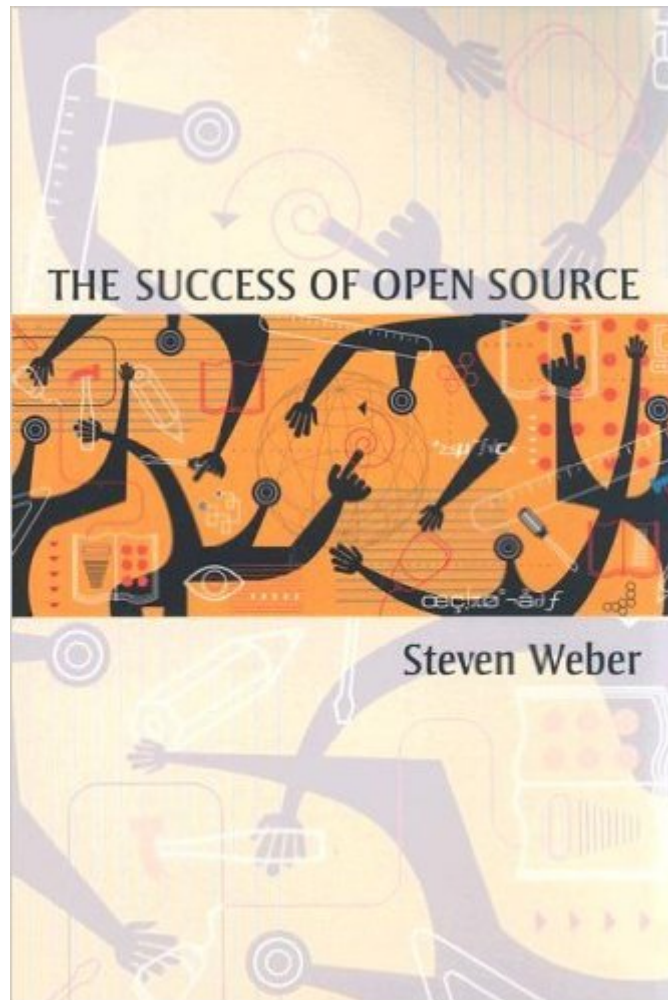The book was found

The Success Of Open Source

THE SUCCESS OF OPEN SOURCE

Steven Weber

Synopsis

Much of the innovative programming that powers the Internet, creates operating systems, and produces software is the result of "open source" code, that is, code that is freely distributed--as opposed to being kept secret--by those who write it. Leaving source code open has generated some of the most sophisticated developments in computer technology, including, most notably, Linux and Apache, which pose a significant challenge to Microsoft in the marketplace. As Steven Weber discusses, open source's success in a highly competitive industry has subverted many assumptions about how businesses are run, and how intellectual products are created and protected.Traditionally, intellectual property law has allowed companies to control knowledge and has guarded the rights of the innovator, at the expense of industry-wide cooperation. In turn, engineers of new software code are richly rewarded; but, as Weber shows, in spite of the conventional wisdom that innovation is driven by the promise of individual and corporate wealth, ensuring the free distribution of code among computer programmers can empower a more effective process for building intellectual products. In the case of Open Source, independent programmers--sometimes hundreds or thousands of them--make unpaid contributions to software that develops organically, through trial and error.Weber argues that the success of open source is not a freakish exception to economic principles. The open source community is guided by standards, rules, decisionmaking procedures, and sanctioning mechanisms. Weber explains the political and economic dynamics of this mysterious but important market development.

Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Harvard University Press (October 31, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0674018583

ISBN-13: 978-0674018587

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.8 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars See all reviews (11 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #408,645 in Books (See Top 100 in Books)   #35 in Books > Business & Money > Management & Leadership > Distribution & Warehouse Management   #267 in Books > Business & Money > Industries > Computers & Technology   #571 in Books > Business & Money > Management & Leadership > Information Management

Customer Reviews

I am a commercial software developer/manager who has often wondered about the broader motivations and implications of the Open Source movement, which is permeating many large patches of my industry. I found this book incredibly helpful in giving me the background I needed to understand the various Open Source products and articles I encounter day to day. Although my background is technical, this book generally is not. Although some technical information is unavoidable, Weber does a great job of maintaining his position as a professional political scientist and an informed layman on software technology. It may seem strange for a political scientist to approach this subject, but it turns out to be very beneficial because of the skill he has in analyzing organizations, their cultural, governmental, economic and societal impact. This isn't really a political science book; it is deeply about Open Source. But, Weber did manage to get me a little more interested in political science too.Weber is a terrific writer. This is one of the best-organized, concisely written and cleanly reasoned books I have ever read. That said, this is not light reading; you will need to put your thinking cap on and think big thoughts with the author pretty frequently. This is exactly what I was looking for. There's plenty of shallow analysis out there concerning Open Source. What Weber provides is the cross-discipline perspective of a professional scholar who has studied Open Source carefully. I believe this book will prove useful to future historians when they want to understand the roots of Open Source, which, as Weber presents, could be very profound to our global economy and culture over decades to come.The first chapter cleanly outlines the goals and big questions of the book.

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