



luminas
[internet applications]

Tel: +44 (0)870 741 6658
Fax: +44 (0)870 284 7489
Email: info@luminas.co.uk

Luminas Limited, 7 Webster Close, Norwich, NR5 9DF

<http://www.luminas.co.uk/>

Open Source: national frameworks
OSSWatch, 20th January 2005

Open Source business across Europe

David Casal

(how was lunch?)

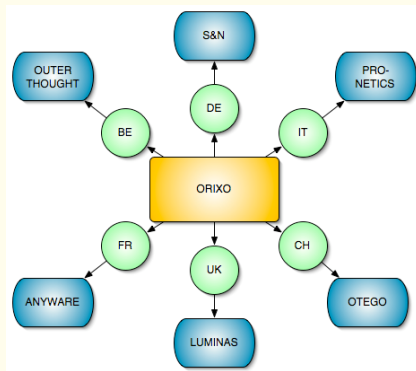
Or...

Herding Cats on a
Multinational Scale

**WARNING : CROSS-EUROPEAN OPEN SOURCE BUSINESS
MAY BE HARMFUL TO YOUR HEALTH**

Who in the name of Sweet Feathery Buddha are you?

- FLOSS involvement for 7 years, as user and contributor
- Luminas : 5 years in April
- Orixo : last two years
 - 6 companies working on Open Source throughout Europe, trying to bring Open Source collaboration model into a business collaboration context
 - with an aim to:
 - Share information : documentation, mailing lists
 - Share resources : common training, outsourced development
 - Use each other's companies as a sounding board



Triumvirate of issues: evaluating, buying, and supporting FLOSS.

DAVID

"Are we being used as bait?"

ANDREW

"Not bait. They're using us as a **shill**."

DAVID

"Oh."



- shill** P (shl) *Slang n.* One who poses as a satisfied customer or an enthusiastic gambler to dupe bystanders into participating in a swindle.v. **shilled, shill-ing, shills** v. *intr.* To act as a shill.v. *tr.*1. To act as a shill for (a deceitful enterprise).2. To lure (a person) into a swindle.
3. An Open Source company asked to quote in order to **unwillingly** dupe a proprietary vendor into reducing their fees.

Evaluating Open Source:

- Legal accountability
- What the licenses mean (GPL, LGPL, Apache)
- Governmental policy
 - Does 'default' mean default? When?
- The red rag, or why working as a shill can work out for the best.

Selling Open Source

- Appearances : what is presented to customers as Open Source
 - The "packaged off-the shelf box with manual" vs. the tarball
 - The "we have a great solution" which hides Open Source behind formal curtain
 - The 'we wrote the book, now let us enlighten you for €800 a day'
 - The "scruffy hacker" vs. dapper salesman

Supporting Open Source

- **Local**
 - FE/HE : JISC, AHRB projects and (mostly) HE-driven research
 - VNU
 - Most support involves focused project development and continues as incident-based
- **International**
 - Winterthur, T-Mobile, other mobile networks, mobile content providers
 - Support usually begins with 'Open Source comparison'
 - Most larger companies are already using FLOSS and want incident 24/7 guarantees
 - Others want help with existing FLOSS components

Supporting Open Source (2)

- Typical requirements
 - Hand holding
 - Up-front consultancy and advice
 - Feature-specific development
 - Call-out, incident-based

The legal position of Open Source in Europe

The non-profit corporation vs. the small business

- A foundation has a responsibility to the general public.
- A normal corporation has a responsibility to its shareholders.
- When a normal corporation (for profit) works with a software commons, responsibilities become blurry in the eyes of the client.

Is accountability subject to culture?

- Every country involved understands legal accountability in a different way, ranging from straightforward to Byzantine
- Provision of accountability within pan-European projects differs culturally from company to company
 - Some are too small, some are too big
 - Some talk about 'support contracts', some have 1 major client buying services only.

The Full English vs. the Continental

- **Current explosion of Open Source companies**
 - Spikesource and Optaros example : “Productized Open Source”
- **Older companies : generally stick to one ‘product’**
 - Web applications
- **Venture capital creeping into FLOSS model**
 - Changing business model
 - Shareholder driven process
 - Capitalising on the increasing maturity of OSS offering

The Big Breakfast

Components:

- Apache
- JBoss
- MySQL
- Tomcat
- Axis
- Hibernate
- PHP

Platforms:

- SuSE 9.0
- Red Hat 9
- Red Hat Enterprise 3.0
- Fedora Core 1

The Continental

- Web application development services
 - General project development
- Apache development (Cocoon, Slide, etc.)
 - Specific, customised component development
 - Documentation (a customer needs specific documentation for a component)

Most people aren't that hungry

- European experience
 - Large pan-European companies want services and support around specific components.
 - 'Complete stack' is very rarely within the scope
- US experience vs. Europe
 - Open Source goes to Hollywood
 - The 'The Time Has Come' paradigm and why Europe isn't listening
- The need for libraries/frameworks is greater than that for entire applications (Linux)
 - Increased programmer productivity
 - Reduced development time

“So, the next time you hear “open source development”, think “the most economically efficient method for matching resources to construct information products”.

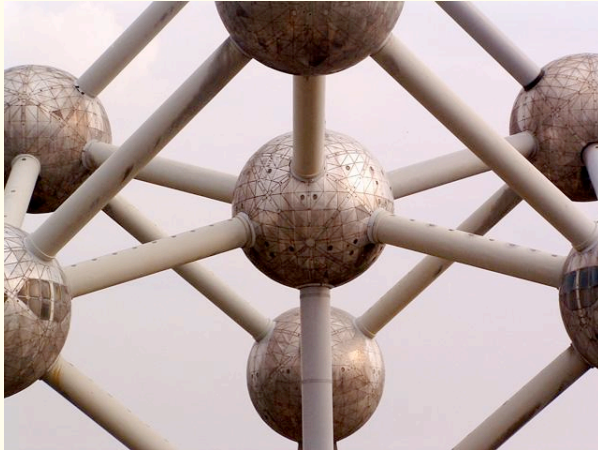
The next time you see “XXX Software Foundation”, think “people constructing a software commons (protected by intellectual property laws) that the rest of us can use and extend”.”

Ted Leung

<http://www.sauria.com/blog/2005/01/10#1185>

Summary

- Just because we can code together doesn't mean we can work together.
- Contextual differences matter less at a line-by-line level; finding understanding on an European scale is "difficult".
- Working across Europe is rewarding :
 - Cultural diversity actually improves chances of success
 - Getting to understand diversity means a stronger offering
 - CAVEAT : can boil down to great wine, great chocolate, lots of airmiles.





Thank you.

Play nice.

<http://www.luminas.co.uk/>

<http://www.orix.com/>