

1. ANNEX I:Obstacles and barriers to F/OSS adoption in Public Administration. Report on the Workshop



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2. Introduction

This report describes the context and results of the workshop on Barriers and Obstacles to the adoption of F/OSS in public administration. The workshop was held during the II International Conference about Free Knowledge, which took place on 25th and 26th of October, 2005 in Extremadura, Spain.

The report will describe the context within which the workshop was held (the conference), it will explain the methodology used, and will expose the main results from the workshop.

3. II International Conference about Free knowledge

The Junta de Extremadura and the Junta de Andalusia jointly with sector's enterprises and other companies organized the II Free Software International Conference. It was based in two events, the International Meeting about Free Knowledge 2005 held in Merida (Extremadura, Spain) the 25th and 26th October 2005 and the International Conference of Malaga 2006 held in Malaga (Andalusia, Spain) from the 15th until the 17th of February 2006 titled "Innovation and Freedom".

The target of the Conference was to show the Open Source world as a reality, and as a powerful, robust and secure solution to take into account at the time of implementing new information systems.

Merida's event has dealt with the globalization of knowledge. Free knowledge as Open Source, is a good opportunity whose globalization allows the development of our society in all its fields. The Free Knowledge Meeting focused on the following areas: Knowledge globalization, Political environment, Open Source and Research economy, Open Source Technological and Innovative Development.

Freedom and technological independence provided by the use of Free Software and the use of Technological Standards are fundamental aspects to bear in mind by the responsables of the development of a Society based on solidarity above all.

The event has been a Meeting with plenty of reflections and experiences about the evolution of the strategies and policies made worldwide in the field of Knowledge Society.

In this particular case, the objectives, as described below, have been achieved:

- Debate about the state of the Question, through the presentation of the main actions developed around the Free Knowledge and Free Software worldwide.
- Present the decisive factors of Free Software in the Business Process and in the Research, Technological Development and Innovation field as well.
- Discuss about the challenges that Free Software has to face up to.
- Know about the different political attitudes (national and international)

concerning Free Software.

- Be a Meeting Point of Developers and Persons in Charge of Free Software Projects.
- Official Presentation of gnuLinEx'2005.

4. Methodology

The objective of the Workshop was to to share knowledge and exchange experiences on F/OSS, where representatives of public administration could interact with each other and with the partners of the project, on their own experiences with the F/OSS. The results of the workshop will be used to contextualize and develop the tools of the survey to be realised in task 1.4 of Workpackage 1.

The methodology used to obtain data and information was the focus group methodology.

4.1. Focus Groups

Focus group research involves organised discussion with a selected group of individuals to gain information about their views and experiences of a topic. It is particularly suited for obtaining several perspectives about the same topic. Focus groups however rely on interaction within the group based on topics that are supplied by the researcher. Hence the key characteristic which distinguishes focus groups is the insight and data produced by the interaction between participants.

The objective of the Focus Groups in the workshop was the detection of the main barriers and obstacles to F/OSS adoption in Public Administration.

Three focus groups were established:

1. Administrative barriers (end-user and technological barriers are included in this group)
2. Financial issues
3. Legal issues

regarding the adoption of F/OSS in Public Administration.

The first step was to have a brainstorming session with the participants in the different focus groups. The flow ideas that came out of this session, formed the basis for the posterior discussion.

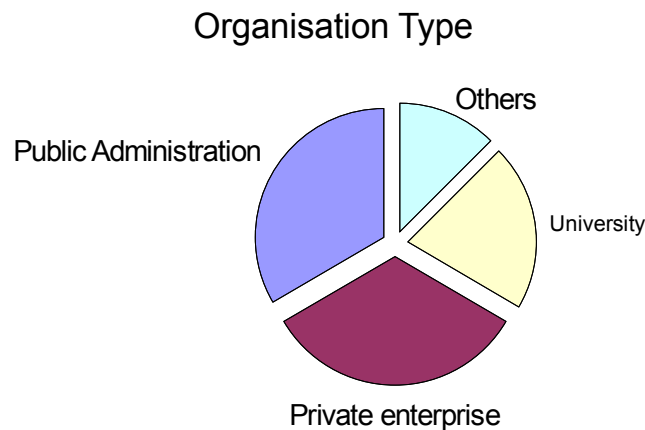
The second step was to reach consensus within separate focus groups, on first the relevant barriers as identified in the brainstorming, and second the prioritization and/or classification of these from most relevant to less relevant.

As a last step the moderators of the different focus groups, presented their results of the groups to the rest of the focus groups. After this step all participants were given the opportunity to provide their opinion and/or ideas on

the results of the other focus groups, which the participants of the other groups decided in a vote to accept or not.

The result is a listing according to relevance of the main barriers in the three different groups mentioned above.

A total of 23 persons participated in the workshop, with the following classification as according to type of organisation:



5. Results

5.1. Administrative barriers

This heading describes the results of group 1: Administrative barriers, which refer to technological and end-user barriers.

The following points were raised as potential administrative obstacles to FOSS. They reflect the discussions and ideas of the participants in the discussion. The group on Administrative issues consisted of 3 representatives of Guadalinfo (part of the strategy of the region of Andalusia on digital literacy); an OS based SME from the region of Murcia, and IT and consulting company of the region of Madrid, and one person preparing for civil servant.

1. End-user problems: Issues mentioned were
 - Reticence of users
 - Resistance to change
 - Lack of companies that migrate, combined with a lack of a local OS based economy creates a lack of confidence
 - Perceived issue of “free” is not good does not offer quality, OS is still considered as “free” in the sense of free of costs, marketing is needed on this issue.

- Many small Public Adm. Do not perceive the added value of the migration as many are using “pirated” versions of proprietary software.
- Perception is that, specific training is needed for OS while people have had to invest already a large number of hours in learning by trail and error how to use proprietary software.
- Perception that FLOSS is still very much related to anarchy instead of professionalism
- Lack of business models that create confidence in FLOSS
- FLOSS does not have the “branding” proprietary software has, specially in the area of operating systems for the desktop.

2. Technological problems: Issues mentioned were

- Security problems and system failure (perceived as such by end-user)
- Universality of Microsoft operating system
- Lack of standardization in formats and compatibility and transfer of files, although efforts are done, these are insufficient.

3. Others:

- Barriers set up by the Public Administrations themselves, heavily related to cultural levels. There is a generational conflict between professors and students, the migration to FLOSS requires training of professors when rolling out in educational system.
- Many Public Administrations plan projects for shorter term, i.e 2/3 years, a too short a time span for FLOSS to take off and for business to develop and consolidate (thus working against the creation of a local OS based company)
- Entry barriers, costs of migrating are important, specially for smaller Public Adm organizations, they do not perceive the added value.
- Not one single center, recognized and with sufficient prestige which really organizes FLOSS, such as is done for proprietary software.
- Duality in Public Adm, they finance and publicly support FLOSS but on many occasions other projects financed depend and run entirely on proprietary software
- Lack of clear implication in and support for an FLOSS strategy in the Public Adm.

After the brainstorming the participants reached consensus on the most important barriers:

The following two are the most important ones:

- A lack of clear implication of the Public Adm. Related to the lack of confidence and a resistance to change. There is a low level of FLOSS digital literacy, and a lack of confidence on the ability to learn how to use the applications.
- Lack of standardization

The following two are the second most important ones:

- Lack of branding or the image of the brand
- Costs related to migration, in many occasions there is a need to depreciate still the proprietary software acquired

5.2. Financial Issues

The following points were raised as potential financial obstacles to F/OSS, and were classified in according to relevance :

- 1 Difficulty in establishing or estimating a final Total Cost of ownership.
- 2 Difficulty in establishing Interoperability costs and costs related to establishing Open format standards.
- 3 Huge costs related to marketing and increasing public awareness of OSS.
- 4 High initial training costs required.
- 5 Potential productivity losses that can have a financial impact on organizations.
- 6 High retrofitting/ switching and customisation costs.
- 7 Can have a significant organizational impact and increase management costs
- 8 High software compliance costs
- 9 High vendor management costs
- 10 Lack of venture capital friendly to OSS
- 11 A potential loss in Cognitive competence¹ costs difficult to measure
- 12 Lack of corporate sponsorships
- 13 COTS suppliers are reluctant to allow OSS due to the financial impact it could have on its established support teams and investments.
- 14 OSS pricing power is weak, eg for support, since very little demand and low competition drives price up.
- 15 Unnecessary legal reassurance can increase financial cost for legal advise

5.3. Legal Issues

The brainstorming session resulted in the following ideas and comments:

1. Everybody waits for a case on F/OSS to happen
2. Who is the owner of the software? - its important. For a private company this is not a problem but the PA is different. Nobody makes something for everybody. There is no guide.

1. A less obvious disadvantage is the loss of cognitive competence that occurs when employees start feeling confused and lost when they have to shift between office open source applications at work and their home personal computer that may be running popular proprietary applications.

3. Most important problem in Spain - don't have laws protecting the F/OSS& CopyLeft. Public Administrations are only making contracts with companies. Local administration is participating only in small pilot projects – e.g. a project in small department in the local council, by adopting a system for security copies, firewall, etc..
4. Its much easier to implement F/OSS in schools.
5. Contracting is pretty hard, small assumptions based on the GPL license & said only it was F/OSS. If not making noise about giving services on f/oss problems will persist.
6. To sign a contract is hard.

Difficulties identified:

1. who is the last person giving the order to do something - nobody wants to take responsibility on a decision for adopting F/OSS (issue of accountability, what happens if the project fails...etc.).
2. No legitimate body responsible for taking a decision in the majority of the Public Administration organizations. No formal decisions on higher level, giving clear indications on the support for F/OSS adoption.
3. No similar examples available from other local administrations.

Issues to be take into consideration:

1. In Italy there are laws supporting OpenSource software in some regions.
2. It is necessary to provide security (psychological) that all will be fine and upfront the reality of piracy..
3. Money for Public Administration in Spain is not a critical issue, account especially when talking about Windows. Accountability is of great importance, and the fear of risk is another critical issue.
4. Pirated software is a barrier for the wider adoption of FOSS (many organizations function on desk top with pirated versions of Windows).
5. Decisions are taken based on previous contracts/decisions taken that are hard to change.
6. In most of the the Microsoft products in the EULA its written that they are not responsible for nothing. But if there is problem in Microsft products, they will fix it. Issue is with F/OSS who is responsible for fixing the problems.

After the discussion consensus was reached on the following classification of the legal barriers:

1. Difficult to sign contract about F/OSS. -> to make GPL confirmable in front of the law. Spain has not lot of tradition/experience in F/OSS.
2. Patent issues
3. Language barrier & lack of awareness about recommendations and lack of laws

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4. Nobody wants to take responsibilities.
5. Pirated software is a barrier for the wider adoption of F/OSS.- because people do not think about the legal issues.
6. Decisions are taken based on previous contracts/decisions taken that are hard to change.

The conclusions of the workshop of the three different focus group provided a first view of the barriers and obstacles to F/OSS adoption by Public Administration. The results will be taken into account on the development of the questionnaire and interview guidelines for the survey to be developed as part of Workpackage 1.