

Unlocking the commercial value of open source software



By [Simon McCullough](#)

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Open source software is a powerful springboard for innovation and collaboration. When harnessed correctly it can enhance data security, expedite services through innovative coding and development, as well as unlock restrictions to commercial freedom.

The spirit of collaboration and peer-to-peer problem solving is particularly important at a time when cybersecurity threats are escalating the complexity of security and compliance. The need for trust in the app development and delivery space is also intensifying.

Accelerating innovation

In some circles, experts believe open source is on the wane. I strongly disagree. At its best, open source software explodes barriers to progress and accelerate innovation in ways licensed software with all its legislative impediments can only dream about. Furthermore, adopting open software as a strategy means users can add value and diversify with more speed and flexibility than ever before - all while raising overall operational standards.



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A good use-case of open source's adaptability is its ability to raise awareness of major threats, such as backdoors. How else can a vast community of developers converge, connect and forensically interrogate code to identify if something is truly secure or has vulnerabilities affecting crucial assets like applications and infrastructure?

According to Eric Marks, VP of Cloud Consulting at CloudSpectator, open source is "is getting more popular, not less, and more components are offered in this format." Speaking to the Foresight Factory's recently launched Future of Multi-cloud (FOMC) report, he added that it is "becoming more and more viable" and that we will soon see "a full IT stack that is entirely built from open source components."

Bridge existing interoperability gaps

Another key benefit of open source is its inherent capacity to bridge existing interoperability gaps. For instance, with a

multi-cloud strategy, enterprises have more freedom to easily assign workloads to public clouds best suited to specific tasks, including speed, agility, and security. It is notable that many enterprises are currently and convincingly increasing multi-cloud flexibility and avoiding historic cost impediments with open source using resources, including Kubernetes or OpenStack.

According to some expert contributors to the FOMC report, a lack of open source options could adversely hit the development of user-friendly and intelligent multi-cloud dashboards and various levels of abstraction (i.e. security, monitoring, compliance, and containers). It could also inhibit the ability to communicate between multiple clouds due to the increasing complexity of controlled proprietary platforms.

While open source may have multifarious and vocal detractors, it is important that we are not intimidated by negativity or prompted to stifle its potentially paradigm-shifting influence in any way.

The non-profit open.ai research organisation is a case in point. Exclusively founded to grapple with the life-altering impact of artificial intelligence, it was explicitly committed to open sourcing its software and sharing research findings from the outset.

Collaborations, nimble mindsets needed

To solve big problems, we clearly need big collaborations and nimble mindsets. The problems stemming from different industry sectors adopting technology at different rates due to strict security policies and diverse commercial objectives is another example. Open source can overcome all those issues and help standardise on best practice. It can also offer consumers more choice, including access to free versions of cloud-based services like storage, not to mention spark technological entrepreneurialism by avoiding the high costs of licensed software.

Fundamentally, open source is a conduit for new forms of collaboration and productive dialogue that can push businesses to the next phase of progressive digital engagement. By driving value across the entire ecosystem of creation through service innovation, organisations can gain greater visibility into their applications' performance and understand what is happening across different cloud and enterprise environments. Furthermore, adopting an open source culture helps people more readily share best practice and nurture protocols for coding excellence, which in turn ensures secure data protection and accountability.

Organisations should never fear disruptive technology or new methodologies. Major digital shifts are imminent. The pressure to stay ahead of the technological curve has never been greater. We could all do with being more openminded to open source and embracing its associated freedoms.

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