

Open Source Governance: Getting Started Best Practices for Software Companies

Summary

Software product companies can benefit by using high-quality open source software components in their products. At the same time, unregulated / ungoverned use of open source software comes with significant risks. To avoid these risks, while fully profiting from open source software, companies set up FLOSS governance program, processes and practices.

This thesis analyses how successful companies get started with FLOSS governance. Through expert interviews and literature review, this thesis will systematically derive the key best practices and processes focused on the “getting started” phase of open source governance in software product companies. For example, such best practices would include:

- establishing open source program office,
- defining open source governance policy,
- introducing open source compliance policy,
- introducing open source compliance manager role etc.

This thesis will study three software product companies with well established FLOSS governance programs. The student will employ case study research and qualitative data analysis methods to derive a suggested theory of “Getting Started” best practices split into categories and including application examples for these best practices in the studied companies. The outcome of the thesis will be broadly applicable proposed best practices for setting up the initial FLOSS governance system at a software product company.

Work Results

- Research method
 - Grounded Theory / QDA following Corbin / Strauss
- Materials gathering
 - Literature search including web search for practitioner reports
 - Interviews with companies who have expertise in FLOSS governance at different levels of maturity
- Iterative theory building using QDA and MaxQDA / QDAcity (at least two iterations)
 - Iteration 1: QDA using existing literature
 - Iteration 2: More literature, enhanced by expert interviews
- Presentation of theory

- Hierarchical definition and classification of best practices
- Detailed descriptions of best practices and graph process overview
 - Provide name-only best practices to connect graph
 - Specific best practices and details using pattern language (e.g. patterns of best practice name, context, problem, solution, source)
 - Application examples for proposed best practices based on expert interviews

Supervisor

Nikolay Harutyunyan, nikolay.harutyunyan@fau.de

Open Source Research Group
Computer Science Department
Friedrich-Alexander University

More information: <http://osr.cs.fau.de/theses/resources/>