



Is your career ready for Free and Open Source Software?

Dear FLOSS community members,

As a conscientious software user, I have enjoyed the many benefits of Free/Libre/Open-Source Software (FLOSS) and contributed back to the community as much as possible. However, since embarking upon my college pursuits, I have often found myself pondering the possibility of professional involvement in the free software world after graduation. Is there a professional future under FLOSS development?

Along this journey, I have consistently encountered others, both individuals and organizations, posing related questions: students with similar employment concerns, professors looking to incorporate FLOSS into their curricula, companies wondering about the potential incorporation of FLOSS within their infrastructures, and the occasional entrepreneur weighing the impact of using FLOSS as a platform for new business ventures. The above individuals intuit that there are implicit benefits to be gained from FLOSS, but often remain unable to get all the facts to make an informed decision.

Many are seeking answers to their FLOSS questions, and, more than ever, the answers are emerging all around us: we see them in examples such as Google's successful implementation of FLOSS, Red Hat's dominance in the Linux market, Oracle's rush to embrace Linux, IBM's unprecedented transformation into a service business, and Wikipedia's invaluable contribution to the world. These are the examples of organizations that are finding answers while simultaneously embodying those answers. Is it possible that FLOSS is finally flourishing as a prominent engine of innovation?



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Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines Flourish as "to grow luxuriantly, to thrive, to achieve success, to reach a height of development or influence." It is our belief that FLOSS has reached this state of flourishing, and can no longer be ignored by any serious IT player. Where do we go from here? What can we expect from FLOSS and its community?

In this inquisitive spirit, The University of Illinois at Chicago's CS Department, the Linux User's Group at UIC, and the Association for Computer Machinery at UIC would like to invite you to come join us April 6-7 to *Flourish!*: a two-day conference reflecting on the impact of FLOSS on our future.

We are extending this open invitation to academia, to industry members, and to the community, so that together we can explore FLOSS and how it influences our daily lives, both present and future.

Several of the tentative topics we would like to focus on for inclusion are as follows:

- Will FLOSS tools expertise increase my marketability after graduation?
- Is FLOSS suited for the professional environment?
- Has the time finally come for companies to set up shop around FLOSS?  
(Reflections on the impact of SCO, GPL v3, etc)
- Does FLOSS generate new business synergies?
- Does FLOSS generate new academic opportunities?



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- What is the key to a successful open project? (Classic Myths in Open Source and Free Software development)
- Is there a business model for non-commercial licenses?
- Can the Free and Open Source models be applied to more areas than software?
- Women and FLOSS: contributions, opportunities, and the community.

It is our belief that the prospective answers to most of these questions are positive, and with that in mind, it is our ultimate goal to provide a platform for triggering new ideas and encouraging ongoing innovation. In light of this, we are honored to announce the participation as keynote speaker of Mr. Chris DiBona, Open Source Programs Manager for Google, renowned Open Source evangelist, and co-host of the podcast “Floss weekly.”

Please join us in this endeavor, whether by lending your support in the form of active participation as a panelist, providing some of the much-needed funding, or simply by contributing with your presence. Visit <http://www.flourishconf.com/> for more info. We welcome any and all support from the community!

Our gratitude extends to those who join us in this intent to Flourish.

Respectfully,

Roberto C. Serrano

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