

Summers of Code ~ BoF - FOSSA 2010

Olivier Berger, Telecom SudParis

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Discussing ways to foster students involvement in FLOSS projects

Introduction

Purpose Foreword

Ideas and discussion

- No, I'm not Albert Cohen (apologies, he's forced to rest at home while I'm enjoying the conference ;-)
- No, I haven't had time to prepare something really polished
- Haven't participated myself so much in GSoC

Who I am

- Institut TELECOM / TELECOM SudParis / Computer Science dpt. / PFTCR/FOCS2 team
 - 2 perm. staff Christian BAC and myself
 - 2 PhD students
 - 2 non permanent research engineers
 - Research on collaborative development platforms, tools, process, in FLOSS communities
- Previously worked in service companies (Cap Gemini, IDEALX)
- Research engineer at TELECOM SudParis since 2002
- R&D on FLOSS, forges, bugtracking, Linked Data, etc. (CALIBRE, HELIOS, COCLICO)
- Contributor to Debian, FusionForge, Mantis



About the Google Summer of Code

- Matchmaking between
 - FLOSS development project
 - Student
 - Mentor involved in the day-to-day development of a FLOSS project
 - Interest of someone at Google
- \$5000 stipend from Google
- Diverse projects, from very recent developments to core FSF projects like GCC
- Tasks : code, document, outreach, testing, research, training, translation, user interface
- Since 2005, nearly 2500 students and 2500 mentors from 98 countries

Use the potential of CS students to help FLOSS projects

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- FLOSS projects define tasks which can be offered as an “internship” subject
 - Important issue : what to expect from novice contributors ?
 - Find mentors who can commit
 - Motivation and engagement for students (recognition and financial support)

Allow students to learn

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- Be confronted to real projects practices (collaboration, distant work)
 - Allow some students already involved in projects to be paid to do what they would have done in a volunteer way nevertheless?
 - Which prerequisites?
 - Who's helping them, tutoring them?
 - A lonesome geek in the basement for 3 months?

Be compatible with the curriculum rules

- Validate credits
 - Manage risk of failure and subjectivity of evaluation independent of the student's skills
- Learn knowledge and competences
- Comply with internship requirements and regulations
- Optionally, autumn, winter or spring of code ?
 - Issue : coordination with course, lab and ordinary project assignment activity
 - FLOSS project as a replacement for a course or project assignment ?

Be compatible with employment regulation (stages/internships)

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- Financial retribution scheme
- Workplace (colleagues, socialization, learning company life) ?

Grants and sponsors

- Companies interested in fostering R&D activity in FLOSS projects
- Way to detect talents (HR)
- Not directly drafting the subject (otherwise no different from regular internships) ?
- What is the critical mass ?
- How to define success criteria with the company ?
- How to make sure companies commit to paying the grants ?

Involvement of professors (beyond mentors) ?

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- Monitoring the internship
- Probably with some interest in the project
 - Some local initiatives exist already, provide them with more exposure and support
- Monitoring of local students only ?

Google Summer of Code (GSoC) exists

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- GSoC is fine : no need to compete
 - Compatibility with stages/internship requirements?
 - Legal aspects regarding grant payment?
 - Independent, non-profit organization is preferable in case of curricula integration

Need for other programmes ?

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- Other initiatives (Mozilla drumbeat ?)
- Google is already too big and powerful
- Many more projects and companies deserve to be in touch with the best students
- Every FLOSS project behind same banner ?
- Quality label only, to apply to regular internships ?

How to move on ?

- Who wants to get involved (professors, mentors, companies, students?)
- Which time frame ?
- Which rules ?
- What cost ?
- Potential start at System@tic cluster's "GTLL" special interest group on FLOSS
 - Active support from IRILL : free software research and innovation initiative of INRIA, UPMC (P6), UPD (P7)
 - Considering experiment with Android-related projects

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Thank you
Questions?

More

@oberger : <http://identi.ca/oberger/>

email : <mailto:olivier.berger@it-sudparis.eu>

blog :

http://www-public.it-sudparis.eu/~berger_o/weblog/