

Social Behavioral Economic FOSS

Christopher Kelty

Associate Professor, UCLA Department of Information Studies
<http://www.kelty.org>

Joel West

Professor, Innovation & Entrepreneurship
San José State University
<http://www.joelwest.org>

Charlie Schweik

Associate Professor
Dept of Natural Resources Conservation and Center for Public Policy and Administration
<http://people.umass.edu/cschweik>

How to broaden the focus on FOSS?

1. One movement or many?
2. Value and Values in FOSS?
3. Politics of FOSS or FOSS of Politics?

One Movement or Many?

- Does FOSS still exist?
 - Free Software vs. Open Source? Still a relevant debate?
 - Is FOSS being assimilated into business as usual, and if so, where (Wagstrom, West)?
 - Are people still “evangelizing” and on what arguments?
 - Is it simply an economic calculus (Dirk Riehle's decision metrics, Greiner)
 - National/Regional differences in the state of the debate.

One Movement or Many?

- FOSS after Google?
 - changes in software industry: clouds, software as service models
 - changes in infrastructure: server farm wars (Google v. Yahoo)
 - changes in IP issues (GPL3/AGPL, Terms of Service)
 - open source as goodwill branding
 - group identity beyond “community”?
 - other terms *commons* (Schweik, Ostrom, Benkler, Boyle), *social worlds* (Gerson), *publics* (Kelty)

Value and Values in FOSS

- What are the economic and social implications of corporate involvement in FOSS?
 - Does economic and strategic necessity affect the course of innovation? (As opposed to “open” and under-determined innovation?)
 - Does FOSS push industries towards more open standards? (Alspaugh)
 - Do for-profit vs. not-for-profit organizations that manage FOSS yield different outcomes?
 - What values guide design (Bowker)? Social and democratic values vs. efficiency and elegance?

Politics of FOSS or FOSS of Politics?

- FOSS in governments (e-government) vs. FOSS as a new mode of *governance*. (Wasserman); Sunlight Foundation, Obama Campaign, Expert Labs. HFOSS, Google/AllForGood.
- Spread of FOSS to new domains (Kelty education, culture, biology, nanotech Hissam on DOD/Mission critical cases)
- FOSS in different Political cultures (Murillo, G. Coleman, J. Karanovic, A. Chan, L. Nguyen, Y. Takhteyev)
- Digital Labor, Labor politics, and the status of work in FOSS (mechanical turk, farmtown)

Methodological challenges?

- What counts as compelling empirical data?
 - reliance on repositories?
 - reliance on old economic categories?
 - ethnographic data vs. anecdotal and common sense perceptions?
 - survey, statistics and revealed preferences vs. observed interactions, network analysis or traces of interactions in software?