

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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