

# CIO Perspective on Open Source

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# Predictions

- Open Standards will prevail over proprietary formats, will become the norm and policy priorities
- Open Source and Closed Source will
  - combine, interoperate and leverage each other
  - compete on a level playing field offering more choice and better value
- Commodity components will seamlessly integrate with Open Source components (SOA)
- Open Software Collaboration in government will become an accepted Best Practice

# Newport News Practice on Open Collaboration

- We will actively share at no cost all IT related IP when we own the copyright
  - i.e. Plone eGov
- We will seek vendor contracts that explicitly grant us copyright privilege so we can copyleft
- In exchange, the city will seek reciprocity in the sense of derived works
- We encourage all government agencies to adopt similar policies or practices

# Open Source – A revolutionary process

“...what is potentially durable and possibly deserving of the term “revolutionary”-- not a particular manifestation of a process but the process itself”

Source: “The Success of Open Source” – Steven Weber

# Openness

- “A synthesis of collaborative creativity, connectivity, access and transparency...”
- “It reshapes ICT ecosystems, and makes it possible to re-engineer government, rewrite business models and deliver customized services to citizens.”

# What is Open Source?

## 1) Products

- Linux/Apache/MySQL/Php
- Python/Zope/Plone
- OpenOffice

## 2) Best Practice

- For Software Collaboration

# Typical reactions to “Open”

- Open Standard (Formats) are good
- Open Source (Products) are in the range of not acceptable to it depends, and certainly below potential
- Open Collaborations (Processes) are potentially good IF the practical obstacles could be overcome

# Perceived Barriers to Open Source products

- Wild West
- Amusement for enthusiasts
- Fun game for hobbyists
- Like train enthusiasts joining their tracks together through the www.
- Popular opinion: while present in the technical infrastructure Open Source is still not ready for real business!!!

# Real Barriers to Open Source products

- Marketing imbalance
- No door to door sales force
- Pull rather than Push model, while the rest of the industry is heavy Push
- Most often grass roots movement in organizations
- Very few organizations have a clearly defined strategy that addresses Open Source
- Confusion and conflict caused by the word Open

# Known barriers to Collaboration (Perceived & Real)

- Legal – can't do it, they don't let me
- Risk – what if it fails, I am still accountable
- Complexity – a generalized solution is more difficult to implement
- Historical – never worked well in the past, few success stories if any
- Cultural – can't get my own departments to work together

# Additional barriers to Collaboration (less known)

- No understanding of the transformative impact of Open Source
- No understanding of the Open Source software production process, its distributed and collaborative nature
- Very few CIO's view Open Source as a Best Practice in collaborative software development
- Compared to the structure of "in-house" controlled development, external collaborative development seems ad-hoc, hap hazard and out of control

# Potential benefits to Collaboration

- Implementation cost savings
  - sharing the cost (i.e. Open eGov)
  - leveraging another agency's investment (NC Taxation)
- Operational cost savings
  - sharing the cost (NC Taxation)
- More Control
  - over COTS (less over Custom Built)
- Consistency in delivering services
  - citizen centric across government boundaries
    - move personal/business from one jurisdiction to another

# Good questions

- How can we overcome the obstacles?
  - No silver bullets
- Are we making progress?
  - Yes, but slow
- Are there some good candidates for future Open Collaborations?
  - eGov
  - IJIS
  - Taxation