

A Career in Open Source Software

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Slides at princessleia.com



Elizabeth K. Joseph

- Automation & Tools Engineer at HP, focusing on OpenStack Infrastructure
- Recipient of the O'Reilly Open Source Award, 2012
- Author of The Official Ubuntu Book, 8th ed



What I do

- Automated testing framework engineering*
- Systems administration**
- Documentation (user and dev facing)**
- Giving talks**
- Writing about events**
- Community management
- Software testing
- Event planning

* paid

* sometimes paid



Why?

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“Scratching your own itch”

- In the course of using a tool, you discover you want to make an improvement
- Contribute upstream so you don't have to carry local patches through upgrades



Be a part of the biggest software projects in the world

(or a big part of something small)

Maybe I don't need to tell you...

- Apache “Market share of active sites” is 52.27% (source: netcraft.com, May 2014)
- Firefox web browser
- Linux operating system
- Many smaller projects have 1-3 core contributors



Professional development

- Gives you real world experience with software projects without strictly requiring professional experience
- As you work, you're building up a serious, public portfolio of work on real software projects



International collaboration & travel

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



Passion for technology & desire to share

- Working on technology projects makes you happy
- Wish to share the fruits of your labor freely with the world
- Belief in freedom, openness and/or equal access to technology



What?

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Opportunities to work on many things

Programming, software packaging, bug triage, documentation, support, quality assurance, systems administration, design, marketing, event coordination, community

Or a creative mix of several of these



Getting started

- Start with a piece of software you use
- Go to the project website and look into how to contribute
- Sign up for mailing list(s), join their chat (IRC), visit their support forums
- Submit a patch/make a contribution
- Other resources:

<http://opensource.com/resources/ebook/how-get-started-open-source>

<http://www.openhatch.org>



Tips

- Respect the work of others, avoid insulting the work of your predecessors
- Follow procedures in place for contributions
- Follow through with commitments (or admit it if you can't)
- Focus on *constructive* criticism and comments
- Collaborate, don't fork



Getting a job

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Network

- Attend open source conferences (hello!)
- Stay attentive to work that needs to be done in the community
- Engage with users
- Collaborate with other projects



Building your “brand”

- Have an active blog talking about your FOSS work
- Be active on social media with and about your project
- Speak at open source conferences
- Always say “yes” to press interviews



Being someone people want to work with

- Do your work openly with a public plan
- Work in a way that showcases your ability to collaborate
- Take time to mentor other project members



Companies to target for employment

- Open Source or Open Source core companies
- A company that uses Open Source and lets their employees contribute back changes
- A larger company or non-profit that has an Open Source-focused division



The interview

- Conference attendance policy
- Ability to contribute to open source projects
- Their commitment to use of open source
- Policy around forking and upstream contributions

Have a clear, thought out vision of which of these you are willing to sacrifice, if any



Questions?

Land the tech job you love by Andy Lester

“7 skills to land your open source dream job” -
<http://opensource.com/business/14/4/open-source-job-skills>

“Careers in Open Source Week features professionals' tips and lessons learned
in the field”

<http://opensource.com/business/14/8/careers-open-source-week>

StackOverflow open source jobs board:
<http://careers.stackoverflow.com/jobs/tag/open-source>

HP Helion OpenStack jobs:
<https://bit.ly/OpenStackatHPHelion>

HP Jobs:
<http://hp.com/jobs>

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