Towards a Solid Theoretical and Empirical Foundation for European Open Source Policy

EU Open Source Policy Meeting

Mirko Boehm
31 January 2020
Looking Back

• “Impact of open source software on ICT sector in the EU”, UNU-MERIT et al 2007
• “Standards and Open Source - Bringing them together”, OpenForum Europe 2017
• “The Relationship Between Open Source Software and Standard Setting”, EC-JRC 2019
• +++
“A rising tide lifts all boats.”

– John F Kennedy
Open Source enables participation driven by increased transparency and reduced barriers to entry in knowledge/academia, business and politics.
“Open Source communities are incubators for both technologies and people.”

–Anonymous
Open Source as a Matter of Public Interest

- Open Source software is a public good that contributes positively to the common good.

- Ergo: There is a common interest in society to facilitate, invest in, protect and support Open Source software and communities.
Looking Forward

- Still work-in-progress is the development of a commonly accepted understanding of the economic and societal impact of Open Source software and communities,

- ... of its interaction with related fields like standards development or patenting ...

- and the impact on related sectors (hardware, communication, logistics, ...) and fields of endeavour (creative works, research and science, political decision making, ...)

Perspectives: Individual

- Individuals engage in a mix of market and social transactions to benefit from Open Source.

- Social transactions include a sense of achievement and community from contributing. People derive personal value from it.

- Market transactions include the development of independent skills and the creation of a personal portfolio.

- Amateurization blends these perspectives and challenges traditional professions.
Perspectives: Business

• Businesses (organisations) engage in a mix of market and social transactions to benefit from Open Source.

• A taxonomy based on revenue models, types of goods and differentiating factors can help with positioning businesses.

• Open Source engagement can only partially be explained by theoretical models solely based on market logic.
Perspectives: Society

- Open Source impacts regions, member states and the union in competition and collaboration.

- Increasing own competitiveness within the union may be a zero-sum game.

- Collaboratively creating communities and markets facilitates the emergence of a modernised ICT sector.

- Possible guidelines: The UN Sustainable Development Goals and a human-rights centred foreign, trade and innovation policy.
Outlook: Upcoming Research

• Topic: “The impact of open source software and hardware on technological independence, competitiveness and innovation in the EU economy”

• Consortium: Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research (Karlsruhe) and OpenForum Europe (Brussels)

• Results expected: EOY 2020

• How to participate: Surveys, workshops, general input. Watch this space.
What?

The impact of Open Source Software and Hardware on technological independence, competitiveness, innovation
How?

Analysis of the economic impact:

- **Quantitative** of Open Source Software,
- **Qualitative** of Open Source Hardware,
How?

Learning from experience:

- Case studies,
- Surveys.
How?

Community
How?

We don’t want to reinvent the wheel.
Goal:

Policy recommendations
Long-term goal:

Evidence-based Open Source and Open Innovation policymaking.
Thank you.
euteam@openforumeurope.org

Mirko Boehm | Paula Grzegorzewska