

Value Creation and Cooperative Resource Exchange in the Eclipse Ecosystem

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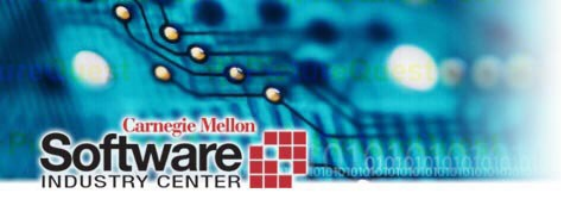


Our Problem in a Nutshell

- Each year sees more OSS communities
- Eclipse is seen as a model for OSS development
- What is it about Eclipse that makes it succeed while other communities fail?

Background and Method

- We're researchers interested in the “bigger” picture
- Interviewed 32 people (still looking for more)
- Read up on almost every Eclipse member company
- Hope to add quantitative elements in the future



Major Topics

- Foundation Structure
- Firm Cooperation
- End Users
- Future Ecosystem Expansion

Foundation Structure

- Structure was almost universally positive
- Organization with no business motive owning code was key factor
 - unambiguous licensing and ownership
 - independence of short term business pressures
 - no reliance on external firms
- The foundation brand is trusted
- Bold step for IBM to release control

Issues with First Movers

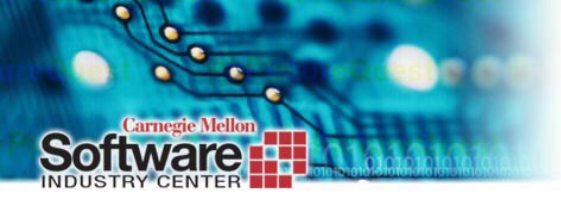
- The Eclipse release train is powerful
- Eclipse structure makes it difficult to propose an alternative project
- The first project usually “wins”
- But the first project is not always the best
- Lack of integration leaves little incentive to release competing tools as Open Source

Cooperation in Eclipse

- Clear benefits for IDE developers
 - Starting to see many new IDEs based on Eclipse
- Plugin developers often participate in competing Open Source projects to get a preview of future competition
- Developers of complimentary goods are able to compete on a level playing field

Public Goods Problem

- Has Eclipse solved the public goods problem?
 - No
- Foundation and member companies have different planning horizons
- Common components frequently subject to the “Eclipse bluffing game”
- Solution is not to have Foundation do the work



End User Success

- Plugins allow firms to customize project for their setup
- Eclipse distributions take this a step further and make it more useful
- Plugin documentation makes it easy for firms to customize

End User Issues

- Distributed development makes it difficult for end users to get a say
- Traditional feedback channels are not present
- Large firms can hire developers to customize
- Smaller firms face more difficult prospects

Future Ecosystem Expansion

- Eclipse is moving beyond the IDE – but most people don't realize it
- Nested Platform Building
- Brand confusion issues
 - Similar issues face Apache

Questions/Comments

- patrick@wagstrom.net (email/jabber)
- Longer version of talk on Wednesday at 10:10 in room 206

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