An Alternative to Sugarcrmâ€™s Non-Open Source Open Code

Zoltan Mesko

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There is something about SugarCRM that many people donâ€™t know. 50 percent of the development of any version of SugarCRM isnâ€™t available to the open source community as free open source. Thatâ€™s because free open source can be available to a maximum of 25 people but beyond that it becomes an enterprise. And since SugarCRM is a for-profit company, it keeps a certain Source free and certain, exclusive. So, why do they call it an open source organization? Hereâ€™s the story.

SugarCRM employs 18 full-time developers (out of a staff of 36) and works with about 50 other developers who have assigned Sugar CRM rights to their code under an Apache assignment agreement. About 25 percent of the development for the new version (3.5) just released is held back from the free â€™pureâ€™ open source version (3.5).

As an alternative to SugarCRMâ€™s non-open source open code, SugarForge has modules, tools, language packs, skins and other code, as well as associated projects created by the Sugar Open Source community. SugarForge has 900 registered developers and 90 extension projects. Version 3.5 has a module loader, a framework that allows developers to write extensions, package them and post them so that end users can load them without any programming.

SugarCRM is to adopt version 3 of the GNU General Public License (GPLv3) for the next release of its open-source CRM (customer relationship management) software after coming under pressure from its user community to move away from its own Sugar Public License.

The GPL gives users the right to freely study, copy, modify, reuse, share and redistribute software. Created by Richard Stallman in 1989 for the GNU free operating system project, the license, popular among free and open-source software (FOSS) developers, was last fully revised 16 years ago as GPLv2.

The license was rewritten to reflect emerging issues. A third draft of GPLv3 was delayed to ensure that it dealt with the potential ramifications of a patent-licensing deal around Suse Linux struck between Novell Inc. and Microsoft. Parts of the Linux operating system including its kernel are licensed under GPLv2.

When SugarCRM was established three and a half years ago, the company saw the Mozilla Public License (MPL) as best representing the ideals of the open-source CRM project. Over the past year and a half, SugarCRM has been working with the Free Software Foundation (FSF) and participating with the organization in the development of GPLv3.

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Zoltan Mesko - About Author:

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