

Impact of Open Source on Transforming Government

Timothy Ney
Co-founder, Linux Greenhouse
International Open ICT Summit
October 20, 2008



First Initiative - Seoul, 2000



Public IT in a financial crisis

In South Korea, after the 1997 Asian financial crisis, there were no funds for software licenses in computer science departments of universities.

In the current economic environment shrinking resources for government are a global phenomena.

Aspirations

- Educate and support governments and social entrepreneurs in open source (original)
- Create social support network and knowledge library (new)

Social Objective

- Digital inclusion
- Create jobs and sustainable projects

Early Adopters in Open Source Community



I expect this audience would include a fair number of college students, and also some people like me.

– Havoc Pennington,
Red Hat developer

Big Picture:

Age of Commoditization

- PCs and digital devices cheaper
- Software prices downward
- Service model
- Server real estate

Computers per 100 population

- Brazil 16.1
- China 4.1
- India 1.5
- Kenya 1.0

Source: The Economist

Internet hosts, January 2007

● U.S.	245,327,938
● Brazil	7,422,440
● Russia	2,353,171
● China	1,933,919
● India	1,684,858

Source: The Economist

Internet hosts per 1000 population - Top Three

- U.S. 822.7
- Iceland 696.9
- Estonia 345.4

Source: The Economist

Mobile Telephone

Subscribers per 100 - Top Ten

● Luxembourg	154.8	● Macau	115.9
● Aruba	135.1	● Czech Republic	115.2
● Lithuania	127.1	● Israel	112.4
● Italy	124.3	● U.K.	109.8
● Hong Kong	123.5	● Portugal	109.1

Source: The Economist

Median Age

● Rwanda	17.4	● China	32.5
● Senegal	18.5	● U.S.	36.0
● Ghana	19.9	● Russia	37.3
● Brazil	26.9	● Euro Area	40.4
● Sri Lanka	29.5		

Source: The Economist

Necessity is the Mother of Invention



What I discovered was that -
with the caveat of a
necessary network
connection - life is just fine
without a disk.

- John Markoff

American technology journalist

Telecentros in Brazil



- Government support
- Software Livre
- Community Center
- Urban/rural
- Replicable
- Test laboratories

What a Software Project Needs

- Web site
- Mailing Lists
- Version Control
- Bug tracking
- Real-time Chat

– Karl Fogel

Producing Open Source Software (O'Reilly 2006)

What e-Government Needs

- Skillset - management, operations, human resources
- Transparency - participation
- Seamlessness
- Best practices - efficiency
- Innovation

Making a community vibrant

Community focus and identity means better implementation

- Local IT websites and bulletin boards
- Blogs
- Aggregators (rss Planets)
- Photo galleries (Flickr, Picasa)
- Cross organization collaboration

New Rules of Engagement


Public Policy

Default to open source solution
Justify expense of proprietary software

Tipping Points Adoption or Failure?

- What are the users accustomed to?
- Overwhelmed or engaged?
- Operational challenges
- Transparency and accountability
- Interoperability

Small bites

- docs (simple text, text tables) 
- version control (embedded)
- comments in doc or via e-mail
- final doc or white paper by person most involved
- reviewed by person least involved

Collective Intelligence

- Shared insights - best practices
- Leverage partnerships
- Open wiki model
- Interoperability
- Tools to crossbreed applications

Thank you!

