Participate or Die

CommunityOne 2009

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Community Gardener, Red Hat

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Open source and free culture

The **four freedoms**:

0. The freedom to **run/use for any purpose**

1. The freedom to **study and modify**

2. The freedom to **copy and use to help others**

3. The freedom to **improve and distribute to your community**

Cf. scientific method

Free culture is about sharing and social media – the **remix**

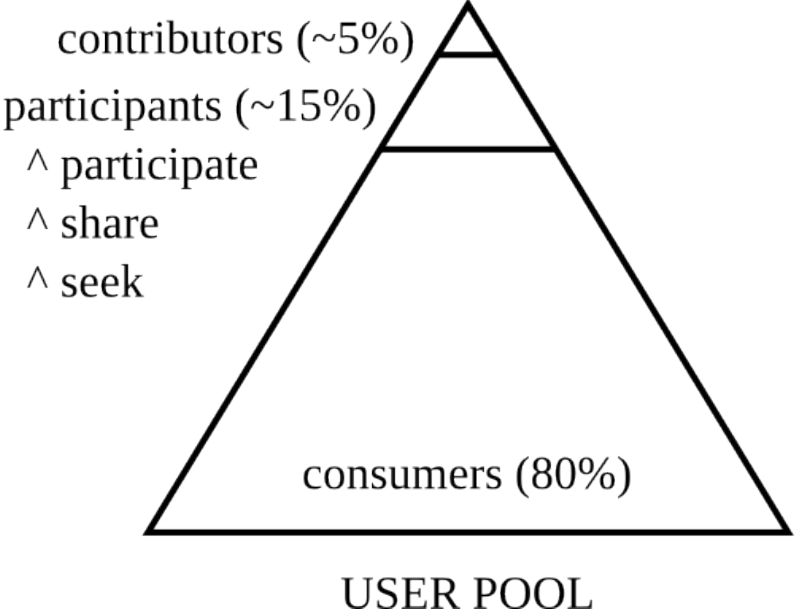Free culture is defining the business and social environment

Communities of participation
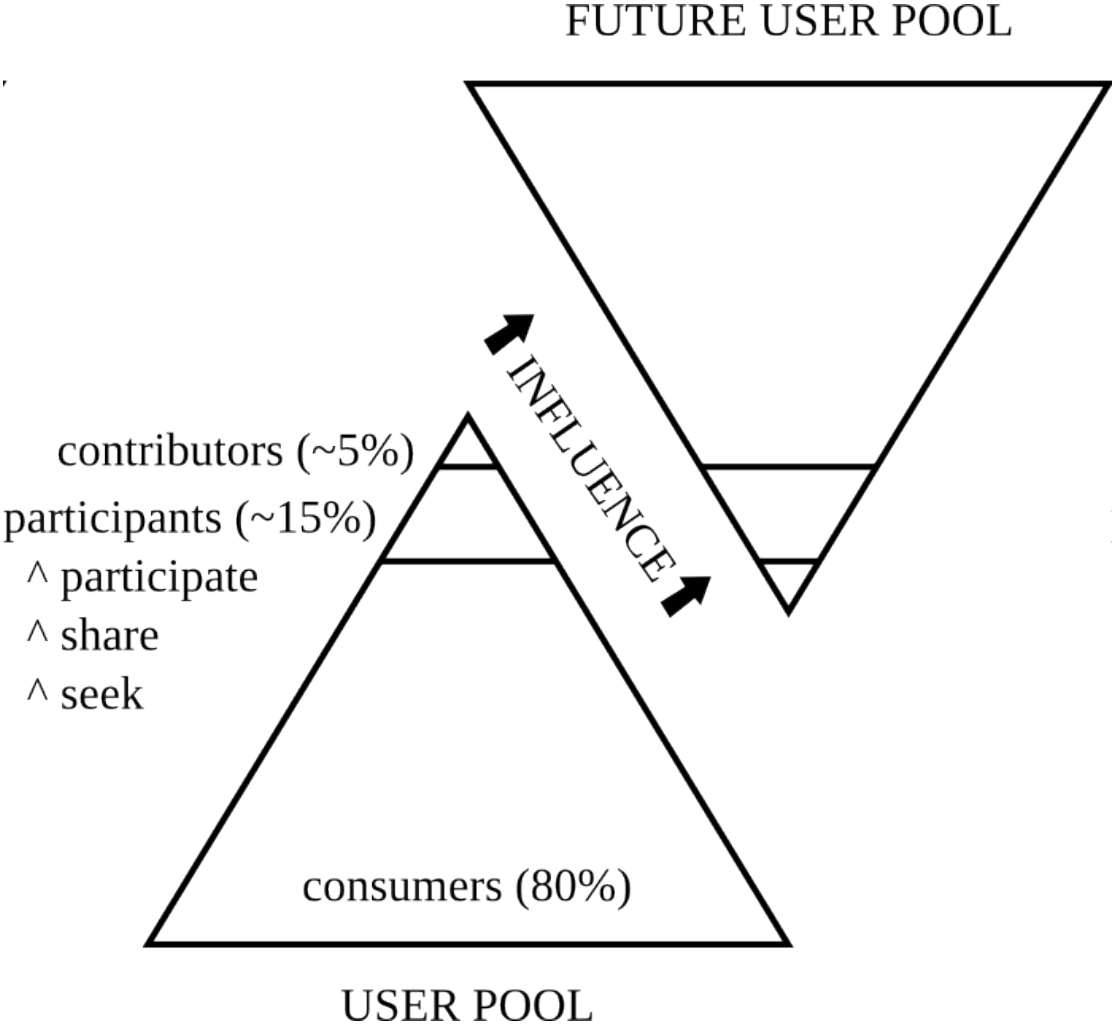
What is a participation community?

How is it different from a user-focused or consumer community?

Are there evident truths about building communities of participation?

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Communities of participation

contributors (~5%)

participants (~15%)

^ participate

^ share

^ seek

consumers (80%)

USER POOL

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Communities of participation

FUTURE USER POOL

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INFLUENCE

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Communities of participation

Edits to Fedora wiki
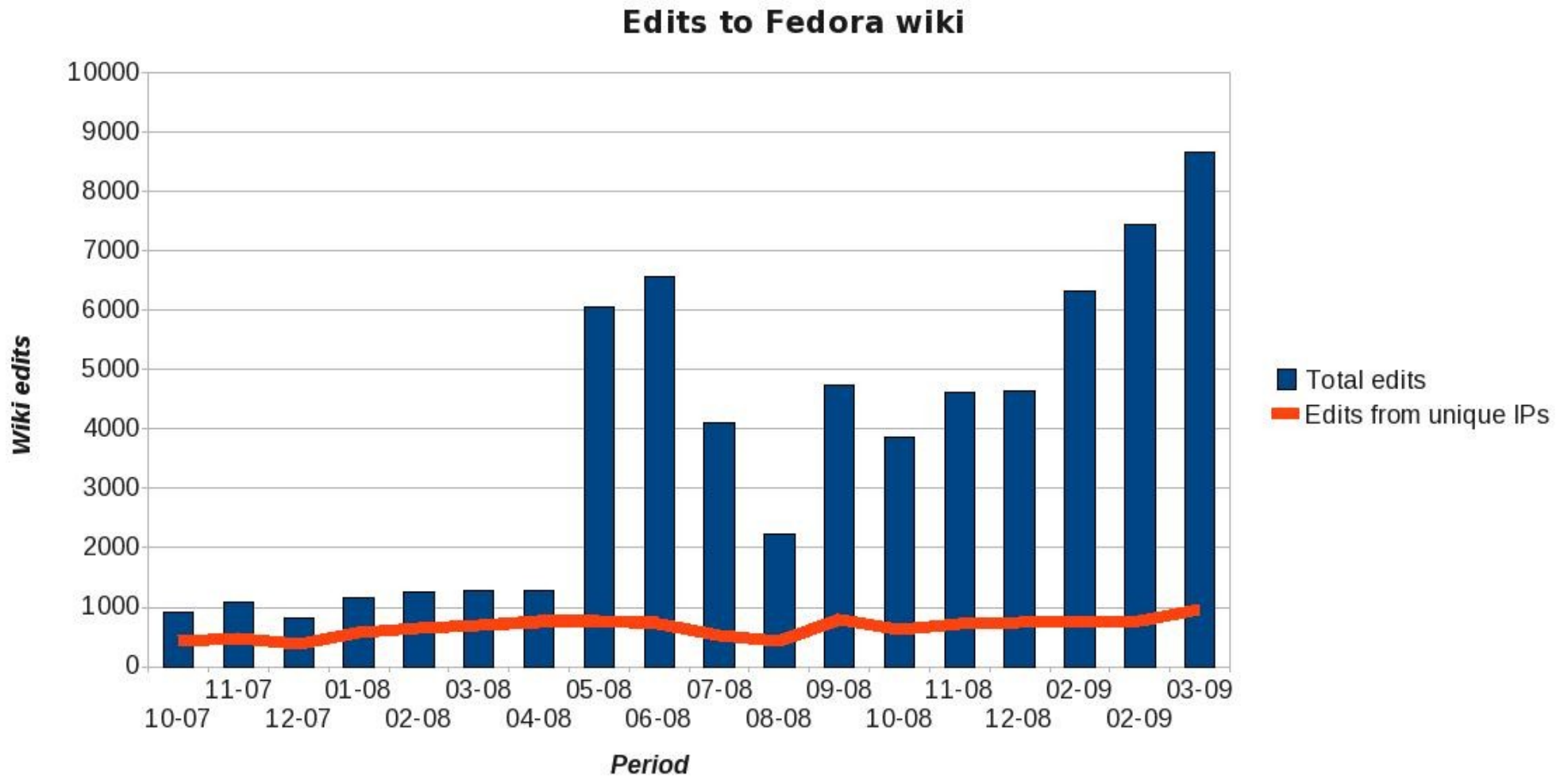
Examples of participation communities

Wikipedia

Specialty software forums

Other forums (gadget, shopper)

YouTube etc.

Grateful Dead and old timey music

How participants are attracted

Low barriers to entry

Friendly and welcoming

Something they see they can do right away

Recognition and social status

... which leads to ...

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Why do people participate ... and why should you?

General reasons and specific reasons

Specific audiences such as business and education

Demonstration of evident truths

Why should businesses participate?

Uses open source tools ...

Relies upon FLOSS as a core competency ...

Is an upstream ...

... but many ignore this

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Why should educators participate?

Immerse a class in methodology ...

Shared maintenance of courseware ...

Teaches academic quality that also prepares
for the rest of career ...

... but dead-code autopsies are the norm

K-12 – need Linux to get to 1:1 ...

... prepares for a world of DIY, collaboration,
and self-responsibility

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Why should students participate?

Yay! Friends ...

Where your future happens right now ...

Take control of what you care about ...

Why should anyone participate?

It's what the cool kids are doing ...

Ultimate invitation to participate ...

Embrace DIY for yourself ...

When friends get together to work on something
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Enabling participation

Build an infrastructure that scales ...

Make radical transparency the rule ...

Practice radical transparency ...

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Questions?

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Goals - introduce me, learn about the audience make-up, learn what they know about open source and community projects such as Fedora.

Does open source affect your business? Academic interests? Are you an educator or a student?

Is open source applicable to your life or not? Your personal life?

It is no longer a question if open source and open collaboration are viable methodologies ...

Open source and free culture

The **four freedoms**:

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Cf. scientific method

Free culture is about sharing and social media – the **remix**

Free culture is defining the business and social environment

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Four freedoms are important because ...

- Underpins all free and open source software
- Creative Commons and millions of musicians sharing ideas freely
- Sharing culture so that a small contribution adds to a pool ...
- Open source meme affects social tools and communities ...

Communities of participation

What is a participation community?

How is it different from a user-focused
  or consumer community?

Are there evident truths about building
  communities of participation?

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Participation - why it's important to you and your future.

Participation communities invite people to get more by
   doing more, usually with a force-multiplying effect.

Put in N, they get back Nx5. Participation communities
   have something you can do and make it possible to
   do it, whatever it is.

A lot of people are on the bus just for the ride, but ...

YES - When looking at how and why we build
   communities of participation, there are clearly some
   evident truths, and a handful of best practices and
   reasons.

Communities of participation

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^ participate
^ share
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USER POOL

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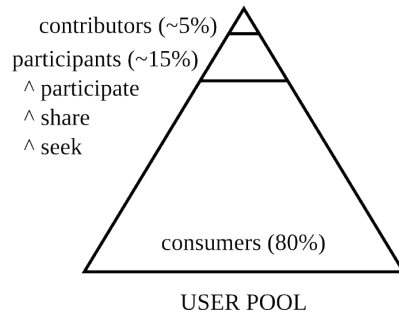
This is the pyramid of contribution, and it demonstrates one of the most important evident truths.

Imagine it as representing one pool of users ... 90 / 9 / 1

Similarly, in FLOSS we see that about 80% are drawn to use ...
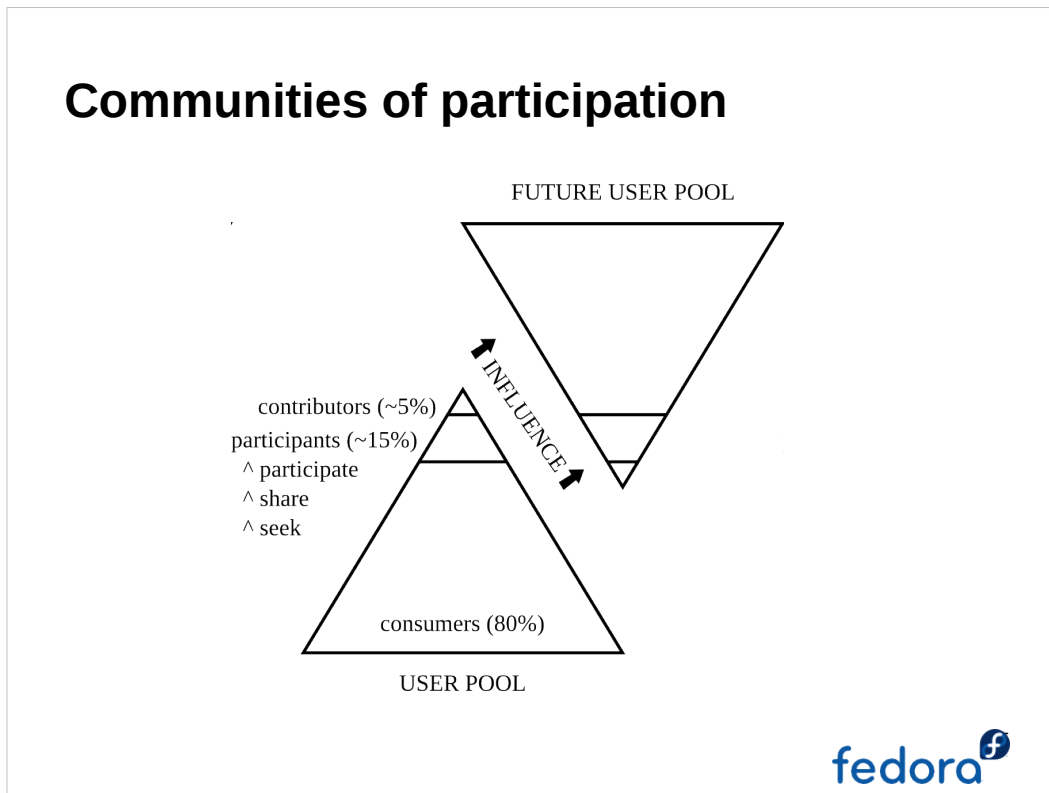
Some of are going to be drawn to participate

Some % of participants will rise to be full contributors. This is the evident truth we so over and over.

Most marketing practices have traditionally focused on the 80% and their money ...

Focus on the contributors and the participants, and here is why ... (next slide)

  "You cannot normally take someone from zero to contributor; they have to pass through some % of the stages of participation, then self-select to contribute. Participants can be drawn in and even created, but contributors are self-made." - another way to say the evident truth

Communities of participation

FUTURE USER POOL

INFLUENCE

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The contributors are the group that have the greatest potential of positively influencing the largest number of future people ...

The consumer portion of the pool has the lowest impact on influencing , 10:1 ...

The participant group is self-identified. This role occurs everywhere, for example, the instincts, research, and deal-seeking of a fashion-wearing friend who influences the purchasing decisions of all his friends.

The contributor group that has the greatest potential to influence ...

In 2008 when the Fedora Project decided to change from the Moin Moin wiki to Media Wiki. ... looking for basic benefits ...

In all this, an email came to the Infrastructure group from Ian ...

Communities of participation

Edits to Fedora wiki
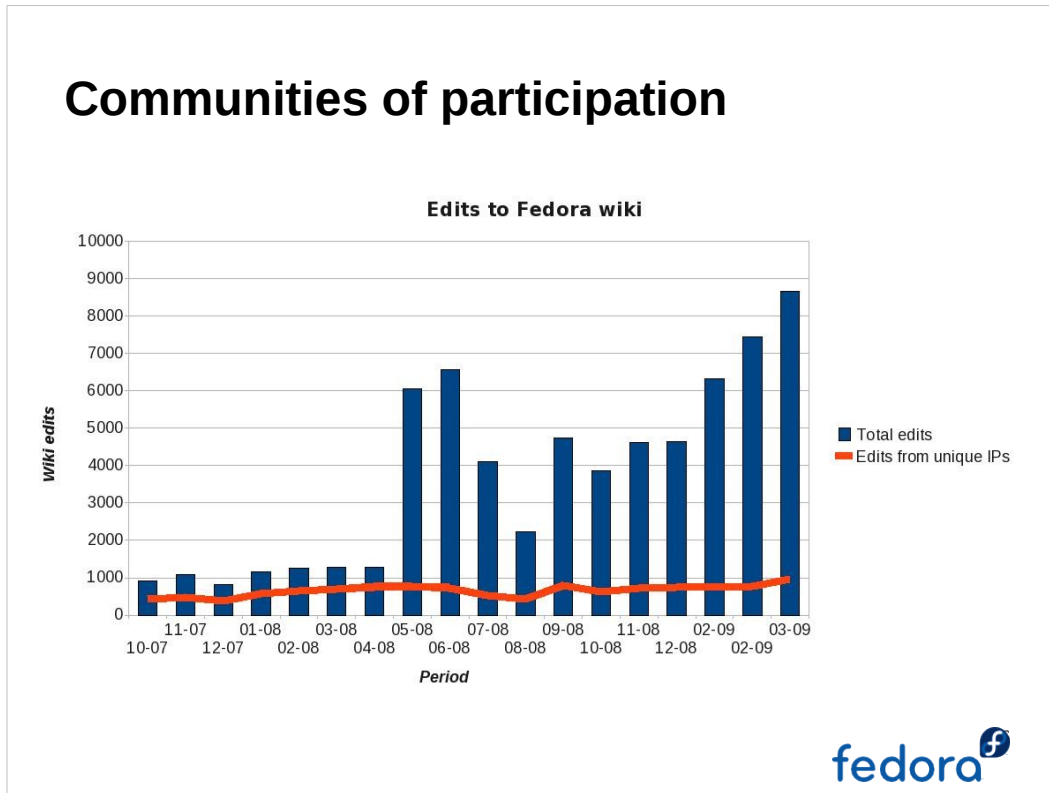
This graphic demonstrates that power of one contributor from Ian's story.

By enabling and listening for contributors, the Fedora Project was able to get out of Ian's way to make a difference in the daily lives of 13.5 million Fedora users and additional interested people.

Examples of participation communities

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Other forums (gadget, shopper)

YouTube etc.

Grateful Dead and old timey music

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Different participation communities have different qualities to the contributions, different flavors.

Wikipedia – This is a premier example of a low-barrier to entry participation community.
Flavor – Sharing, social status

Specialty software forums – Software product, prosumers.
Flavor – Helping others helps yourself, and gaining karma/social status

Other forums – such as shopper ranking sites and gadget forums.
Flavor – Helping and rating

YouTube etc – core to the burgeoning culture of sharing on the Internet.
Flavor – Participate through sharing and rating

* Grateful Dead & any old timey music – this is the commons that Creative Commons was named from.
Flavor – Improvement and entertainment through sharing, social prestige

How participants are attracted

Low barriers to entry

Friendly and welcoming

Something they see they can do right away

Recognition and social status

... which leads to ...

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These are the basics, derived from evident truths we see all again and again.

There are many more subtleties, but these are the commonalities that need to be considered and covered for any participation community.

**Why do people participate ...
and why should you?**

General reasons and specific reasons

Specific audiences such as business and education

Demonstration of evident truths

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There are general reasons people should and do participate

Specific reasons depending on which groups they identify with.

These are examples of extended evident truths of participation communities.

Why should businesses participate?

Uses open source tools ...

Relies upon FLOSS as a core competency ...

Is an upstream ...

... but many ignore this

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Another set of evident truths ...

If the business uses open source tools for commodity tasks,
participation is a low-cost way to get training, support, and
collaboration from the community. You give X and receive 5X or
10X in return.

If the business relies upon free software as part of their core
competency & to make money ... e.g. AMQP

If the business has one or more upstreams it is owner of ...

Many businesses ignore this opportunity.

E.g. Systems integrators have a vested interest in seeing specific
hardware and software combinations work. Participating by
tracking rawhide in Fedora, filing bugs, and helping to drive
QA/Testing days.

Why should educators participate?

Immerse a class in methodology ...

Shared maintenance of courseware ...

Teaches academic quality that also prepares
 for the rest of career ...

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K-12 – need Linux to get to 1:1 ...

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 and self-responsibility

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Another set of evident truths ...

Immersing a class in the open source methodology provides the best
    of academic, scientific, and real-world methods in one package.

Maintenance of courseware (reuse year-over-year) can be reduced
    using an open content model.

K-12:

If we ever intend to get to 1:1 computing, it is going to require Linux.
    The case for *using* open source is clear. For example, the low
    cost and ubiquity (Firefox, OpenOffice, Thunderbird) mean
    students can have the same software if they have home
    computers.

Preparation for a world of collaboration, DIY, and self-responsibility.

Why should students participate?

Yay! Friends ...

Where your future happens right now ...

Take control of what you care about ...

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Another set of evident truths ...

One of the most important draws to participation communities are friends. People go to where their friends are.

People put their energy in where they find the most current or potential value.

We're all looking at what we want from our future, to varying degrees. Open source and open collaborations are a way to get involved in work that will beneficially follow you for life.

Part of growing older is getting the opportunity to take increasing control of your own life. Open collaboration projects are a wonderful method of taking control of what matters to you the most.

Why should anyone participate?

It's what the cool kids are doing ...

Ultimate invitation to participate ...

Embrace DIY for yourself ...

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We are social creatures and ...

Don't participate in a community where you don't admire the
people involved.

In general, humans like to help each other and be involved.
Participation communities are very inviting toward new
people.

Participation communities give us a chance to embrace our
desire to do things ourselves.

When friends get together to work on something with
meaning, it strengthens the friendship and strengthens
their work. Better friends, better outcome.

Enabling participation

Build an infrastructure that scales ...

Make radical transparency the rule ...

Practice radical transparency ...

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Build an infrastructure that scales and supports participation. Think about this from the start ... keep flexible, and use open tools that people are already familiar with – build on the training they've done with Wordpress, MediaWiki, Twitter, etc.

Make radical transparency the rule, not the exception.

Never have secrecy or ignoring transparency lead to a thriving open project. This is an evident truth.

Put all your needs out in public space and encourage people to grab and run with them.

Don't keep things in your heads.

Allow people to show up and get started from your to-do lists, etc.

Questions?

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Was this convincing?

Do you feel inspired to participate and also to encourage others to participate?

Do the ideas make sense?