

# Annual Report 2008

## **COSS's General Activities**

The Finnish Centre for Open Source Solutions (COSS) is a national development organisation for businesses that use open-source technology along with an open-source model of operation. COSS promotes the managed use of open source technology solutions throughout various industries and provides services to its members for business development. COSS assists companies that offer open source technology based products and services, as well as users of open solutions; businesses, communities, and public administrative organisations.

COSS's objectives are to strengthen the competitiveness of Finland's software-intensive industries, generate new business growth, and promote the development of the information society through open-source code technologies as well as via the communities that provide those technologies.

2008 represents COSS's fifth actual year of financial operations. COSS was established at the end of 2003. The Centre of Expertise Programme (OSKE), which annually awards special financing to a top national project, supplied the basic funding for COSS's first two years. After this first phase, COSS worked with the government-owned Technology Centre Hermia Ltd's managed development programme. This Programme is financed through the payment of membership dues from its business partners, corporate and publicly funded business development projects, as well as from fees for professional services and events.

COSS's membership continued to grow steadily through the development of its open-source business and at year-end, its membership stood at 141 associates.

In order to monitor membership satisfaction rates, COSS conducts an annual survey. In 2008, representatives from 29 of our member organisations responded to the survey. The results of the study are being utilised as a starting point for planning the upcoming year of operation.

In accordance with the governance practices of Technology Centre Hermia Ltd, COSS operates as an independent development programme. In essence, COSS's operations are directed by a steering committee sponsored by the board members. In 2008, the following people served on the steering committee:

Timo Väliharju, Mediamasteri Ltd, Chairman  
Kim Aaltonen, Novell Ltd  
Henri Bergius, Nemein Ltd  
Keith Bonnici, Tekes  
Päivi Hietanen, Tieturi Ltd  
Kai Keinänen, Saunalahti Group PLC  
Jouni Kempainen/ Matti Vuori from 19.5, Plenware Ltd  
Anneli Koivunen, Proactum Ltd  
Jyrki Koskinen, IBM  
Mika Kukkonen/Juhani Ahonen from 3.10, Nokia Siemens Networks Ltd  
Antti Kytömäki, Ixonos PLC  
Petri Maanonen, RedHat  
Olli Mannisto, HP  
Miko Nieminen/Timo Jyrinki from 12.9, Nomovok Ltd

Henri Ranki, Cubical Solutions Ltd  
Tomi Rauste, Movial Ltd  
Toni Sormunen, Nokia PLC

The following passages briefly describe the activities conducted in 2008:

## ***Communication and Visibility Services***

### **Newsletters and Membership Bulletins**

Newsletters and membership bulletins were regularly issued in 2008. A total of 16 newsletters and 6 membership bulletins were sent out throughout the year. The newsletter operates as a channel of communication between both COSS and the COSS membership, as members have the opportunity to post their own news items in the newsletters. Issues and interests that are associated with COSS's membership were publicised in the membership bulletins.

In addition, a few separate event listings were posted. A letter to the editor and eight press releases were written and published in the media.

### **COSS.fi**

A much-needed improvement to the COSS.fi network service was carried out in 2008 and will be subsequently implemented in February 2009. Technically, the service was upgraded so that it better serves networking, membership visibility and activity, and current data retention.

The new site is based on the Drupal 6 content management platform, meets COSS's needs better than the previous system, and is less burdensome and more user-friendly. In addition, COSS's personnel have the expertise to modify and maintain the system. Site users now have the ability to write blogs and COSS's members can publish news items and event information. Furthermore, users can set up groups in order to discuss and comment.

The company and software index will be maintained in the old system for the time being, but will also be moved to the new system when the respective development is completed.

### **Marketing Materials**

COSS's printed marketing materials were revised. In the autumn of 2008, a new brochure in English was printed, in which content was separated according to user groups. Photographs were taken for the brochure that will also be used for other marketing purposes. In connection with this, COSS's new mascot King Ping was also created.

### **Avopaikka**

Avopaikka - Open Source Business News was published as a separate supplement in Kauppalehti on 2.9.2008. The newspaper has a circulation of over 80,000 subscribers. COSS's membership organisations; Media Master, Wapice, Proactum, Ixonos, IBM, and Linux Support, all contributed to the supplement. Moreover, a number of articles were written by the social media network Sombiz, the Tikka project, the MindTrek conference, and the Cubiq network.

## Export Promotion Excursion

COSS arranged an export promotion trip for its members to Berlin, where the mobile sector's premier event, Open Source in Mobile World conference, was held 16.9-18.9.2008. Three representatives from COSS and nine representatives from its member organisations participated in the excursion. In connection with the conference, Nokia treated the delegation from COSS to a networking supper.

## The OpenMind Conference

OpenMind, COSS's main annual international seminar, was organised in association with the MindTrek conference. The conference brought together 143 people from Finland and abroad. This year, the decision was taken to organise a one-day event in which current technological and business issues would be covered. Open-source management, mobile Internet, and public information systems were the key themes of the conference. An Open Nordic Scheme project meeting was also arranged, in affiliation with OpenMind, in which it was decided to request further funding for this project.

Conference speakers included Roberto Galoppini (InitMarketing), Martin Michlmayr (Hewlett Packard), Mikko Terho (Nokia), Elmar Geese (Tarent), Ismael Olea (Stratego Consortium), and Teppo Kuisma (Ixonos). In addition, the programme "lightning talk" was introduced for the first time. OpenMind Lightning Talks and the long-established Summer Coders introduced their own projects.

## Other Seminars and Events

In 2008, COSS organised and spoke at several events for various target groups.

16/01/08	First QualiPSo Conference, Rome
27/02/08	Future of Internet, Geneva
20/03/08	AOP - Open Programmes Day 2008, Turku
09/04/08	Topical Software Solutions Seminar, Jyväskylä
08/05/08	HP Linux Forum, Helsinki
13/05/08	JHS Seminar, Helsinki
27/05/08	Open Source Code Training for Suppliers, Helsinki
03/06/08	ServOSS Seminar - Into the World through Open Source Code, Helsinki
21/08/08	Open Source Code Training for Business, Seinäjoki
09/09/08	Open Source Products and Support Training, Helsinki
30/09/08	ECIS Workshop, Brussels
03/10/08	Open Source Code Training, Helsinki
15/10/08	Opportunities in Linux, Helsinki
28/10/08	LUKE Copyright Info, Tampere
28/10/08	Open Source Jurisprudence - Training for Machine Builders, Tampere
14/11/08	OSOR.EU - Workshop for Municipalities, Brussels
18/11/08	OpenKvarken Inaugural Seminar, Vaasa
12/12/08	Bisnestreffit: Making Business Transparent, Helsinki
17/12/08	COSS's Membership Meeting, Helsinki

## **Operet Development Project**

Operet, an ESF-funded training and development project that was initiated in 2006, ended as planned in the spring of 2008.

The following training programmes were still offered by the Operet project in 2008;

04/03/08	GTK User Interface Programming
18/03/08	Linux Driver Programming

## **TIKKA**

At the beginning of May, Technology Centre Hermia Ltd's co-ordinated project TIKKA, a new wide-ranging and interdisciplinary educational project, was launched. It will improve the technical knowledge and skills of Pirkamaa's professional staff in SMEs so that companies can meet the challenges of global competition.

The goal of TIKKA's open source code sub-project is to train SMEs in open source code technology and business opportunities. Training was planned in the sub-project to offer both long-term instruction and up-to-date short-term classes. These can be held on a company-wide basis or in joint training sessions.

SMEs in Pirkanmaa can obtain up to 50% in financial support for TIKKA training. The project is administered by the Pirkanmaa Employment and Economic Development Centre (EEDC). Sponsors include the European Social Fund, the State of Finland, and the actual companies involved.

## **Kesäkoodi**

The Finnish Summer Code (Kesäkoodi) project was arranged for the third time by COSS and its partners (Novell, Nokia, Nokia Siemens Networks, Saunalahti, Google, Ixonos, Nomovok, and Technology Centre Hermia Ltd). Summer jobs were offered to five university students. There were a total of 13 candidates of which seven were selected as finalists. Antti Kaijanmäki, Juuso Alasuutari, Niklas Laxström, Olli Savolainen, and Sakari Bergen were the summer coders selected.

During the summer, the coders worked on their chosen open-source project. There were two professional audio software usability-related projects; Juuso Alasuutari improved LASH Audio Session Handler and Sakari Bergen worked on Ardour. Antti Kaijanmäki's project facilitated the use of mobile broadband. The Network Manager Mobile Broadband Configuration Assistant was developed out of this project. Niklas Laxström's theme was localisation. In his own project, he developed a collaborative-based translation platform built on MediaWik. Olli Savolainen focused on improving the user and programme interface in his Moodle Quiz project.

Antti Kaijanmäki's Kesäkoodi-project is one of the most successful of all time. His work has already been released as a part of NetworkManager, which is Ubuntu Version 8.10's enhanced network configuration management tool. His project has been commended and praised in nearly every review.

## **Avoim Koulu Project**

The Open School (Avoim Koulu) Project is a scheme inspired by COSS's membership whose goal is to bring together a collection of open-source software that is capable of running the everyday routines of a school or educational institution. The idea is to give schools the opportunity to use the software themselves or to provide them with software-based functionality and services.

In 2008, IBM, Mediamasteri and Opinsys participated in brainstorming and operating the project.

## **COSSConnect**

COSSConnect is an industry-specific matchmaking service, which seeks to generate new customers and partnerships for open-source solution providers. Through the help of this service, customers secure needed solutions.

Because COSSConnect did not receive the funding that was applied for from TEKES in the spring, the service was unable to be fully implemented. However, an open-source bazaar was arranged at the HP Linux Forum where COSS members were on hand. Additionally, COSS acted as a bilateral leads mediator and made preliminary plans for a web-based matchmaking service as a part of its web service.

## **The Open Source Procurement Guide**

At the request of the Municipal-IT unit (KuntaIT-yksikön) of the Ministry of Finance, COSS produced an open source procurement guide that makes it easier to acquire open access-code solutions, especially in the public sector. The aim of this is to release a guide of Public Administration (JHS) recommendations in the first half of 2009.

The guide will add to the awareness of those personnel who are responsible for purchasing the public sector's IT supplies in regards to the open source approach. It will also provide guidelines for the issues related to procurement activities and the dissemination of good practices in open-source procurement. Among other things, the guide supplements the content of the Successful Public ICT Procurement Process Guide.

This work was commented on and directed by a working group that was convened for this purpose, which included representatives from the municipalities, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, various ministries, and Hansel.

## **IDABC**

IDABC (Interoperable Delivery of European government Services to public Administrations, Businesses, and Citizens) is a special EU programme, which will develop a framework for e-government services and the European regulations concerning them.

For several years, COSS has participated in work concerning IDABC's open source code at various events. In 2008, operations reached a new level, when an agreement was signed with the Ministry

of Finance. Under this agreement, COSS's authorities may act as Finland's official representatives among open-source code and document-format expert groups. In 2008, Manu Setälä, Petri Räsänen, and Ilkka Lehtinen served as the representatives in these groups. A tighter relationship with the IDABC benefitted other activities, e.g. designing a code bank for the public sector, creating an open source-code procurement guide, and the OpenMind event.

In 2008, COSS became the Finnish party to the Centre of Expertise Network ([www.osor.eu](http://www.osor.eu)), which is maintained by IDABC's Open Source Observatory.

## **OpenNordic**

Scandinavia's open-source network construction project, OpenNordic, was successfully completed on 30/06/08. The project was funded by the Nordic Research and Innovation Council, with whom the network has started negotiations on a new joint-project. The aim of the project is to expand the network into the Baltic area and to promote closer co-operation, especially in the area of software sharing.

## ***International Networks***

In addition to the previously mentioned OpenNordic and IDABC's Open Source Observatory and Repository's expertise network ([www.osor.eu](http://www.osor.eu)), COSS also works with other international networks and communities.

In the first half of 2008, COSS joined the Open Business Organisation of Europe (OBOOE) network, which brings together nationally active open-source organisations. OBOOE's mission is to represent European OSS professionals and to gain maximum benefit from regional activities. Developing collaborations and spotlighting the small and medium enterprise sector will also benefit Finnish players since the importance of SMEs is significant to the entire OS sector. A European wide-collaborative network will also open new opportunities of internationalisation to Finnish SMEs.

Towards the end of the year, COSS joined the FOSSBazaar community. FOSSBazaar is a Linux Foundation working group that shares information and best practices about the controlled use and exploitation of open-source software in the private and public sectors. ([www.fossbazaar.org](http://www.fossbazaar.org))

## ***Open Document Format***

Domestic and International debate over editing office documents using a standardised format was especially lively in 2008. After ISO-approval of Open Document Format (ODF), accelerating the ISO's standardisation process for OOXML (the format was developed by Microsoft) was discussed.

COSS actively participated in this process and also stimulated interest among stakeholders. COSS's Manu Setälä took part in OOXML-related meetings of the Finnish Standards Association (SFS), and was also a member of the delegation representing Finland at the ISO Ballot Resolution meeting in Geneva. Following ISO approval of OOXML, Setälä, as COSS's representative, participated in the activities of the international standards monitoring group. Concerning document formats, COSS has served as the national contact point for activities of the international ODF Alliance.

## **Research**

COSS has continued to work closely with researchers in the field of open-source coding and innovation both in Finland and Europe. COSS organised the ServOSS research project's closing seminar in June 2008 and took part in a European NESSI research community's OSS activity as a seminar speaker and as a member of the OSS's research agenda's preparation group. Petri Räsänen and Ville Oksanen were COSS's representatives in the NESSI OSS Working Group.

COSS also built a collaborative relationship with TIVIT, which produces ICT SHOK in Finland. Conceiving open-source related projects, incorporating an OSS perspective into research programmes, and channelling OSS knowledge into projects are their objectives.