

# Corporate engagement with open source communities

Research findings

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# What we'll discuss today

- ▶ Method of research
- ▶ Confirmatory findings
- ▶ Emergent findings
- ▶ Contribution barriers
- ▶ Building community
- ▶ Diversity matters
- ▶ Confidence is high
- ▶ Implications

# Background

# Here's how we learned some things

## The 2011 OG study

This study was initially run in 2011 to explore what was then a fairly new phenomena.

- ▶ Original investigation was sponsored by the National Science Foundation
- ▶ Conducted by the University of Nebraska-Omaha

# Here's how we learned some things

## Research methodology

The Interview Protocol was developed to explore motivations, contribution barriers, project characteristics, organizational policies, and differentiation practices

- ▶ Completed 35 interviews
- ▶ Corporate open source participants (developers, OSPO staff, community managers, project managers, and product managers)
- ▶ Qualitative content analysis
- ▶ Pair coding method to extract themes related to corporate engagement with projects

# Confirmatory findings

# Confirming what was seen in 2011

## Software use

- ▶ Software use (Quality, free, convenient, and well maintained) – solves a business problem
- ▶ Free infrastructure

# Confirming what was seen in 2011

## Leveraged development

- ▶ Collaborative labor to support our business goals
- ▶ Build alliances with companies



# Confirming what was seen in 2011

## Monetize open source

- ▶ Provide support services around OSS
- ▶ Create a marketplace around a product/projects
- ▶ Acquire new users and encourage adoption of products

# New findings

# New discoveries in 2021: Culture and community

## Evolving corporate culture

- ▶ Risk attentive legal culture
- ▶ Blending internal and external innovation
- ▶ Changing corporate culture is hard
- ▶ Open Source Program Offices

# New discoveries in 2021: Culture and community

## Building communities/projects

- ▶ Sustainability around projects is important
- ▶ Centering diversity, equity, & inclusion
- ▶ Building community matters
- ▶ People want active communities

# New discoveries in 2021: Strategic motivations

## Reputations

- ▶ Marketing – Building goodwill and name recognition
- ▶ Demonstrate technical leadership in a competitive landscape

# New discoveries in 2021: Strategic motivations

## Aligning business objectives

- ▶ Standardization in software ecosystems
- ▶ Speculation about the importance of future technology
- ▶ Help steer the direction of a project towards our business interests

# New discoveries in 2021: Strategic motivations

## Competitive

- ▶ Offloading maintenance to a competitor
- ▶ Weaponizing licensing
- ▶ Influencing competitors
- ▶ Commoditize a competitor's service to prevent vendor lock-in

# Takeaways



# Open source is stronger now

## Organizational culture

- ▶ No/less separation between internal and external development
- ▶ OSPO development

# Open source is stronger now

## Building community

- ▶ It's about people and relationships
- ▶ Highlights the importance of centering DEI in OSS projects
  - Explore DEI when determining use and engagement
  - Poor DEI is a consideration when joining a project and reason to leave a project

# Open source is stronger now

## Strategic advantage

- ▶ Constructively
  - Influencing existing projects
  - Driving technology
- ▶ Aggressively
  - Commoditizing services
  - Sharing maintenance


# Thank you

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