

# What Else Is Going On? – Building a Project Database

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# Outline

What Else Is  
Going On? –  
Building a  
Project  
Database

Holger  
Schmuhl

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Introduction

Collaboration  
Initiatives

Databases of  
Open Source  
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Weak points  
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Discussion

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Collaboration Initiatives
- 3 Databases of Open Source Projects
- 4 Weak points of existing databases
- 5 Discussion

# About myself

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- Working as system integrator at GE Healthcare
- This is my personal interest and commitment (aka “hobby”)
- Compiled a list of medical OSS projects that is available online at <http://freemedsw.apfelkraut.org>
- Contact: [holger.schmuhl@web.de](mailto:holger.schmuhl@web.de)

# About this session

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Share and discuss your *requirements*, *expectations* and *experiences* about a future database that lists all available open source software projects for the Health Care Sector.

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- Initial point for the discussion about “Building a Project Database”
- Should give only a brief insight into existing databases and collaboration initiatives
- Not complete at all, only listing those that I came across during my research
- Looking forward to your comments and additions

# Definition of Open Source Software (OSS)

as defined by the Open Source Initiative (OSI)



- Availability of source code
- Free (re-)distribution of software in source code as well as in compiled form
- Derived works/modifications allowed while preserving the rights of the original author
- No discrimination against persons or groups and fields of endeavor
- For details (definition, different licenses, etc.) see <http://www.opensource.org>
- Acronyms: Free/Libre Open Source Software (FLOSS or FOSS)

# Open Source

Considerations by Richard M. Stallman (GNU Project)

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*“Copying all or parts of a program is as natural to a programmer as breathing, and as productive. It ought to be as free.”*

*“If anything deserves a reward, it is social contribution. Creativity can be a social contribution, but only in so far as society is free to use the results. If programmers deserve to be rewarded for creating innovative programs, by the same token they deserve to be punished if they restrict the use of these programs.”*

# Motivation

Why would we need a database of medical OSS projects?

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- Find the software you are looking for without having to google or consult other sources.
- Short-list software that may be relevant to your purposes without having to analyze every project homepage in detail.
- Find projects on which you can build upon. There are many projects of same or similar type that may not know of each other. This leads to:
  - Lack of code re-use and knowledge/experience transfer between the projects.
  - Reinventing the wheel instead of collaborating and creating thereby something of much greater good (synergy effect!).

# Collaboration Initiatives (1/3)

- latest initiative -

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- Open Health Tools (OHT)
  - “Open Health Tools is a community of open source developers, health professionals, and an ecosystem that brings together members from the health and IT professions to create a common health interoperability framework, exemplary tools and reference applications to support health information interoperability.”
  - Resulting software framework will be available under a commercially-friendly open source license
  - Members (beside others): Eclipse Foundation, HL7, IBM, National Health Service (UK), Object Management Group, Oracle, Veterans Health Administration (USA)
  - Officially announced their collaborative effort on April 8, 2008
  - <http://www.openhealthtools.org>

# Collaboration Initiatives (2/3)

- working groups -

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- International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) -  
Open Source Health Informatics working group (OSWG)  
<http://www.imia.org>
- European Federation for Medical Informatics (EFMI) -  
Libre/Free and Open Source Software in Health  
Informatics working group (LIFOSS)  
<http://www.efmi.org>
- American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) - Open  
Source working group (OS-WG)  
<http://www.imia.org>

# Collaboration Initiatives (3/3)

- other initiatives -

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- Open Source Health Care Alliance (OSHCA)
  - “OSHCA is a non-profit organisation that provides the collaborative platform and forum to promote and facilitate Free/Open Source Software in Health Care.” OSHCA is registered in Malaysia.
  - <http://www.oshca.org>
- FLOSS[include]
  - “The FLOSSInclude project aims to strengthen Europe’s participation in international research in FLOSS and open standards.” It is initiated by United Nations University and Maastricht University.
  - <http://flossinclude.eu>

# Databases of general OSS

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- **sourceforge.net**
  - 174,497 projects in total, about 640 projects in category “Medical Science Apps”
  - Listed project attributes: Name, project admins, developers, database environment, development status, intended audience, license, operating system, programming language, topic, translations, user interface, donors, project UNIX name, registration date and activity
  - Features: advanced search functionality, direct URLs (to homepage, mailing-list, documentation, download etc.), statistics, RSS ...
- **freshmeat.net**
  - 44,431 projects in total, about 139 projects in category “Medical Science Apps”
  - Listed project attributes: similar to [sourceforge.net](#)
  - Features: rating, rest similar to [sourceforge.net](#)

# Databases of medical OSS (1/2)

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Discussion

- List of open source healthcare software at [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)
  - Static list containing about 120 projects
  - Short description about each projects, 1-2 sentences that may contain, beside a general description, information about used technology and license
  - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_open\\_source\\_healthcare\\_software](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_open_source_healthcare_software)
- FOSS Health Applications by the Open Source Healthcare Alliance
  - Static list containing about 20 projects
  - Listed project attributes: name, description, license, category, supported OS, supported languages, supported platform/dependencies, notes
  - <http://oshca.org/healthdir/fossapps.html>

# Databases of medical OSS (2/2)

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- [www.idoimaging.com/index.shtml](http://www.idoimaging.com/index.shtml) (Andrew Crabb)
  - More than 200 projects, only Medical Imaging specific free software (not only OSS)
  - Listed project attributes: name, description, author, URL status, rank, input/output formats, revision history and interface type
  - Features: advanced search functionality, ranking
- [freemedsw.apfelkraut.org](http://freemedsw.apfelkraut.org) (Holger Schmuhl)
  - Static list of more than 70 *active* projects (last news or releases not older than a year)
  - Listed project attributes: name, license, RSS feed, platform, client type, description

# Further information on medical OSS

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## ■ GNU/Linux and Open Source Medical Software News



- THE medical OSS news site
  - Open, moderated news site (meaning you can post your own article there)
  - Editor: Ignacio H. Valdes
  - <http://linuxmednews.com>
- For more listings and further information see “Further Sources” at <http://freemedsw.apfelkraut.org>

# Weak points of existing databases (1/2)

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- Awareness/popularity (what use has a perfect database that is not known to the public nor cannot be found via search engines)
- Search capabilities (hard to find the adequate project that you are looking for)
- Visual clarity (information overflow, too many projects/information at once)
- Up-to-dateness (contain also projects that are dead/non-active since a few years)

# Weak points of existing databases (2/2)

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- Relevance (contain also software that is free but closed source or restricted in usage or distribution, non-conform to the definition of OSS)
- Lack of information (essential information like license or supported platform is missing, project homepage needs to be analyzed in detail to gather the required information)
- Administration (who can add, update or delete projects)

# Outline

- questions to be answered during discussion -

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Possible  
attributes

Possible features

- 1 Where/How would you start looking for a project you need?
- 2 What information should be given per project?
- 3 Which functionality should the database offer?
- 4 Who should be able to add, modify or delete projects?  
(community, dedicated persons)

# Possible project attributes

- information that could be listed per project -

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*Name, description, category/tag, project admins, developers, database environment, development status, intended audience, license, operating system, programming language, topic, translations, user interface, registration date, activity, last update, offered interfaces/supported standards, available languages, compliant to which legal regulations, number of user, reference sites, service suppliers . . .*

# Possible database features

- functions the database could offer -

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Possible features

- *Advanced search functionality*
- *Direct URLs*
- *RSS or other notification services*
- *Statistics*
- *Administration*
- *Moderation*
- *Donation capabilities*
- *Locate service supplier near you*
- ...

# THANK YOU

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**Thank you for your attention and contribution !!**

# Bob Pyke

Health Span International

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Possible features

- Will give us an insight about the Telehealth project “Health Span International”
- Co administrator Telehealth List Serve and roving editor
- [www.telehealth.net/interviews/pykebio.html](http://www.telehealth.net/interviews/pykebio.html)
- [bob-thebobblog.blogspot.com](http://bob-thebobblog.blogspot.com)