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Summaries and Annotated Bibliographies of Successful Free & Open Source Projects

4 January 2020

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Humanitarian Free & Open Source Software Development (IGME-582) provides students with exposure to the design, creation and production of Open Source Software projects. Students will be introduced to the historic intersections of technology and intellectual property rights and will become familiar with Open Source development processes, tools and practices. They will become contributing members of humanitarian software, game and interactive media development communities. Students will actively document their efforts on Humanitarian Free and Open Source Software community hubs. The lecture instructor and advisor for this project is Professor Stephen Jacobs.

BACKGROUND

Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) is software that allows the user to use, read, edit, and redistribute the software's source code. The concept of FOSS was popularized in the 1980s by Richard M. Stallman, a professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Many organizations and projects use different definitions of Free Software, or use the ambiguous term, "Open Source," which creates inconsistency and interferes with the productivity in FOSS and Open Source communities. Additionally, FOSS is shrouded in controversy because of infighting and politically motivated licensing

practices. Despite these obstacles, many FOSS communities are vibrant and thriving.

Notable FOSS projects include the Linux kernel, many BSD and Linux operating systems, the MySQL database and the Apache web server. The FOSS community is relevant today because of libre and privacy activists, passionate software developers, and a growing need for information transparency.

OVERVIEW

In this Honors option, I will use the readings in this course to create a collection of professional development resources for faculty in the Open@RIT community. The collection will highlight the importance of FOSS, and explain the elements of FOSS programming, like documentation and collaboration. In addition, the collection will examine the social workings and economic development behind successful FOSS projects and communities.

To create the summaries and annotated bibliographies, I will analyze weekly readings, references, and other resources in IGME-582 to create summaries and an annotated bibliography. My goal is to provide future students and faculty involved in Open@RIT with professional development materials, which will be used to improve the development of FOSS at Rochester Institute of Technology.

The development of this project will enhance my understanding of FOSS, the FOSS community, and the social and economic traits of FOSS projects. I will learn about the historical and social context of FOSS issues, and highlight their relevance in my research. This independent research project will help me become a better FOSS developer, help future students interested in FOSS, and assist the faculty involved with Open@RIT collect FOSS professional development materials.

DELIVERABLES

I will use the course's weekly readings, references and writings to create a summary and an annotated bibliography. The summary will be written in Google

Docs, and the annotated bibliography will be made using Zotero. The summary and annotated bibliography will be posted on the class' WordPress blog.

The class requires that each student find an article that is relevant to a particular topic outlined in Professor Stephen Jacobs' weekly lesson plan. After the students have found their articles, the students divide themselves into groups of three or four, and they share their articles with their peers. Each group will vote on the best article in their group, and paste the winning article's link into a shared Google Doc. I will use the shared Google Doc to access the best article for each group. Then, I will create a summary, and annotated bibliography for each article. I expect to summarize and create annotated bibliographies of three or four articles per week. The summary and bibliography are due by the following Tuesday, and Professor Stephen Jacobs will review my work by that Friday.

On April 29th, 2021, I will present the summary and annotated bibliography at one of Open@RIT's weekly faculty meetings. The presentation will be around fifty minutes and will include a question and answer session.