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# The Future of Open Source Sustainability (as seen elsewhere)

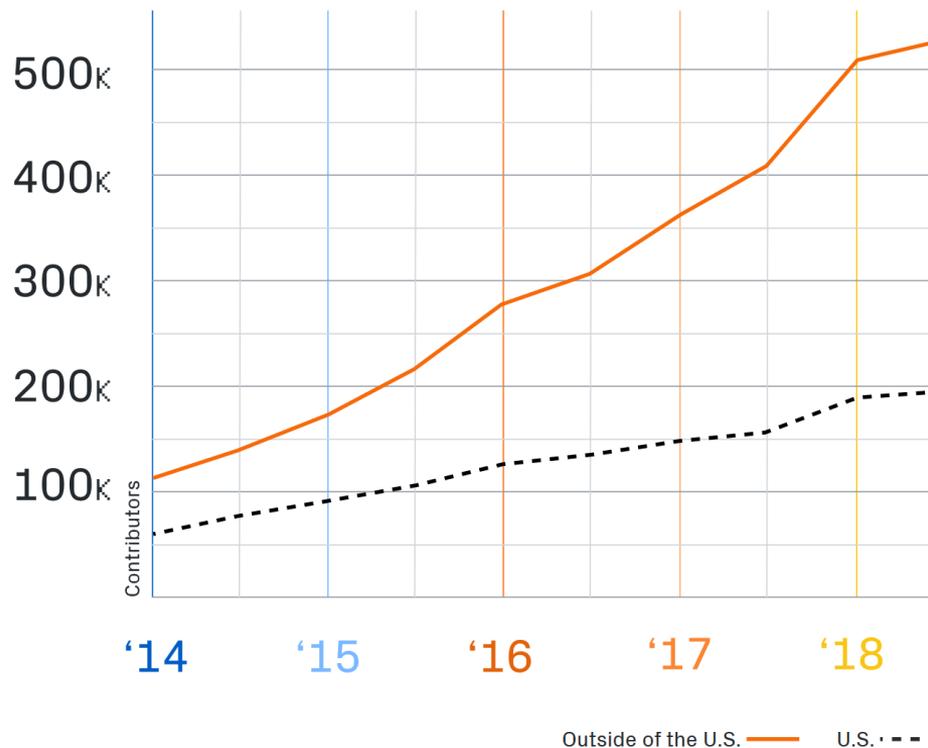
Jose Miguel Parrella

<https://jmp.soy> | @bureado



## Where open source software happens

Year over year, we are seeing more open source contributions from users based outside of the United States. \*



Source: [The State of the Octoverse](#)

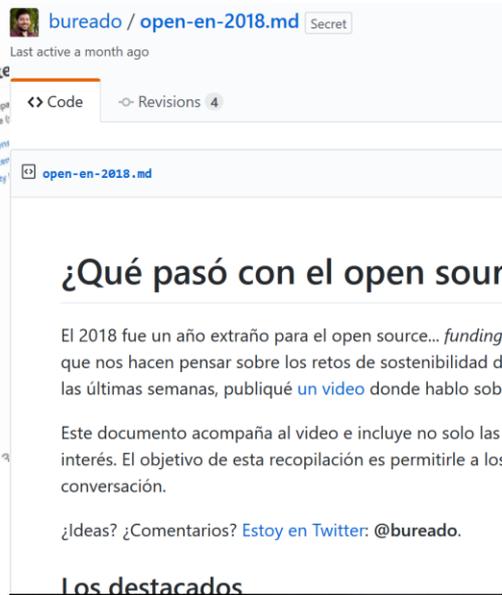
# Lost in translation

- Open source sustainability
- Open source foundations
- Income (in)equality
- Wealth (re)distribution
- Project freeloaders
- Open source business model

✓ Más difícil usar el Proyecto  
Legalmente inconveniente  
Remoción de distros  
✓ Menos incentivos para  
contribuir al Proyecto  
✓ Menos incentivos para  
competir  
Más lock-in  
✓ Establece una relación de  
poder con la comunidad  
Limita la ambición a "solo  
una de las partes"  
✓ Podría no ser aplicable

¿Qué pasó con el open source en 2018?

VIEWS



The Non-Compete

It's officially a trend - when a company calls the middle ground license (C)...

- Confluent Community License
- Timescale Community License
- CockroachDB Community License

bureado / open-en-2018.md Secret

Last active a month ago

<> Code Revisions 4

open-en-2018.md

## ¿Qué pasó con el open sour

El 2018 fue un año extraño para el open source... *funding* que nos hacen pensar sobre los retos de sostenibilidad d las últimas semanas, publiqué [un video](#) donde hablo sob

Este documento acompaña al video e incluye no solo las interés. El objetivo de esta recopilación es permitirle a los conversación.

¿Ideas? ¿Comentarios? [Estoy en Twitter: @bureado](#).

Los destacados

**3.57/5.00**

From author's survey

Q: I believe open source has an  
"income inequality" problem



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# Meanwhile, on Twitter

📌 Pinned Tweet



**José Miguel Parrella** @bureado · Mar 1

Thrilled to speak about global perceptions & insights on open source sustainability at #LFOSLS: [osls19.sched.com/event/LG5V](https://osls19.sched.com/event/LG5V)

What do YOU think? Does open source have an "income inequality" problem?

57% Yes

29% No

14% IDK

14 votes • Final results

Source: Twitter [poll](#) by author

# Strong opinions beget strong opinions



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- Respondents that agreed **open source has an income inequality problem...**
- ...often think **foundations play a critical role** in the future of open source (82%)
- ...and they, in turn, often think **competition makes open source better** (79%)
- ...and those people are more likely to say **Codes of Conduct play an important role** in sustainability.

From author's survey



# Threats & non-threats

Threats	Non-threats
Software patents (75%+)	Freeloaders (<20%)
Income inequality (~50%)	
Startup money (<40%)	Young people (<20%)

From author's survey

**3.52/5.00**

From author's survey

Q: I believe "codes of conduct" play a critical role for "open source sustainability"



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# Sustainability: what clicks/what doesn't

Top	Bottom (btw. 1 and 3 respondents)
Distributed funding (>50%)	New licenses
Diversity & inclusion (>50%)	Eliminate freeloaders
Subscription systems (about a third)	Eliminate BDFLs
More foundations (about a third)	Government step-in

From author's survey



<> Code Issues 0 Pull requests 0 Projects 0

100% View only

A handy guide to financial support for open source

money sponsorships funding content lists documentation

176 commits

3 branches

Branch: master

New pull request

nayafia Merge pull request #108 from nayafia/nayafia-patch-2

LICENSE Initial commit

README.md move inkscape to bounties

README.md

A handy guide to financial su

fx	Name	
		A
1	<b>Name</b>	<b>Short Description</b>
2	<b>Amazon Smile</b>	Amazon donates 0.5% charitable organisation
3	<a href="https://smile.amazon.com/">https://smile.amazon.com/</a>	
4	<b>Bounties Network</b>	Decentralized task bas staking and arbitration.
5	<a href="https://bounties.network/">https://bounties.network/</a>	
6	<b>Bounty Source</b>	Bountysource is the fun creating/collecting bour
7	<a href="https://bountysource.com">https://bountysource.com</a>	
8	<b>Bugmark</b>	A platform, used to con prediction markets and
9	<a href="https://bugmark.net/">https://bugmark.net/</a>	
10	<b>Buy me Coffe</b>	Allows creators to rece link or a button on their
11	<a href="https://www.buymeacoffee.com/">https://www.buymeacoffee.com/</a>	
12	<b>Carbon Ads</b>	Connecting designers, relevant brands through
13	<a href="https://carbonads.net/">https://carbonads.net/</a>	
14	<b>Code Fund</b>	CodeFund is an ethical source ecosystem
15	<a href="https://codefund.io/">https://codefund.io/</a>	
16	<b>Coinlancer</b>	Allows freelancers and contracts and exchange
17	<a href="https://coinlancer.com/">https://coinlancer.com/</a>	
18	<b>Core Infrastructure Initiative</b>	A Linux Foundation init support critical element
19	<a href="https://www.coreinfrastructure.org/">https://www.coreinfrastructure.org/</a>	



Source: [Stack Overflow Developer Survey](#)

1		Egypt	1.9x
2		Saudi Arabia	1.8x
3		Belarus	1.8x
4		Sri Lanka	1.7x
5		Nigeria	1.7x
6		Kenya	1.7x
7		Venezuela	1.6x
8		Tunisia	1.6x
9		India	1.5x
10		Nepal	1.5x

Source: [The State of the Octoverse](#)

# On post-modern licensing

2. I think "non-mainstream/new/postmodern" licenses (Commons Clause, SSPL, etc.) help or hurt the future of open source

[More Details](#)

	Mostly help	2
	Mostly hurt	13
	No impact	6



**Devon** @devonzuegel · Mar 9

Is the significance of OSS licenses generally overrated or underrated?

22% Overrated ✓

22% Underrated

19% About right

37% Just show me the results

390 votes · Final results

Left: author's survey, Right: Devon Zuegel's [survey](#) on Twitter

# Themes: Project survival



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- *The ability to keep healthy projects, projects that are being taken care of*
- *Making sure that there is a thriving community [...] so that such software can be **maintained and produced for years to come.***
- *The set of rules/tasks deployed in a project to ensure its survivability in all the involved dimensions (i.e., code, community, legal, etc.)*

Anonymous respondent verbatims



# Themes: Maintainer survival



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- *Being able to sustain an open source **developer's life** without hurting the commons pool.*
- *the possibility to contribute to open source software development [...] while **my life expectatives** (sic) are assured*
- *Open source sustainability means **having the maintainers capture a big enough portion of the generated value**. Currently I think it's too often around 0%.*

Anonymous respondent verbatims



# Themes: Recognition/unsung heroes



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- *Attract volunteer and/or paid-for work in critical open source components or projects that **span multiple open source solutions which have a large user base***
- *Giving more visibility on the **real contributions** of open source software or components when these are **part of a larger software ecosystem***
- *Making sure that communities have enough money to develop new features, maintain and legally protect open source software **that is used by in critical infrastructure in both public and private organizations.***

Anonymous respondent verbatims



# Themes: Societal/Ethos



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- *Collaborating and care about software **FREEDOM** and Openness*
- *The capacity of humanity of carrying on with the free and open source practice based on the **persistence of freedom ideals**, the prevalence of openness ethos, and the existence of favorable social and commercial conditions.*
- *Everyone helping each other (money, time, etc) **so that the world can advance together***
- *Meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*

Anonymous respondent verbatims



# Key takeaways

- Needs more research: software patents, role of government/regulators
- Foundations perceived as important, but **role and impact unclear**
- **Diversity & inclusion expectations unmet**, CoCs insufficient
- A strong position on a core issue such as **income inequality** tends to dictate positions in topics such as **role of foundations, competition**
- It does not seem possible to decouple survival of project from **survival of the individual maintainer**
- Open source sustainability and associated problems **aren't a zero-sum game**

# Recommendations

- Make time to and pay close attention to **definitions**, don't assume people's background or where they stand on a problem based on their affiliations
- Does your **customer advisory** board look like your customers? (roadmap discussions, release notes, documentation)
- Bring more project functions into your diversity & inclusion efforts (speakers, ambassadors, I10n/i18n)
- Can you as project leader describe to members what long-term survival looks like for your project? And can they?
- Don't hesitate to **draw boundaries** for problems you don't believe in or where someone else is an expert

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