

Target Keyword: How to Use Open Source Software
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Page Title: What's Keeping You Back from Using Open Source Software?

Open source software, unlike proprietary software, is software that keeps the code open to IT professionals to alter, improve, and distribute. Although it has been around since relatively early in the history of computers, in the past several years OSS has truly taken off, in what some might see as a surprising example of a successful communal collaboration.

OSS can be used in any type of software, from word processing to cloud computing to EDI. Some of the most famous and ubiquitous pieces of software, such as Linux and Mozilla Firefox, are OSS, yet some people are still hesitant to use less well-known pieces of open-source software. If you're like most people, it's probably one of the following reasons keeping you back from using open software. Below, we'll take a look at [whether your reasons](#) are right.

Reason 1: We'll Need Too Much Support

One of the biggest advantages of OSS is that as long as you have someone with the know-how, you can completely customize the software to your needs. Because of savings on licensing fees, just using OSS can be beneficial even if you don't do any customization, but if you do customize, you'll need someone on hand who knows how to use open source software.

On top of that, most proprietary software includes tech support from the company, while OSS companies must charge for those services. To make up for that, the fact that the code is open source makes it easier for your IT team to learn how to use open source software.

Another reason that people expect they'll need too much support while using OSS is that this type of software has a reputation for being relatively inaccessible to the average user - unlike proprietary software, which is extensively tested for user friendliness, OSS software is often written by and for computer professionals. Choosing your software wisely can help eliminate this potential issue.

Reason 2: It Will Infringe on Intellectual Property

You can negotiate with proprietary companies about indemnification for intellectual property (IP) infringement, but that's not available through OSS companies. In addition, the rules that govern IP for OSS are complex. However, you can purchase indemnification through a third-party vendor, and reading the terms of the license can help mitigate the risk of committing IP infringement.

Reason 3: It Won't be Reliable

Often deprived of strong central management, it's up to the OSS community to identify and provide solutions for errors with the product. This leads some to worry that problems will go without being fixed, as compared to traditional software, which has centralized management and a dedicated team of developers.

In reality, the opposite is the case. It's been seen many times that issues with OSS are often quickly fixed thanks to the work of the community members, whereas with a proprietary software company you'd need to wait for the release of the next software update to get a fix for the bug.

Reason 4: It Won't be Secure

This is perhaps the biggest misgiving that people express regarding OSS: since the code is open, any opportunist could hypothetically identify and exploit the program through hacking and viruses. However, proprietary software companies often have team members dedicated to ensuring the security of the software.

There is some risk associated with using any software, and the overall risk associated with OSS does not seem to be higher than with any other type of software. While it's true that anyone can look at and potentially exploit the code, it's also true that anyone can look at the code to identify potential causes of security breaches, and address them immediately. What's more, as long as you have someone on your team who knows how to use open source software, you'll be able to examine the software before using it, and thus determine the level of risk associated with using it.

The concerns that people have about OSS are not completely unfounded, but each concern can be mitigated with an understanding of the software in question. In many cases using this type of software can help companies save money while also getting a product that is better suited to their needs. Once your company learns how to use open source software - and how to mitigate some of the risks associated with it - you, like many others, may reap great benefits.