

OSAF receives \$98,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

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We are pleased to announce that the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has agreed to provide a \$98,000 grant to fund a planning project to extend OSAF's Chandler software application to meet the information technology needs of higher education. The Open Source Applications Foundation (OSAF) originally planned for its new Personal Information Manager application to target individual and small-to-medium business users that need a better tool to manage and share their email, contacts, calendars and notes. Based on expressions of significant interest from the higher education community, OSAF, with support of the Mellon Foundation, is undertaking a study of how to address administration, scalability, and security issues of that segment. Chandler, comprising both a polished application itself and a platform for developing information management applications, takes a fresh view of email, calendar, contacts, and instant messaging functionality, and features sophisticated information sharing based on easy, server-optional networking. OSAF founder Mitchell Kapor said, "We're committed to serving the broad base of users while also offering advanced capabilities for the more expert user. Above all, we're committed to keeping the end-users' interests and needs central to our undertaking."

The Mellon Foundation currently provides grants in several areas, including Research in Information Technology. This program seeks research and development initiatives intended to create new ways in which information technologies, and particularly digital technologies, can benefit scholarship and research, teaching, and learning. The Mellon Foundation approached OSAF and encouraged us to explore the possibility of extending Chandler's functionality so that it could be successfully deployed and used in the higher educational setting. This grant provides funding to determine the additional requirements as a prelude for implementing a higher education version of Chandler. Support for open source development from institutions like the Mellon Foundation are significant in ensuring sustainability of a non-profit open source endeavor like OSAF. Since the Chandler application will be distributed for free OSAF actively seeks grants and donations to provide sustained future development and support.

Mr. Kapur said, "We're excited about working with universities to meet their needs with an open source solution and possibly expand the capabilities of Chandler." One of the Universities that OSAF has been working with is the University of Washington. Oren Sreebny, Assistant Director of Computing & Communications, is excited about the prospects of an open source shared personal information manager tailored for higher education use. "Having a freely distributable, open source PIM that will support relevant standard protocols and connect to our existing enterprise systems will be a tremendous help in our institution. The campus has been trying for years to find good solutions for integrating calendaring and messaging that can really be supported for hundreds of thousands of users in scalable and cost-effective ways. We look forward to working with the great OSAF staff to achieve these goals."
