



How can open source be better business

Ultra Tendency
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The alphabet is an open-source technology and without it, life would be more difficult, while business would be impossible. There have been several releases and updates to the alphabet since its invention on Sinai nearly 4,000 years ago. But like most open source technologies, it was initially developed by a business community to meet its own needs. Because of this innovation, that community prospered, as have other communities who have since adopted and improved the alphabet. In life as in business, not everything is straightforwardly about money.

Indeed, many of the most fundamental technologies of daily life are open source and have been developed, adapted, and updated by commercially motivated communities for millennia. Yet when open source software development took off at the end of the 20th Century, it was not obvious to some writers how or why open source philosophies and methods could inform profitable business models. In an editorial in [IEEE Software](#) *The Sociology of Open Source: Of Cults and Cultures* [1], Robert L. Glass even claimed at the beginning of this century that the future of open source development would be limited to idealistic cults because only a few brainwashed groups would want to put in the work of coding without recompense.

Yet twenty years later, open-source software development and services have moved far beyond the purview of hobbyists and altruists, currently accounting for billions of dollars of revenue annually, and the main open-source foundations, like the [Apache Foundation](#) and the [Linux Foundation](#), are among the most utilized projects and tools.

How did that happen if payment is not directly connected to open source contributions?

Apart from cash, the advantages of open source are clear. No single tool can provide the necessary processing and analytic capabilities required by a modern enterprise and no single team can compete

against an open network of ideas. The genius of open source software, as with any teamwork, is that there is no single genius behind development, though potentially the teams are much larger. In aggregate, we are smarter than we are as individuals. These benefits of open source software are apparent to businesses in need of flexible solutions. This is where the money comes in: markets reward experts in those tools and those who remain on the cutting edge of the development of new systems.

Nothing is perfect. There are issues to negotiate in open-source development: only a minority of programmers contribute to open-source projects and the artefacts developed to push the edge of software engineering and science. But the products can be quite complex, manifested in a variety of releases, difficult to understand, and difficult to integrate for an enterprise trying to make the best use of the open-source ecosystem.

The enterprise clients of open source software development are not paying for the basic components that anyone may download and install, but rather for engineering excellence, service, and when needed, the latest improvements. Ultra Tendency has contributed to open-source software projects since 2016. That is why we have



become an open-source powerhouse, contributing to over 15 Apache Foundation open source projects, including HBase, Nifi, and Kafka, Terrascan and Ansible. Indeed, it would be difficult to employ consultants with greater expertise in HBase than Ultra Tendency. Our CIO Jan Hentschel is a highly-ranked contributor to [HBase](#) and [Alluxio](#), while serving on Project Management Committees (PMCs). You can read Mr. Hentschel's 10th Anniversary Testimonial on the significance of HBase for Ultra Tendency [here](#).

When Ultra Tendency creates a solution for a client, we improve the fundamental tools of big data processing and analytics. When possible, we share these solutions with the open-source community because we want to enrich the ecosystem from which we came and in which we work. That is how open source software is better business for enterprises implementing complex architectures and for experts in open source: it provides a community network from which several parties can benefit and creates a foundation upon which businesses can build the future.

[1] R. L. Glass, The Sociology of Open Source: Of Cults and Cultures, IEEE Software, 17(3): 104-105, May 2000.