



# Free/Libre/Open Source Software Worldwide impact study: FLOSSWorld

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**East Asia Workshop #1**

**December 17-18, Tsinghua University, Beijing**

**Coordinator:**

**MERIT, University of Maastricht**

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# FLOSSWorld: Aims and objectives

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- Strengthen EU participation in global research
- Build a global constituency of policy-makers and researchers on FLOSS issues
- Enhance global awareness of FLOSS:
  - human capacity building
  - policy and use in government
  - technical, organisational and business differences between regional FLOSS projects
- Period: May 1, 2005 to April 30, 2007



# FLOSSWorld: Geographic scope

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- Target countries (consortium partners):
  - Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, India, Malaysia, South Africa
- Related regions (outside consortium) include:
  - Japan, USA (original letters of support)
  - Others (expressions of interest): Uganda, Australia, Chile, Colombia, Iran



# FLOSSWorld: Consortium - EU

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- Coordinator: MERIT, University of Maastricht  
Leading survey research tracks
- Oxford Internet Institute, Univ. of Oxford  
Contributing to survey development/analysis
- FUNDECYT, Junta de Extremadura, Spain  
Leading workshop and collaboration track
- Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Spain  
Leading software project comparison track



# FLOSSWorld: Consortium - regional

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- *Argentina:*

- USUARIA, business IT user organisation
- Fundacion Via Libre, leading community organisation in Latin America

- *Brazil:*

- Natl. IT Institute (ITI), Office of the President of Brazil
- University of Campinas, top University



# FLOSSWorld: Consortium - regional

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- *Bulgaria:*
  - Internet Society Bulgaria
- *China:*
  - China Education & Research Network (CERNET) at Tsinghua Univ: largest network in China, under Ministry of Education, at top University
  - China Standard Software Company: one of the main FLOSS companies in China



# FLOSSWorld: Consortium - regional

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- *Croatia:*

- Multimedia Institute MI2: hosts SummerSource developer workshop
- Croatian Academic Research Network, under Science Ministry

- *India:*

- Centre for Development of Advanced Computing: largest group of IT labs in India, under Ministry of Information Technology



# FLOSSWorld: Consortium - regional

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- *Malaysia:*
  - MIMOS: govt-owned leading IT research organisation, author of national open source policy
- *South Africa:*
  - Council for Scientific and Industrial Research: Africa's largest R&D organisation
  - University of the Western Cape





# FLOSSWorld: External support

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- Not part of consortium, pre-project letters of support:
- *India:* National Assoc. for Software & Services Cos.
- *USA:* Stanford University Inst. Econ & Policy Research
- *Japan:* Mitsubishi Research Institute
- Open Society Institute / Soros Foundations
- UNCTAD



# FLOSSWorld: Observers

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- Observers, collaborators can participate in FLOSSWorld
- No funding, but they can get interim results
- They can participate in FLOSSWorld working groups, mailing-lists
- They can conduct FLOSSWorld studies in their own countries / regions
- FLOSSWorld will provide survey questionnaires, methodologies and analysis



# FLOSSWorld: Observers

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- Australia: New South Wales Government
- Chile: Centro de Software Libre
- Taipei: OSSF / Academica Sinica
- Colombia: SEAQ Servicios
- Costa Rica: ALAS Libre
- Iran: GNU/Linux Localisation Project
- Portugal: Madeira Tecnopolo
- Spain: Regional Government of Catalonia
- Uganda: Uganda Martyrs University
- MySQL



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# FLOSSWorld: 4 Track Workplan

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- 1: skills development and employment generation: surveys of developers, employers and higher education insts.
- 2: study differences between regions in development methods, participation in global community, links to industry, quality of local FLOSS software



# FLOSSWorld: 4 Track Workplan

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- 3: survey attitudes, usage towards FLOSS and open standards in govt orgs.
- 4: conduct regional and international workshops and working groups to develop and build upon tasks 1-3, to create a global research/policy constituency



# FLOSSWorld: 4 Track Workplan

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- Research tracks 1-3 largely extend past EU studies to the 8 target countries
- Core design/analysis done by EU partners
- Regional issues, implementation addressed by regional partners
- Easily extended to regions outside the consortium



# European projects: earlier research

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- FLOSS project (EU 2001-2002): understanding developer community, business needs; software project details
- FLOSSPOLs project (EU 2004-2006): survey of developers, employers on skills learnt through FLOSS communities compared with formal degrees; survey of governments on use/non-use of FLOSS
- OSSWatch (UK 2004): survey of Universities and HEIs on FLOSS use





# FLOSS findings: developers

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- Main reason to join community: “to learn and develop new skills”
- Money is not a main reason to join community...
- ... but 30% earn income directly from FLOSS
- 20% earn income indirectly from FLOSS
- Most community developers are not very active (<5 hours per week; 1-2 projects)
- <10% developers most active, >20 hours per week, write >70% of all software code



# FLOSSPOLS findings: developers

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- Learn *many* technical skills, basic as well as advanced
- Learn many *non-technical* skills (legal, management/teamwork, general – e.g. English)
- Think they learn most things better from FLOSS community than from formal courses
- Think employers may accept *proven* FLOSS participation instead of formal degree



# FLOSSPOLLS findings: employers

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- Firms that use FLOSS are more positive about skills learnt from FLOSS communities, but...
- ...even firms that don't think FLOSS is important think many skills are learnt *better* in FLOSS communities than in formal courses
- Both types of firms think that *proven* FLOSS participation could be accepted if potential employee has no formal degree (“wrote a driver for Linux kernel” proves practical knowledge better than University computer science degree?)



# FLOSSPOL findings: government

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- 80% of European regional governments have *some* use of FLOSS
- ...but 30% say they don't use it, even when they do use FLOSS applications! (unaware use)
- ...and most use is not extensive: e.g. partial on server, not complete on desktop



# FLOSSPOLS findings: government

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- Main reasons to use FLOSS:
  - Need to customise
  - Independence from vendors
- Main reasons *not to* use FLOSS:
  - Fear that no technical support is available
  - Fear that (re-)training costs will be high
- Fears are perhaps false:
  - Those with *actual FLOSS experience* don't report such problems with support and training



# Relevance to FLOSSWorld

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- Data available only on Europe, some other surveys also in US, Japan, elsewhere
- Are other regions similar to Europe? Same problems, same solutions?
- Are other regions similar to each other? Comparing China, India, Brazil etc...
- Are there common policy solutions possible?
  - Track 1: can FLOSS develop IT skills better
  - Track 2: can FLOSS help local software creation
  - Track 3: can FLOSS help IT in government?



# FLOSSWorld schedule

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- 1<sup>st</sup> regional workshops: Nov 05-Mar 06
  - Discuss research questions, interact
  - Buenos Aires, Beijing, Mumbai, Sofia (Bulgaria), Nairobi (Kenya)
- 1<sup>st</sup> International workshop: Mar 06
  - Brussels



# FLOSSWorld schedule

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- On-going survey and study:
  - Nov 05-July 06
- Analysis:
  - August 06-September 06
- 2<sup>nd</sup> regional and intl workshops:
  - Oct 06-Feb 07
  - Discuss survey results, policy issues
- Finalise recommendations: Feb-Apr 07





## More information

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- *Coordinator:* Rishab Ghosh, MERIT  
rishab@dxm.org
- FLOSSWorld: <http://flossworld.org>
- FLOSS Project report (2002)  
<http://flossproject.org/report/>