FLOSS Cadastre Project – Status and developments


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Background and aim

• Many projects in developing countries seem to fail because of high software license fees
• OSS enjoys high attention also in the GIS market
• FAO is leading the project, with FIG and World Bank as partners

• Aims:
  • to explore the topic
  • to develop it for cadastral domain
  • to provide a platform for the benefit of developing as well as developed countries
FLOSS Cadastre project

Tentative phases

• **1st phase:** scoping paper by Gertrude Pieper, overview of OSS and recommendations

• Expert Group Meeting to discuss next steps

• **2nd phase:** to carry out several case studies

• In parallel: to look for funding for 3rd phase / to look for academic partner / to plan workshop → Workshop in Dunedin, May 2008

• **3rd phase:** to establish core team and platform.
• Presentation and discussion of scoping paper
• Presentation of other OSS projects, experiences and lessons learnt
• Result of EGM: the project should aim for the development and provision of OSS tools for the following:
  • basic cadastral operations
  • data modelling tools
Results

- participation and input from different countries
- set-up of a wiki site (http://source.otago.ac.nz/oscar/OSCAR_Home)
- development of OSCAR modules and report by Univ. of Otago (OSCAR = Open Source Cadastral and Registry)

Discussion at workshop showed that there would be a tremendous benefit when large national projects declare their software developments as open-source. Many others could potentially profit. The C&LR community should be more aware of high costs of software license fees and the potential of FLOSS.
FLOSS vs COTS

It is crucial for both FLOSS and COTS:
• to have local support facilities available
• to have education and training possibilities established
• to have a national contact person or institution in place, which is able to:
  • open the access to the international FLOSS Cadastre community
  • make translations from and to English
  • establish documentation in the national language
  • organize and support trainings

Advantages of FLOSS over COTS:
• no license fees
• highly motivated developers
• very flexible and scalable solutions
• BUT: users have to formulate their needs and commission their realization
• BENEFIT: local know-how is being established and remains there
Experiences and perspectives

Strengths:
- FLOSS allows cost effective solutions with high potential for added value
- further developments benefit all
- no limitations in terms of scalability

Challenges:
- more difficult and different challenges for the user, e.g. he/she has to master the technology (documentation and source code)
- user has to initiate further developments and – if a module does not yet exist – to pay for it

Perspectives:
- consolidation (architecture, code, user interface)
- further developments according to user needs
Observations and critical points

Observations

- FLOSS needs to be based on open concepts
- Standardized data modelling is essential (no matter what the data model is or what the modelling mechanism is)

- The big issue in Europe at the moment: fees
- Discussions are currently more often about **open source data** rather than open source software

Private cadastral offices start to discover FLOSS possibilities while they grow tired of license restrictions, limitations and costs.
What we need to think about

• There are suspicions against FLOSS (can this be good? can this be reliable? who provides support in case of problems?)
  \[\rightarrow\] How can these suspicions be overcome?

• How can an international forum or platform be established?
  \[\rightarrow\] Probably we have to learn more about existing communities, or maybe even join them.

  • Should "FLOSS Cadastre" join OSGEO or should it establish a separate platform?
  • Should "FLOSS Cadastre" participate in national OSGEO chapters or establish their own chapters?
  • What should a possible FAO platform be able to provide?
Next steps

• Project committee will discuss if and how developments can be applied on country level

• Dissemination of information

• FIG-Commission 7 will take lead in producing a publication with material so far (input from all parties / aim is political, strategic level)
openstreetmap.org (→ Zurich, Switzerland)
openstreetmap.org (→ Dunedin, New Zealand)
The Map...