



COSS, The Finnish Centre for Open Source Solutions Annual Report 2009

COSS' 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 products and services based on open source technology, as well as the users of open solutions: businesses, communities and public administrative organisations.

COSS' objectives are to strengthen the competitive ability of the Finnish software-intensive business, to generate new business growth, and to promote the development of the information society through open source technologies and the communities producing those respective technologies.

2009 was COSS' sixth actual year of operation. COSS was established at the end of 2003 as a national top project that received special financing through the Centre of Expertise Project. The administrative background organisation of COSS is Hermia Ltd (previously known as Technology Centre Hermia Ltd). COSS operates in accordance with the governance practices of Hermia Ltd as its independent development programme. The operations are financed by membership fees, sponsorship revenues, external project funding and by selling paid services.

The number of members decreased slightly in 2009 due to the general economic situation and, at the end of 2009, the number of business members was 132. The list of members can be accessed online at <http://www.coss.fi/en/members>.

COSS' operations are directed by a steering committee comprising sponsoring members and financing organisations. At the end of 2009, the following people served on the steering committee:

Timo Väliharju, Managing Director and Founder, Mediamaisteri Group Oy (Chairman)

Kim Aaltonen, Managing Director, Novell Finland Oy

Juhani Ahonen, Nokia Siemens Networks Ltd

Henri Bergius, Nemein Oy

Timo Jyrinki, Nomovok Ltd

Kai Keinänen, Department Manager, Saunalahti Group Oyj

Anneli Koivunen, Chairman of the Board, Proactum Oy

Jyrki Koskinen, University and Social Relations, IBM

Antti Kytömäki, Chief Architect, Ixonos PLC

Markus Pekkarinen, Sales Manager Finland, Red Hat Nordic

Henri Ranki, COO, Cubical Solutions Oy

Manu Setälä, Technology Expert, Tekes

Mikko J. Terho, Vice President & Nokia Fellow, Nokia PLC

Martin von Willebrand, Chairman of the Board, Validos ry

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Communication and Visibility Services

E-Mail Services

13 COSS newsletters were published throughout the year. The newsletter includes information on COSS activities, future open source events, notices by COSS member organisations and open source news.

The newsletter operates as a communication channel of both COSS and its members, as the members can publish their own news items in the newsletter.

In addition to the newsletters, a few separate member letters, event advertisements and five press releases were published.

Internet Services

The new [coss.fi](http://www.coss.fi) website was introduced in February 2009. The new site improves the visibility of member businesses in addition to offering additional current information. The development of the website will be continued in 2010.

COSS started to use social media channels in 2009. A COSS Qaiku channel was created for discussion on COSS activity and open source issues. Additionally, Facebook was used in marketing the Openmind conference, for instance. COSS has its own channels or groups also on LinkedIn, YouTube and Twitter. A more extensive utilisation of social media services is constantly being researched.

- Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/COSS/250674019544>
- Qaiku, #coss: <http://www.qaiku.com/channels/show/COSS/>
- Qaiku, @coss: <http://www.qaiku.com/home/COSS/>
- LinkedIn, #coss: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=135235>
- YouTube, @cossfinland: <http://www.youtube.com/cossfinland>
- Twitter, @cossfinland: <http://twitter.com/cossfinland>
- Identi.ca, @coss: <http://identi.ca/coss/>

COSS Directory

The new COSS Directory of open source software and providers of open source solutions and services has been developed during 2009. The renewed service will be published in 2010. There were shortcomings in the operation of the current directory service and, therefore, its maintenance and development were discontinued.

In 2009, the development of the Avopaikka portal was started in connection with the renewal of the Avopaikka concept. The Avopaikka portal will be published in early 2010.

Avopaikka

COSS' Avopaikka newspaper started to be renewed in 2009. Previously a supplement to Kauppalehti newspaper, Avopaikka is being made into COSS' customer newspaper, which offers articles on the open source model and information on open source providers and their solutions.

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To members, the most significant benefit of having an own newspaper are considerably cheaper display advertisement rates.

The first renewed Avopaikka newspaper comes out in January 2010. In the future, the newspaper is planned to be published 2–3 times per year. Businesses can reserve space for articles and advertisements in the newspaper. COSS members have a pre-emptive right for articles, as well as cheaper rates. In addition to business pieces, the newspaper will include expert articles by COSS experts and partners.

In connection with renewing the Avopaikka newspaper, the development of a new service for bringing open source users and providers together was started. The Avopaikka service especially targets those organisations that use, or are considering using, open source. The service comprises the Avopaikka newspaper, Avopaikka portal and Avopaikka events. COSS has applied for financing for the Avopaikka project, and the full operation of the project is scheduled to start in 2010.

<http://avopaikka.fi>

Akademy 2010

COSS requested and succeeded in having the Akademy 2010 event held in Finland. Akademy 2010 will take place in Tampere 3–10 July 2010 and will be organised by COSS along with KDE e.V., which is the organisation behind the KDE project.

Akademy is the annual community event of the KDE project which develops open source desktop solutions. Akademy includes a two-day conference, group meetings, time for programming and other development work as well as the annual meeting of KDE e.V. members.

Openmind

Openmind, the annual international main seminar of COSS, was again organised in collaboration with the MindTrek conference. Openmind gathered around 150 visitors from Finland and abroad.

The speakers of the conference included **Quim Gil** (Maemo Devices, Nokia), **Teppo Sulonen** (City of Tampere), **Ignacio Correias** (eBox), **Adriaan de Groot** (FSF Europe), **Henry Palonen** (Electric Cars - Now!) and **Peter Cheng** (TargetSource Tech Ltd).

The "Linux-tekijä" award of the Finnish Linux Users Group FLUG was awarded for the first time in Openmind. The 2009 "Linux-tekijä" award was given to Opinsys Oy, a provider of Linux systems for schools and also a member of COSS. Furthermore, three honourable mentions were given to **Risto Jääskeläinen** for translating the OpenOffice suite instructions into Finnish, the developer team of Nokia's Linux-based Maemo devices, and the LinuCast team that publishes podcasts discussing Linux. The awards were handed out by MP **Jyrki J. Kasvi**.

<http://openmind.fi>

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Seminars and Events

In 2009, COSS organised and presented at several events for various target groups.

January	
15.01.09	Introducing the operations of COSS to the party of the Tanzanian Minister of Transportation
28.01.09	Data Protection Day seminar organised by the Office of the Data Protection Ombudsman and EFFI on using online services outside the EU, Helsinki
February	
06.02.09	Introducing open source software to the IT and media oriented classes of the Saarnilaakso school, Espoo
10.02.09	TIEKE briefings: business models and a web seminar
March	
04.03.09	Participation in a LinuCast podcast
26.03.09	Talentum legal training: open source business
April	
07.04.09	ICT-Werstas: Microsoft-free office, Tampere
16.04.09	OOXPN Developer Day, Tampere
20.04.09	LTSP-workshop, Turku
21.04.09	"Open Software for Entrepreneurs" event, Turku
22.04.09	LTSP-työpaja, Hämeenlinna
28.04.09	"Making Open Source Productive" seminar, Helsinki
May	
08.05.09	Midgard 10-year Anniversary Gala, Helsinki
08.05.09	Open source event by Jinux, Joensuu
11.05.09	The National Board of Education: a mini seminar on the equipment used in teaching, Helsinki
12.05.09	A VTT mini seminar – Managing Product Life Cycle, Espoo
June	
09.06.09	"Free Software as the IT Solution of a SME" training seminar, Lappeenranta
July	
August	
13.08.09	YLE Tampereen Radio, morning coffee event
25.08.09	Proactum Open Meet Up, Helsinki
September	
07.09.09	Seminar by TIEKE, Helsinki
09.09.09	Kuntamarkkinat fair, Helsinki
17.09.09	"Affect and Be Affected" seminar by TIEKE, Helsinki
23.09.09	ECIS meeting, Brussels
30.09.09	Openmind, Tampere
October	
05.-06.10.09	LTSP workshop #2, Kokkola

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November

- 03.11.09 "Open Source and Security" seminar, Espoo
- 10.11.09 Open School publication seminar, Heureka Science Centre, Vantaa
- 17.11.09 Open School briefing, Helsinki
- 17.11.09 Match making event by COSS and LiSoG, Tampere
- 18.11.09 "Using Open Software" road show, Tampere
- 19.11.09 "Using Open Software" road show, Turku
- 24.11.09 JHS seminar: New Recommendations for the Development of ICT Services, Helsinki
- 24.11.09 Virtual education event by the National Board of Education, "The Benefits of LTSP in Teaching", Helsinki
- 27.11.09 OOXOPN Developers Day Fall seminar, Tampere
- 30.11.09 "Using Open Software" road show, Helsinki

December

- 02.12.09 "Using Open Software" road show, Oulu
- 04.12.09 "Using Open Software" road show, Rovaniemi
- 09.12.09 Open Source, eGovernment and Large Organisations seminar, Athens
- 15.12.09 COSS Membership Meeting, Helsinki

TIKKA

Until June, COSS was responsible for the open source portion of the TIKKA project that offers support for training and consultation, after which the project was transferred from Hermia Ltd to Tredea Oy.

SMEs in the Pirkanmaa region 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 Kesäkoodi (Summer Code) project was organised for the fourth time by COSS and its partners Nokia, Nokia Siemens Networks, Saunalahti, Nomovok and Hermia Ltd. The project offered a summer job to three university students. There were eight applicants of whom five were selected as finalists. **Tanu Kaskinen**, **Akseli Mantila** and **Riku Salminen** were the summer coders selected. During the summer, the coders worked on an open source project of their choice.

Tanu Kaskinen developed a D-Bus interface for the PulseAudio sound server. PulseAudio is the default sound system of many popular Linux distributions, and D-Bus is a widely used protocol for communication between programs.

In his project, Riku Salminen realised XCB extensions allowing for making hardware accelerated 3D graphics software for the X Window System using XCB and OpenGL 3.0. XCB is

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a low-level programming interface for the X Window System. X windowing is used in Linux and Unix desktop environments.

Banshee is one of the most popular and actively developed media players for Linux. Akseli Mantila's project was to add extensions to the program that would enable browsing Internet radio channels and saving broadcasts as mp3 files.

<http://www.coss.fi/en/kesakoodi>

Open School

COSS and three of its partner businesses — IBM, Mediamaisteri Group Oy and Opinsys Oy — have been preparing the Open School project for 18 months. It aims to provide educational institutes with open software that meets their individual needs.

The Open School project was published on Tuesday 10 November at the Heureka Science Centre. There were around 60 listeners, who also took part in a demonstration of the Open School project by using a specially constructed LTSP thin client environment.

On 17 November, IBM and COSS organised a briefing in connection with the publication. The event generated a good amount of visibility even in regional newspapers.

Open School wiki: <http://avoinkoulu.coss.fi>

Open School demo: <http://www.avoinkoulu.fi>

JHS 169: Using Open Source Software in Public Administration

COSS acted as a coordinator for the recommendation by JHS, "Using Open Source Software in Public Administration", published in February. The Advisory Committee on Information Management in Public Administration, JUHTA, accepted the recommendation that guides organisations in open source software acquisition and implementation.

The recommendations of the JHS system concern the information management of public and municipal administration, but the open source recommendation offers relevant information to anyone requiring basic knowledge on open source issues — even businesses.

<http://www.coss.fi/en/use-open-source-software-public-administration>

VALO-CD

The VALO-CD project publishes Finnish-language open source software for Microsoft Windows. The project aims to distribute easy-to-use, free, compatible, safe vendor-independent software and thereby promote open source awareness and usage. VALO-CD is aimed at both ordinary users and businesses.

COSS has supported the VALO-CD project through marketing and participation in the planning

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of the project.

<http://www.valo-cd.fi/english>

Training and Consultation

COSS carried out consultation and organised customised training on open source issues. The training discussed the basics of the open source model, licensing and business. Consultation discussed licensing, existing open source solutions and the Finnish parties supporting them.

Licence Helpdesk

COSS offers its members free-of-charge consultation concerning individual licensing questions. There were approximately 20 contacts, for instance, regarding the inheritance of the GPL licence and publishing a product with an open source licence.

Research

COSS financially supported the two-year research project by the Helsinki University of Technology, which researches what makes software companies grow or not grow.

Public Sector

In 2009, COSS greatly focused on activating public administration. COSS has been present at several events for the representatives of public administration. Furthermore, COSS has directly contacted ministries and the governments of cities and municipalities, and collaborated with the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities nearly on a weekly basis.

Internationally, COSS acted as an expert sent by the Ministry of Finance in the OSOR and ODEF workgroups of the IDABC project by the EU.

International Networks and Collaboration

COSS operates in several international networks, such as OpenNordic, the centre of expertise network of IDABC's Open Source Observatory, OBOOE (Open Source Business Organisations of Europe) and FOSSBazaar.

COSS has strengthened its collaboration with its German sister organisation, Linux Solutions Group (LiSoG). In November, a match making event for Finnish and German businesses and a workshop meeting between COSS and LiSoG were organised in Tampere. COSS and LiSoG decided to continue their collaboration, which had started well.

International collaboration was marked by the successful application for the Akademy conference aimed at KDE e.V. In early 2009, COSS lobbied the GNOME and KDE Linux desktop communities for bringing a mutual GUADEC and Akademy conference to Finland. However, the

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communities decided to decentralise the conferences for 2010. COSS had already been preparing a strategic decision to offer the conference location to KDE in case of decentralisation. This was centrally affected by the local sponsorship promised by Nokia.

COSS International Representation in 2009:

- February: Training and Consultation Trip, Kimberley, South Africa
- March: WebhostingDay Conference, Brühl, Germany
- July: DesktopSummit Conference, Las Palmas, Spain
- October: OpenWorldForum Conference (in connection with an EU meeting), Paris, France
- November: FSCONS Conference, Göteborg, Sweden
- December: Open Source, eGovernment and Large Organisations Seminar, Athens, Greece