

Open Source Software: the case for developing countries

South Centre Intellectual Property Briefing:

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Free/Libre/Open Source Software

- “FLOSS” is everywhere, the Internet depends on it
- Every PC running *Microsoft Windows* includes open source components for networking – TCP/IP, the basic internet protocol; BIND, to access domain names...
- This model maintains some of the most important, innovative technologies today

Open source develops local skills

- **70%** of developers participate in the FLOSS community **“to learn and develop new skills”**
- **67%** of developers participate in the FLOSS community **“to share ... knowledge and skills”**
- **30%** of developers participate in the FLOSS community **“to improve ... job opportunities”**
- **Over 50%** of developers **derive income**, directly or indirectly, through their participation in the FLOSS community

Source: Free/Libre/Open Source Software (FLOSS) Study of Developers

... and local businesses

- Immediate customer base – local businesses are an obvious choice for integration, maintenance and support, no single vendor in control
- Low (no) entry barriers : any local businesses *can provide* support for any open source software

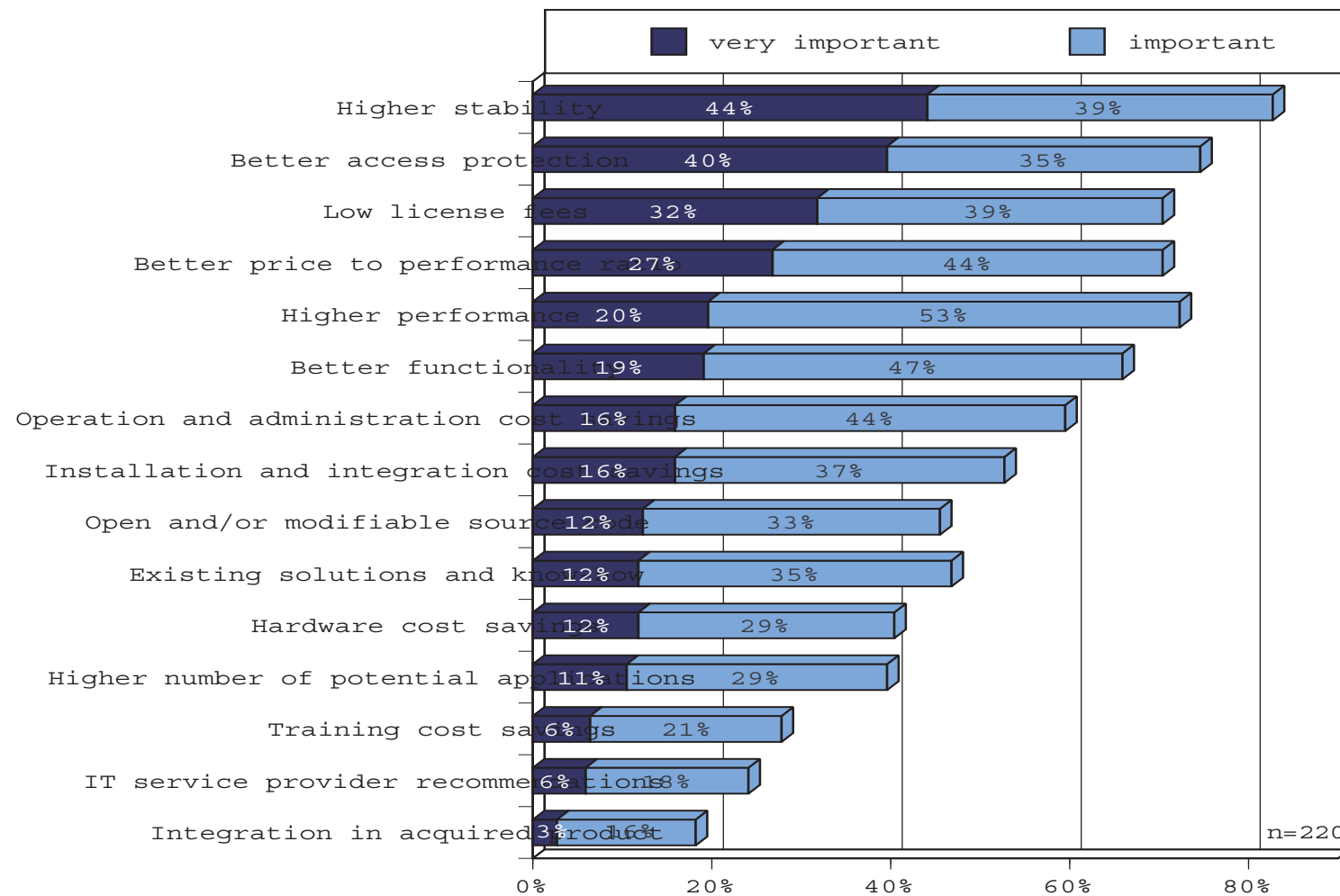
S/w licensing costs seem low...

Licensing Cost of Windows XP + Office (USA):

- Standard Version \$560*
- Professional Version \$800*

**Prices from Amazon.com*

...and not the #1 reason for F/OSS



BeBecon Research 2002

But in developing countries...

Licensing Cost of Windows XP + Office (USA):

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- Professional Version \$800

VIETNAM: GDP per capita \$411 p.a.

Effective cost of Windows XP + Office (per capita)

- Standard Version 15 months' GDP
- Professional Version 22 months' GDP

...Cost really DOES matter

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PPP\$ - comparing with US GDP per capita: \$35,277 p.a.

Effective cost in PPP\$ for Windows XP + Office in Vietnam

- Standard Version **\$48,011**
- Professional Version **\$68,587**

...Cost really DOES matter

Country	GDP/cap \$	PCs ('000s)	Piracy		WinXP Cost*
				GDP months	Effective US\$
Argentina	7166	3415	62%	1	2757
Brazil	2915	10834	56%	2	6777
China	911	24216	92%	7	21678
India	462	6029	70%	15	42725
South Africa	2620	2962	38%	3	7541
United States	35277	178327	25%	0	560
Vietnam	411	934	94%	16	48011

GDP/cap in US\$, WinXP cost in effective US\$ equivalent

*Windows + Office XP equivalent US\$ cost calculation = \$560 * (country GDP per capita / US GDP per capita)*

Source: World Bank World Development Indicators Database, 2001; Piracy data from Business Software Alliance

Open source is the best way for developing countries to:

- Deploy ICT *rapidly, affordably, widely*
- Develop an ICT infrastructure while respecting IPR, limiting “software piracy”
- Develop a *local* ICT software and services skills base and foster a *local* ICT software and services economy
- Truly use ICT as an enabler for *widespread* economic growth

More information...

The FLOSS project pages & final report

<http://flossproject.org>

Paper on FLOSS as Official Development Aid,

By Jordi Carrasco Munoz

[http://www.i-today.com.vn/itoday/open_source/baocao/
jordi_europeancommunity.ppt](http://www.i-today.com.vn/itoday/open_source/baocao/jordi_europeancommunity.ppt)