

Open Source issues? Avoiding the ipo(a)ds ahead..

Christoph H. Lameter
Graphe Inc.
cl@gentwo.org

Abstract

Have you ever wondered why Linux does not make progress in certain areas? Why have we not conquered the desktop yet? Why are many "commercial" applications not for Linux? Why is Apple dancing circles around us with iPhones, Ipods and Ipads?

All these things require funding, a certain frame of mind that focuses on the end user and an autonomy on the part of the developer of new applications. Open source developers are frequently caught in an evil web of pressure by employers to work on proprietary ideas which sucks off the majority of time that is available for productive work, the necessity to maintain relationships with (like-minded) open source developers working on the same projects which results in a closed mind to end users and the inability to start something new and creative with somewhat controllable effort and benefit monetarily from it so that further efforts can be made.

It seems that the ipod world has found a solution to these issues and enabled developers to create useful apps in a minimal time frame, benefit from it and grow the usefulness of their software. Sadly this world is controlled by a commercial entity, source code is not available.

The impression to the general public is that open source contribution is something like a heroic effort. A renunciation of the riches that could be had and a taking of a vow of poverty. The motives of commercial entities can be in collaboration but what we have seen the contributions are mainly driven by commercial benefits derived from open source contribution. The motivation is not to provide a well designed easy to use application to the end user.

The author thinks that we need to change the development process so that the design and creation of easily usable end user applications is rewarded and that at the same time it must be possible for others to use and modify the code created.

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