

Building a Government Open Source Community of Practice

Open Source Software Agency Case Studies | Project Overview



Government agencies are in need of objective information in the form of Case Studies, Best Practices and Lessons Learned. The use of open source software in government operations is not well documented today compared to its extensive adoption. Open Source for America and founding academic member Oregon State University Open Source Lab (OSU OSL) along with organizational and individual volunteers are partnering to help fill this need.

The Open Source Software Agency Case Study project is intended to move beyond “headline-sharing” to more structured collection and sharing of agency experience in adopting open source software and the use of this development methodology to create applications for government. The purpose of creating a Case Study Library is to provide education and information to agencies to use in considering their own projects, leading to better decision-making. Project in-a-nutshell:

- Oregon State University will provide a model or template for case studies as well as methodology and guidance for conducting the studies.
- Open Source for America volunteer member organizations can contribute in several ways; they may provide writing resources through their internal staffing, or can underwrite graduate students’ studies.
- Studies will be vendor-neutral. That is to say, they are designed not to pitch commercial services or support and will not be “branded”. The focus is on the open source solution and the agency experience implementing it.
- Draft reports will be peer reviewed by a multi-disciplinary team (academic, government, industry and open source community) then published with acknowledgments to all who contributed.
- Case Studies will be published as highly readable, short documents packed with useful information in a standardized format.
- Case Studies will be distributed under a Creative Commons license and made available as open content on the web.



Which government? The case study project will focus on U.S. government agencies at all levels of government.

Q&A

For additional information please email:
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Where do the Studies’ Targeted Projects come from? Since 2004, OSU OSL’s Public Sector Program has built a network of government open source practitioners at all levels of government. The Government Open Source Conference (in operation since 2005) is a rich resource of exemplary uses of open source in government. We also anticipate many ideas will come from our network of volunteers and collaborating organizations.

Why Now? The need has been known for some time, but the problem of resourcing such a project remained unaddressed. With its Federal Open Report Card now complete, the OSFA is poised to take on a new project. At the same time, member companies have asked “how can we contribute to the OSFA mission?” While state and local government struggle to do more with less, OSUOSL is stepping up to taking the lead to drive this new project forward.

Related Links:
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