

Preface

Over the past decade, open source software (OSS) has attracted enormous interest from practitioners and academics alike. However, the focus of research on OSS is mostly on individuals' and firms' contributions to public OSS projects. In contrast, the receiving side of this open and collaborative development process has been given much less attention, despite indications that the reuse of OSS code is of high importance in the development of both OSS and of proprietary software. Questions regarding quantity, motivation, and drivers of OSS code reuse have been studied only by few authors, and in no case quantitatively. In particular, the role of individual programmers in the context of "ad hoc" code reuse and concomitant legal risks are largely unexplored.

Manuel Sojer addresses the above issues in this ground-breaking book. After developing the theoretical foundations of his work, he presents two large-scale empirical studies on the reuse of publicly available OSS code. Both studies are based on carefully constructed models that draw on the Theory of Planned Behavior. Focusing on the amount of code reuse that programmers practice in public OSS projects, the first survey yields highly interesting findings regarding the drivers of and impediments to reuse in this setting, with important conclusion to be drawn for code reuse within firms.

The second survey complements the first one by addressing the reuse of OSS and similar code in proprietary software development. In particular, with its focus on license risks this study takes a value appropriation rather than value creation perspective. Using an elaborate survey design, the author derives important results regarding the determinants of negligent or even deliberate violation of license obligations by employed programmers. As the first one, this study bears obvious significant implications for academics as for managers.

This book is Manuel Sojer's doctoral thesis at Technische Universität München. It is full of good ideas, flawless analyses, and novel findings, and I strongly recommend it to practitioners and academics alike. It was a pleasure to be Manuel Sojer's thesis advisor.

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