

# A Career in Free and Open Source Software

Elizabeth Krumbach Joseph  
Automation & Tools Engineer at HP

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Elizabeth Krumbach Joseph | @pleia2  
lyz@princessleia.com

# Elizabeth Krumbach Joseph

- Automation & Tools Engineer at HP working on the OpenStack project infrastructure
- Ubuntu Community Council Member
- Recipient of the O'Reilly Open Source Award in 2012

Elizabeth Krumbach Joseph | @pleia2  
lyz@princessleia.com

# What is Free and Open Source Software?

*“Free and open-source software (FOSS) is software that is liberally licensed to grant the right of users to use, study, change, and improve its design through the availability of its source code. This is in contrast to proprietary software, where the software is under restrictive copyright and the source code is hidden from the users, so that the rights holders (the software publishers) can sell binary executables.”*

Source; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free\\_and\\_open\\_source\\_software](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_and_open_source_software)

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# How companies make money

- **Products and services** (including “open source core”)
- **Deployment and management**
- **Support**

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# Why would you want to work on it?

- Find a FOSS tool that was valuable and now wish to expand upon it
- Passion for technology that you wish to share
- Work with many companies across many cultures internationally
- Being a part of some of the biggest, most widely used software projects in the world
- Great potential for personal and professional development

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# “Scratching your own itch”

- You found an open source tool you wish to use
- In the course of using it, you discover you wish to improve or expand upon it
- Contribute code that improved or expanded upon it

# Passion for technology and desire to share

- Working on technology projects brings you joy
- Wish to share the fruits of your labor with the world
- Belief in freedom, openness and equal access to technology

# Opportunity for international collaboration

- Work with people from different cultures
- Work with people from different companies
- Travel all over the world to collaborate and work on the software through summits, conferences and more

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# A part of the biggest software projects in the world

- Apache hosts 46.96% of the web servers in the world (source: netcraft.com, August 2013)
- Firefox web browser
- Linux operating system

# Personal and professional development

- Gives you real world experience with software projects without strictly requiring professional experience
- As you work, you're building up a public portfolio that can be referred to when seeking jobs
- Experience with different cultures and opportunities for personal growth and exciting experiences

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# Things you can work on

- Programming
- Software packaging
- Working with Bugs
- Documentation
- Support
- Testing/QA
- Design
- Community

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# Getting Started

- Start with a piece of software you use (or start using one that looks useful)
- Go to their project website and look for instructions for contributing
- Sign up for mailing list(s), join their chat (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
- Focus on constructive criticism and comments
- Collaborate, don't fork

# Finding a job: Companies to target

- Work for an Open Source, or Open Source core, company
- Work for a company where you use Open Source, and work with your employer to let you contribute back in some way
- Work for a larger company or non-profit that has a division focusing on Open Source work

# Be someone people want to work with

- Do your work openly with a public plan
- Work in a way that showcases your ability to collaborate with others
- Constructively participate in the project communication channels (mailing list, IRC)
- Take time to mentor other project members

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# Be visible

- Maintain a blog where you write about your Open Source work
- Go to events and conferences (even if you are shy)
- Speak at events (especially if you are shy!)
- Always say yes to interviews and speaking opportunities
- Engage with other users of the software (support outlets are great for this)

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# Love what you do



Elizabeth Krumbach Joseph | @pleia2  
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# Questions

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