

Open Source Vs Closed Source

Topic	Open Source	Closed Source (Proprietary development)
Security	Due to the source code being publicly available, security holes can be found to exploit existing users. In saying that, due to the many people involved in the software development, this also suggests security flaws are found quicker and therefore can be fixed quicker.	The source code is not made public, so security holes are fixed as they are reported or found or during the coding QC stage. Organisations will update patches for those that fall under a support agreement.
Responsibility and accountability	Due to the software being open source, no one is responsible or accountable. It is a team of volunteers that develop the software	The developer is legally responsible to for the software performance. Therefore offers a program of upgrades, patches and a contractual relationship with the client.
Source Code	Due to the source code being publicly available it allows many contributors to be involved in the development. Therefore the core product will be development and bug fixes resolved quicker.	The source code is not made publicly available and therefore the program is developed in a more controlled environment. The owner of the software may sell development licenses.
Upgrades	Upgrades are frequent, but dependent on the contributors.	Upgrades are released in a structures fashion following a commercial and development program.
R & D	As long as the contributors are interested and can make a living from installation and customisation, they will continue to report and fix bugs and also support development.	Market and stakeholder demands dictate the development of the software, and inherently development is approached with more caution than open source development.
Support	Support is provided via Internet forums	Support is a commercial proposition and therefore is more structured with an emphasis on timely responses.
Organisational Efficiency	The organisation is dependent on the group of people involved and commitment to the development of the software. Contributors can be from anywhere in the world. Development teams can have	Due to legal requirements, and stakeholder interests, organisational efficiency is a common goal for all. The business focuses on creative recognition and profit.

	disagreements, and the quality of the product depends on the quality of the contributors. Someone must control this.	
Cost	Free, but the name of the product must to be publicly recognised.	Pay, according to the market price or for the software development.

Proposed Solution:

As can be seen from the above table, there are pros and cons to both the open source and the closed source options. We believe that the best option is to follow a combination of both.

The success of using open source software depends on whether the open source software is already established, has active forums and moderators, and have a strong and dedicated team of professional programmers who can analyse the existing software architecture and development the software on an ongoing basis.

Please note that some Open Source software also provides a paid service where the coordinating organization only allow their subscribers to update releases after they have performed thorough testing.

Therefore we would suggest using the open source software as a foundation. You would then customise the open source software and develop the closed source application to meet your requirement. Thereafter you would use the software developer to supply ongoing support.

However, we must stress that a thorough investigation of the software is recommended. The risk of making a mistake could be far more costly if the solution does not meet your present and future requirements. Be sure to perform a detailed “Requirements Analysis”. This is generally better done by a 3rd party who cannot be influenced by internal organizational politics.

In addition, use a reliable software development organization to perform the development for you and make sure you develop a clear Service Level Agreement.

The financial benefit is you only pay for the development and support and not the core product, which means you will realise significant cost savings. In addition you gain the flexibility of the Open Source software which allows you to develop and attach new applications or modules.

Clearly the selection of the correct open source foundation software is critical to implementing the above model. If it is found that an open source option cannot be found then you would have to select either a commercial product or develop the software from the beginning.

I hope this article provides you some insight into Open Source and Closed Source (Proprietary) software options.

The End.