- Nobody is getting it right
 - Focus on technology comes too late
 - Belief in "licensing cost = quality" is endemic
 - "Search and rescue" too common
- Open Source can help
 - ... when used as part of a well thought-out strategy
 - ... in combination with Open Standards
 - ... and transparent, interoperable development
- Is Open Source the expensive way out?

Background

- Drawing on experiences with two projects
 - Artworld
 - Virtual Norfolk
- Continuous development over two years
- Working within wider context of Free and Open Source software communities

Artworld

- Collaboration between Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts and the Oriental Museum
- Exposing artifacts
- Innovative features:
 - Contributions
 - Galleries
 - Questionnaires

Virtual Norfolk

- Over 2000 original documentary resources
- XML content
- Medieval English documents
- Innovative features:
 - Glossaries and bibliographies
 - "Deep" searching
 - Course shopping baskets

Problems they face

- "Black box" code
- Chaotic data
- Scalability
- Interoperability
- Proprietary lock-in
- Pressure to perform

How we've faced them

- Using an Open Source web publishing framework (Cocoon)
- Enforcing separation of concerns by using XML technologies (XML, XSP, XSLT, SMIL)
- Increasing interoperability by exposing metadata (OAI-PMH, Z39.50, RDF) and providing multichanneling capabilities

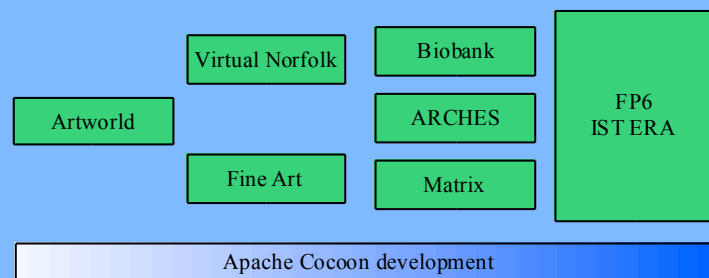
But what about cost?

- Most Open Source is “free”
 - Free as in beer
 - Free as in speech
- Most Open Source costs more to deploy
 - Less “shrink-wrapped” products
 - Less traditional documentation
- Costs move from licenses to development
 - You know all the costs up-front

It's good to talk

- Distributed, shared development of solutions will save us all!
- Try to overcome:
 - “NIH!” (Not Invented Here)
 - IPR thrombosis
- Only viable antidote: Open Source adoption at critical mass levels

Evolution not revolution



The Open Source Paradigm Shift

“What matters are three trends: software commoditization; user-customizable systems; collaboration.

The money doesn't come from selling software. People who don't know this have a paradigm failure.”

- Tim O'Reilly, 20th June 2003

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 - ... and transparent, interoperable development
- Open Source is not the expensive way out