

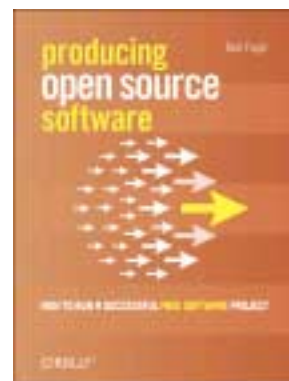
Press Release

October 19, 2005

Producing Open Source Software: How to Run a Successful Free Software Project

Sebastopol, CA--Most free software projects fail. We don't hear much about the failures because the successful projects attract so much attention, and there are so many free or open source projects in total that even though only a small percentage succeeds, the result is still a lot of visible projects. "It's impossible to put a precise number on the failure rate," says Karl Fogel, author of **Producing Open Source Software** (O'Reilly, US \$24.95), "but anecdotal evidence from over a decade in open source, some casting around on SourceForge.net, and a little Googling, all point to the same conclusion: the rate is extremely high, probably on the order of 90 to 95 percent."

Fogel's new book is about avoiding failure. "It examines not only how to do things right, but how to do them wrong, so you can recognize and correct problems early," he explains. "My hope is that after reading it, you will have a repertory of techniques not just for avoiding common pitfalls of open source development, but also for dealing with the growth and maintenance of a successful project."



Once viewed as a fringe phenomenon, open source software has firmly taken its place in today's business world, but its acceptance comes as no surprise to those who dedicate their skills and talents to open source projects--those who understand the sense of community and empowerment that are part of the motivation in successful projects. "Leadership in an open source community comes not from leverage or control, but from finding common interests and expertly managing what is volunteered," explains Brian Behlendorf of the Apache Software Foundation and CollabNet in his foreword to the book. "Those who see open source as a bunch of zero-price software created by amateurs don't get this at all. The rest of the world, though, is starting to clue in to the idea that the software industry doesn't have to be a zero-sum game, and that letting go of a little control and ownership might actually result in something grander in return."

Behlendorf further notes that these successes don't magically happen. "There's a universe of best practice and lore that before now has been largely an oral tradition, picked up by sitting on a good project mailing list for years and learning the patterns of communication and process," he says. "Karl has done the software development world a

tremendous favor by finally capturing much of that in this book. While the software engineering world is much more comfortable with the concepts of open source, software developer communication, and unpredictable outcomes than they were before, there are still not enough leaders with Karl's grasp of the nuances that make all the difference. With this book, that can change."

Fogel, a long time developer and manager, has worked with the development teams of many free software projects, including CVS and GNU Emacs. He most recently managed the creation of Subversion for CollabNet, Inc. In *Producing Open Source Software* he writes for software developers and managers who are considering starting an open source project, or who have started one and are wondering what to do now. The book will also be helpful to people who want to participate in an open source project, but have never done so before.

Some of the topics in *Producing Open Source Software* include:

- Providing developers and users with the technical resources they need
- Keeping developers productive, cooperative, and happy
- Handling communications efficiently
- Distributing responsibility for bug tracking and fixing
- Funding projects effectively
- Testing and releasing

Additional Resources:

- **Chapter 12, "Social and Political Infrastructure"**
- **More information about the book, including table of contents, index, author bio, and samples**
- **A cover graphic in JPEG format**

Producing Open Source Software

Karl Fogel

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About Karl Fogel

Karl Fogel co-founded Cyclic Software in 1995, a company offering commercial CVS support. In 1999 he added support for CVS anonymous read-only repository access, inaugurating a new standard for access to development sources in open source projects. That same year, he wrote *Open Source Development with CVS* (published by Coriolis), now in its third edition via Paraglyph Press. He has also written *Producing Open Source Software*, due to release in October 2005, from O'Reilly Media.

Since early 2000, he has worked for CollabNet, Inc., managing the creation and development of Subversion, a version control system written from scratch by CollabNet and a team of open source volunteers, and meant to replace CVS as the de facto standard among open source projects. He also participates in various other open source projects as a module maintainer, patch contributor, and documentation writer.