Building a Career in FOSS

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Topics

• How companies make money on Open Source
• Reasons to work on Open Source
• What you can work on and how to go about it
• Finding a job
How companies make money with Open Source

- Support and services
- **Products** (including “open source core”)
- Deployment and management
Why would you want to work on Open Source?
“Scratching your own itch”

1) You find a valuable Open Source tool
2) You discover you wish to improve or expand it
3) You complete this improvement or expansion and you submit the result to the project
Passion for Open Source

• Working in the technology space brings you joy
• Sharing the work you're passionate about feels wonderful!
• Belief in freedom, openness and equal access to technology
Opportunity for International collaboration

- Work with people from different cultures
- Work with people from various companies
- Travel around the world to collaborate through summits, conferences and more
Be a part of some of the biggest software projects in the world

- Apache hosts 50.72% of active websites (source: netcraft.com, January 2015)
- Firefox web browser has considerable market share
- Linux powers much of the cloud & 97% of the 500 top supercomputers
Learn innovative software development practices

- Open Source projects have pioneered incremental, small patch-based development
- Projects today often have code review and Continuous Integration systems
- Tools used and developed by Open Source projects are regularly used inside companies
Professional development

• Gives you real world experience with software projects before you're employed
• You can build up a professional portfolio, which can be referenced when looking for a job
• Online collaboration with various cultures improves valuable communication skills
Types of open source work

- Programming
- Software packaging
- Working with bugs
- Documentation
- Support
- Testing/Quality Assurance
- Systems/Infrastructure
- Community & event coordination
Getting started

- Select a piece of software you already use
- Go to the project website and look for instructions for contributing
- Sign up for mailing list(s), join their IRC channel, visit their support forums
- Submit a patch
Tips

- Respect other contributors and avoid insulting the work of your predecessors
- Follow procedures in place for contributions
- Follow through with commitments (even if you're a volunteer!)
- Focus on only constructive criticism and discussion
- Collaborate, don't fork
Be visible

• Maintain a blog and/or be active on social media where you write about your Open Source work
• Go to events and conferences
• Speak at events (even if you're shy)
• Always say “yes” to interviews and speaking opportunities
• Engage with other users of the software
Be someone people want to work with

• Do your work openly, with a public plan
• Work in a way which showcases your ability to collaborate with others
• Constructively participate in the project communication channels (mailing list, IRC)
• Take time to mentor other project members
Finding a job: Companies to target

• Open Source or Open Source core companies
• Companies using Open Source software and work with them to allow you to contribute back in some way
• A larger company or non-profit that has a division focusing on Open Source work
Questions?

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