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Which firms participate in open source software development? A study using data from Debian

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Which firms participate in open source software development? A study using data from Debian

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1. Introduction⁴

This paper is currently about facts rather than hypotheses. We are curious to understand which firms participate in Free/Libre/Open Source Software⁵ development, and from which sectors they come, by size, region, and industry. To this end, we collected a dataset based on all the signed code in the five versions of Debian from 2.0 to 3.1 (aka hamm, sarge, woody, potato, and slink), which were released during the years 1998-2005. The data included the name of the code contributor (committer⁶), from which we identified the type of contributor (firm, individual, foundation, etc.). Approximately 1000 firms worldwide contributed to at least one of the five versions. To the data on firm contributions, we added information from Hoovers on the size, region, and industry distribution of firms worldwide. The latter data allow us to present our results on firm participation as probabilities of participation. That is, we can ask questions such as “do SMEs participate more or less given their share in the industry or in the economy?”

The raw Debian data from which our data come consists of the names and version numbers of projects, the lines of code contributed by each entity that signed code in those projects, and

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⁴ This is a very preliminary draft prepared for the Druid Fundamental on Open Source, to be held in Copenhagen, June 17, 2008. We would like to acknowledge the work done with collecting the raw data by the Libre Software Research Group at Rey Juan Carlos Carlos University on which this paper builds and from which we have benefitted greatly. The third author thanks the Centre for Advanced Studies, Oslo, Norway for hospitality while this draft was being written.

⁵ In this paper we refer to the single phenomenon known by the various terms “libre software”, “free software” and “open source software” as Free/Libre/Open Source Software (or FLOSS).

⁶ Anyone can see the source code of FLOSS software, but a smaller group is allowed to modify the code. A committer is someone that belongs to the group allowed to make changes to the code.

indications of situations where a code contribution serves for more than one project. Contributors can be individuals, firms, university groups, or various kinds of open source coalitions. We focus in this paper on the firms, who account for about 15-20 per cent of contributions. We also give some overall statistics on the other entities' contributions in order to place the firms in context.

The paper is organized as follows: we begin with a description of Debian and the projects it contains. This is followed by a discussion of how the data were constructed and an overview of the contributor shares in each Debian version. Section 4 contains the heart of our analysis, a detailed look at the types of firms contribution to Debian, and the pattern of their contributions. Section 5 concludes.

2. The Debian open source database

The following brief description of the Debian repository comes from the Debian website:⁷

“The Debian Project is an association of individuals who have made common cause to create a free operating system. This operating system that we have created is called Debian GNU/Linux, or simply Debian for short.

An operating system is the set of basic programs and utilities that make your computer run. At the core of an operating system is the kernel. The kernel is the most fundamental program on the computer and does all the basic housekeeping and lets you start other programs.

..... Debian GNU/Linux provides more than a pure OS: it comes with over 18733 packages, precompiled software bundled up in a nice format for easy installation on your machine.

The Debian distribution is a widely used Linux distribution, and it is also the largest distribution of FLOSS software in terms of number of packages and lines of code (Amor et. al. 2005). Debian is a

⁷ www.debian.org, accessed March 2008.

general purpose distribution, and was one of the first Linux distributions when it was released to the public in 1993.⁸ Debian supports a larger number of hardware platforms than any other distributions; including Intel x86, ARM, PPC, Sparc32 and Alpha. Debian is also recognized to be a stable and mature distribution, and many other distributions, such as Ubuntu and Knoppix, are based on Debian.⁹

In principle anyone can integrate and install their own selection of open source software. However, to make it all work seamlessly together with respect to the issues of stability, robustness and security (or simply to make it work at all!), has led to a preference for installing and using a distribution where all this has already been done. Most 'normal users' do not have special needs, nor the necessary technical skill to compile their own distribution. Thus Debian provides a good representation of general purpose open source software, which is the scope of this study. It does not represent embedded software or specialized software as such, since this type of software is typically not integrated into a general purpose distribution. There do exist other distributions with a narrower scope, such as Red Hat Enterprise Linux, which is targeted at business work stations, servers, and mainframe computers. However, this distribution has a monetary cost, as compared to Debian which can be downloaded freely from the Internet.

Debian is collated, quality checked and maintained by the Debian Project, currently run by 1290 individuals.¹⁰ The international team adapt and package everything into one distribution, develop tools specific for Debian, and provide and maintain all the infrastructure that makes the Debian distribution possible. Debian includes the GNU/Linux operating system and a majority of all stable FLOSS applications and tools, amounting to close to 250 million lines of source code. The individual packages range a lot in size and scope, from small drivers, to the largest and better known packages such as the following:

- openoffice.org – office application suite
- `kernel-source-2.6.8` – the stable kernel at the heart of the distribution

⁸ For a comparison of Linux distributions, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_Linux_distributions

⁹ See List of Linux distributions http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Linux_distributions

¹⁰ The data has been retrieved from the Debian Developers Database 9 May 2008, available at: <http://db.debian.org/>

- mozilla (firefox) – a web browser
- gcc-3.4 – compiler collection
- xfree86 – An X window implementation, including graphics server and basic programs.
- gimp – Image manipulation program

The composition of a distribution changes over time, sometimes multiple versions of the same package is included, and after a while old packages which were included in an earlier release may be removed and not supported anymore. Thus, the number of lines of code (SLOC, or source lines of code) is a stock measure of the total lines of code in a given release. Further, code is often re-used in different packages in the same release, which is also part of the whole idea of open source. However, if the code is written once, and used in ten different files, for some of the analysis it is useful to count this only once, since the effort of writing it is incurred only once. Therefore, it is useful to look at SLOC counts that have been adjusted for code re-use.

The data on Debian used in this paper was collected by a research group at Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Spain. For the methodology and more detail on how the raw data was collected, see Amor et al. (2005a), Amor et al (2005b), or refer to their website which is dedicated to collecting information on Debian releases.¹¹ It is also important to note that the methodology used in this paper for determining whether a contributor is a firm does not simply identify them as e-mail addresses ending on *.com*, because this is not a reliable measure for the identification of commercial actors.¹²

3. Contributors to Debian

The software packages included in any given Debian distribution are written and contributed by a variety of actors. The contributions have been grouped into six categories: individual authors, firms, foundations, development groups, universities and unknown. Only 1.6% of the code is on average unsigned, meaning most of the code can be traced back to who contributed the code. The incentives for signing code are well known, including recognition of work and improved job opportunities

¹¹ The website <http://libresoft.dat.escet.urjc.es/debian-counting/> collects results and research related to the counting of Debian code.

¹² For example, it is impossible to distinguish whether an e-mail address ending with gmail.com actually is a contribution from an employee at Google, or from an individual who has an account there.

amongst others. It is also important for firms to be recognized for their work, build a reputation, and interact with the community. A firm would also be interested in claiming ownership of their copyrights, even though they choose to license it under an open source licence. If a firm spends time and effort to contribute, it makes sense for them to make sure their efforts are being recognized (Harhoff et al. 2004). Some firms even have specified guidelines and policies for the employees who work on FLOSS as part of their job, and require signing of the code so that it is attributed to the company.

Figure 1 shows the growth in the size of Debian releases over time, both adjusted and not adjusted for code reuse. Note that the time between releases in the beginning is shorter, around one year, while later it is around three years. This is a general trend observed in any software project; as the project grows and matures the time interval between releases increases. Secondly, the overall growth of the code, within the time span of the data, appears to exhibit linear growth in all the code, while possibly a bit more exponential growth rate when adjusting for code re-use.

Table 1 contains summary statistics for the five Debian versions considered in this paper, versions 2.0, 2.1, 2.2, 3.0, and 3.1. The top panel shows the total lines of code in each release (SLOC), both raw and adjusted for code re-use, along with the shares contributed by firms. The bottom panel shows all the other contributors along with the firms: the largest group are individuals, who contribute over half the code in each release. Firms are second, and they are followed by universities, various open source consortia, and foundations. The share of the contributions attributed to firms is increasing with time, and at a faster rate when adjusting for code re-use, rising from 14 per cent for version 2.0 to 19 per cent for version 3.1.¹³

Figure 2 shows the distribution of code contribution by individuals, firms, universities, and other groups visually. The main changes are the growing role of companies and “foundations” and the shrinking role of universities and development groups, but overall share are relatively stable between 1998 and 2005.

¹³ For about two per cent of the SLOC, we were unable to clearly identify the type of contributor and those are shown as “unknown” in the table. This two per cent is in addition to the 1.6 per cent of unsigned code, for a total of 3.6 per cent of code whose contributor type is unknown.

Figure 3 displays the rate of code reuse within the various classifications of contributors, where code re-use is defined as follows:

$$1 - \frac{SLOC_nondbl}{SLOC_total} \quad (0.1)$$

Re-use by companies is consistently lower than re-use by individuals, and re-use by foundations consistently much higher. This could mean that the code contributed by firms is of a less general purpose nature than what foundations supply. As an example, we found a number of cases where a hardware firm commits the drivers for their hardware. On the other hand, this could also mean that firms make more original contributions or write new code, whereas individuals are more likely to rewrite or use what is already there.

Notice that the unknown and unsigned part of the code has a very high degree of reuse, most likely due to the fact that some basic files have been duplicated and included in many packages. This is further confirmed when investigating the ratio of duplicate files. Therefore the omission of unknown and unsigned lines of code from our analysis does not cause any concern.

Our firm data is thus a restricted subset of the total data, and the firms are operating and interacting in an environment with other actors, other firms and possibly competitors. The further analysis focuses on the firms, since we are trying to understand the firm involvement and activity. It is anyway important to keep in mind that the firms are operating in a more diverse overall environment. We also compared the geographic distribution of project leaders with the geographic distribution of contributing firms and found important differences; this discussion is deferred until later in the paper, after the more detailed description of the firm data.

4. Classifying firms contributing to Debian

The goal of this project was to collect information on the size, location, and sector of the firms that contribute to Debian, starting with only their names (which sometimes give a suggestion of their location as well). In the case of public firms, we were also able to collect short time series of their accounting information such as profits, market value, and so forth. As sources for these data, we used the Hoovers database, Beuro van Dijk's Amadeus database, and the Compustat S&P annual

industrial file.^{14,15} Needless to say, the collection of these data was the most time-consuming part of the project.

The firms identified in Debian corresponded to 1132 unique stem names, of which about 700 firms were successfully matched with the Hoovers database.¹⁶ The procedure for matching the firms were as follows: The firm names identified in Debian was manually searched in the online Hoovers database. If there were multiple entries with any given firm name, or it was at all unclear whether it was a correct match, additional information was sought from the source code, and the firms were searched on the web using Google. In most cases, we were able to identify the firm uniquely; the remainder were tagged as unknown.

The various entries in Hoovers contain different amount/depth of information, depending on the size of the firms/availability and the sources from which Hoovers compiles the data. The entries are categorized as comprehensive, in-depth, and basic; most of the records in the database are in-depth. Comprehensive means that extra financial information is available, which was the case for about 200-300 of the matched firms, typically the larger firms. For North America only there were also some firms with only basic information that was not downloadable, which meant they were very small private (micro) firms. Of approximately 15.5 million North American records, only 1.5 million were downloadable, whereas for Europe, the total number of records available was 1.2 million, all downloadable. Some North American firms were matched to the non-downloadable data, and 35 European firms were matched with Amadeus but not with Hoovers. Overall this means some caution is necessary when analyzing the micro firms in the sample.

The above procedure matched approximately half of the firms with Hoovers and some European micro firms with Amadeus. We then searched the internet using Google for information on the

¹⁴ The Amadeus database contains information on approximately 8 million European firms, including a number of small firms.

¹⁵ The Hoovers database is a proprietary database containing information on firms of all sizes worldwide, drawn from a variety of sources, including public accounting records and credit-rating agencies. It is available online at <http://www.hoovers.com/>

¹⁶ A stem name is the name of the company standardized and without various tags such as corp, ltd, gmbh, etc.

remaining unmatched firms, about 500 in total. The source code was sometimes consulted for additional clues and information, and with thorough searching we managed to classify most of the firms and to re-categorized about 100 of the entries as individuals, development groups, or foundations. This left only 22 contributors (less than one per cent) unclassified. Considerable amounts of time were spent cross-checking to ensure that the match was correct, as when matching the firms with Hoovers. By examing the firms' websites using Google, we were able to classify the firms by employment category, industry, and country, and to establish whether a firm had gone out of business. Very occasionally the web-site indicated the exact number of employees, and sometimes their NAICS code. Further, it was relatively easy to recognize whether a firm was large or micro. The most difficult part was to distinguish between small and medium sized firms, and in some instances between micro and small.

The resulting data consist of 983 firms, for 937 of which we have identified the region, industry, and size class.¹⁷ Unfortunately, due to the way the data have been collected, we are not able to use the EU definition for size categories¹⁸ but instead have used the following:

Number of Employees	Firm size category
< 10	Micro
10 to 19	Small (1)
21 to 100	Small (2)
101 to 500	Medium
> 500	Large

However, because in many cases our size coding was fairly approximate (based on incomplete information from a website), the most reliable category is probably coarser: micro/SME/large.

We used the following list of industry categories, of which only the first five make significant contributions to open source:¹⁹

¹⁷ 41 firms are missing size, 18 are missing sector, and 15 are missing region.

¹⁸ SME definition overview available at http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/sme_definition/index_en.htm

Software
 Electrical equipment
 Computers
 Telecommunications
 Information
 Wholesale and retail trade
 Other services
 Telecommunications
 Business & engineering services
 Other mfg
 FIRE
 Utilities

Finally, we collapsed the data on geographic (country) location of the firm into six geographical regions: Africa and the Middle East, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America, and Oceania (Australia and New Zealand).

5. The firm data

As discussed above, the top panel of Table 1 shows the total lines of code in each version of Debian, the amount after adjusting for code re-use, and the share of each contributed by firms, as identified by us from the signature/copyright notices in the code. Table 2 shows the number of firms contributing to each version, and the size of their contributions. In general, the average, median, and maximum size of the contributions has been increasing over time. The single largest contribution was **open office 1.1.3**, made by Sun Microsystems (3,394,917 lines of code adjusted for re-use, to **sarge**) and the next largest contribution was **mozilla M18**, from Netscape Communications (1,567,644 lines of code adjusted for re-use, to **potato**).²⁰ The difference between the mean size of a contribution and the median size shows that the distribution of contributions is

¹⁹ See Table A1 in Appendix A for a list of the SIC and NAICS codes that define these sectors.

²⁰ It may seem odd that this contribution did not appear in later versions; however, it was replaced by `mozilla_firefox` in **sarge**, which was a somewhat smaller set of code.

very skew. Figure 4 shows that the distribution of the logarithm of contribution size is approximately normal, which accounts for the skewness.²¹

Tables 3a and 3b look at the relationship between firms and package-versions in two ways: Table 3a shows the number of packages that each firm contributes to and Table 3b shows a distribution of the number of firms contributing to each package. Both distributions are similarly skew in various ways: one third of the firms contribute to only one package and 14 contribute to more than 100. However, these 14 account for 44 per cent of the code contributed. They include a number of very large North American firms, such as Sun, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Intel, etc. Details are given in Table A2 of Appendix A.

In Table 3b, we can see that 59 per cent of the package-versions have only one firm contributing, whereas 10 package-versions have more than 100 firms contributing. All of these are some version of the operating system kernel. Note that the median amount of non-duplicated code contributed by firms to these 10 package-versions is zero, suggesting that many of them are contributing a small piece of standardized code in several places, probably code related to their own products.

Next we turn to the question of which type of firm is likely to contribute to Debian. To address this question, we collected data on the worldwide universe of firms contained in the Hoovers database. The process of collecting these data is described in Appendix B. For all these firms, we have information on their geographical location, industry, and size. Tables 4, 5, and 6 present distributions of the population, the firms in our sample (Debian contributors), the number of packages to which they contribute, and the total lines of SLOC. Table 4 presents the size distribution, Table 5 the regional distribution, and Table 6 the industry distribution. Corresponding to these tables are Figures 5, 6, and 7, which give a visual idea of the distributions.

Table 4 and Figure 5 show that although large firms are only about 2 per cent of the population and 20 per cent of our sample, they contribute 65 per cent of the non-duplicate code. This not terribly

²¹ The superimposed curve is a normal distribution with the mean and standard deviation of the underlying data.

surprising result is counterbalanced by the finding that firms with fewer than 10 employees are disproportionately represented in our sample in comparison to SMEs of all sizes.

Table 5 and Figure 6 show the regional distributions of the same variables, along with the regional distribution of the Debian project leaders. The striking thing about these numbers is the relative concentration of project leadership among Europeans, in contrast to the source of the code from firms, which is largely North American. It is quite likely that this reflects the relative strength of US firms in the software sector. In a later section of the paper we try to look at whether European software firms are more likely to contribute, controlling for their far fewer numbers and smaller sizes. We also note that there is effectively no code contribution from Africa and the Middle East and Latin America, and we will therefore drop these regions from the subsequent analysis.

Finally Table 6 and Figure 7 show the industry distributions. Not surprisingly, the population looks entirely different from the sample, being dominated by firms in other manufacturing industries, wholesale and retail trade, business and engineering services, and FIRE (Financial, Insurance, and Real Estate). Only four sectors contribute significant amounts of SLOC to Debian: Software and computing services, Computer hardware, Electrical equipment, and Telecommunications services. Together, these sectors account for over 96 per cent of the code contributed by firms to Debian.

In order to control for variations in size and industry distribution across regions (and therefore different expectations about software production in the various cells), we ran a simple grouped probability regression of the log share of firms on Debian on a set of dummies for region, industry, and size. The regression was the following:

$$\log\left(\frac{\#Debian_{ijk}}{\#Hoover_{ijk}}\right) = \alpha_0 + \sum_{i=2}^R \alpha_i D(\text{region} = i) + \sum_{j=2}^S \beta_j D(\text{sector} = j) + \sum_{k=2}^E \gamma_k D(\text{size} = k) + \varepsilon_{ijk} \quad (2)$$

Where #Debian and #Hoover mean the number of firms in the i th region, j th sector, and k th size class on Debian and Hoovers respectively. The left-out dummy categories were North America, software, and large, which implies that most of the coefficients in the regression should be negative, since this was one of the largest categories. The results of this regression are presented in Table 7. Because the individual cells vary greatly in the number of firms on which they are based, the

disturbance is expected to be very heteroskedastic. Therefore we present both an unweighted regression and weighted regressions, where the weights are the number of Debian firms or the number of Hoovers firms. Either one might be expected to be proportional to the precision with which the dependent variable is measured, and therefore appropriate as a weight.

Table 7 shows that firms in Asia are far less likely to contribute to Debian given their sectoral and size distributions, whereas firms in Europe are about as likely to contribute as North American firms. Given the small sample size, we can say little about Oceania. With the exception of electrical equipment and telecommunications services, all sectors are much less likely to contribute than the software and computing services sector. It is notable that once we control for firm size, the computer hardware sector is much less likely to contribute, which was not true in the raw data. The size results are the least stable across the different weighting schemes, but on the whole large firms are more likely to contribute than small or medium-sized firms.²²

The conclusion from this preliminary investigation is that the contributions are distributed as we might have expected, with the majority coming from large U.S. computer hardware and software firms, and a sizable amount from smaller firms in both the U.S. and Europe. An interesting fact was that North American and European firms had about the same propensity to contribute once we controlled for the differences in size and industry distributions between the two continents.

6. Conclusions

It is far too soon to draw strong conclusions from this work. Rather, we will use this concluding section to discuss some more qualitative things we have learned and to suggest where we are going with these data.

First, some suggestive patterns emerged in our search for these firm on Google, that might indicate subsequent lines of research. We found a number of hardware-producing firms, such as modem manufacturers that had contributed smaller amounts of code, which suggests that they were ensuring that their products would work with Linux installations. We also observed a large number of cases

²² We suspect that some of the instability may be due to our difficulties establishing firm size, especially for non-U.S. firms. A revision of the paper will look more closely at the size question.

where the code had been contributed by a firm which had been merged or acquired around the same time (e.g., Dec, which was acquired by Compaq and then Hewlett-Packard). We do not have exact dates for this sequence at this time, but it seems worth investigating the extent to which firms offload their code to Debian to avoid having to support it in the future. Is this an exit strategy?²³

As to the immediate future, our next step is to use the data we have obtained on non-contributing firms to produce a more nuanced analysis of the firms that choose to participate in open source. In addition, we intend to explore the connectedness of the firms, by looking at which projects they contribute to and who the other contributors to these projects are. If we are able to identify the types of software in a reliable way (kernel, drivers, applications, etc), there are a number of interesting areas that might be explored to give a more complete picture of the commercial portion of the open source software sector.

²³ For an example, see <http://www.eudora.com/> Qualcomm Inc., the creator of Eudora, a successful email package, wanted to exit the software support business and is in the process of creating an open source version that works with mozilla software.

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Figure 1

Contributions to Debian by version release date

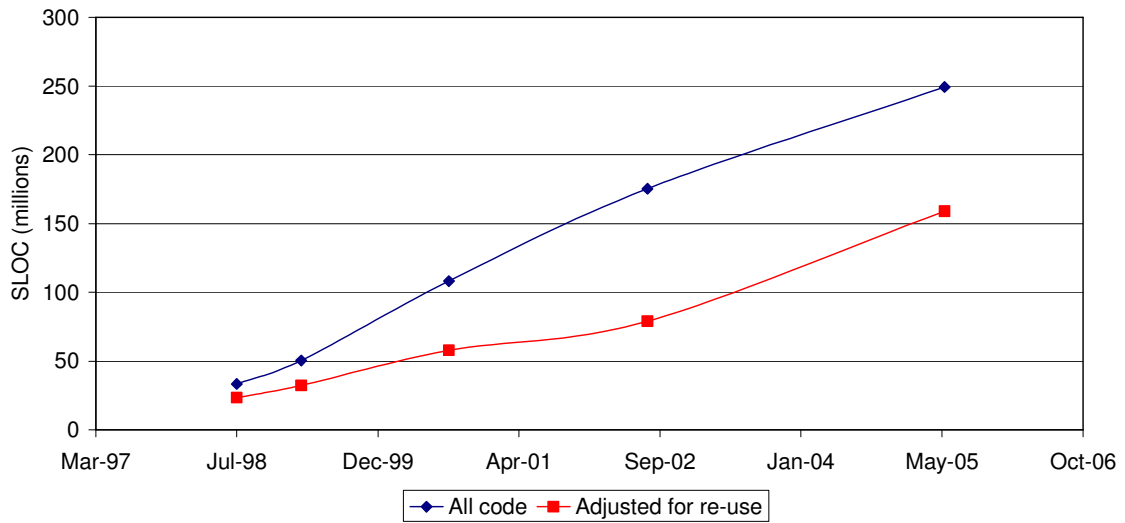


Figure 2

Distribution of code contribution across organization type

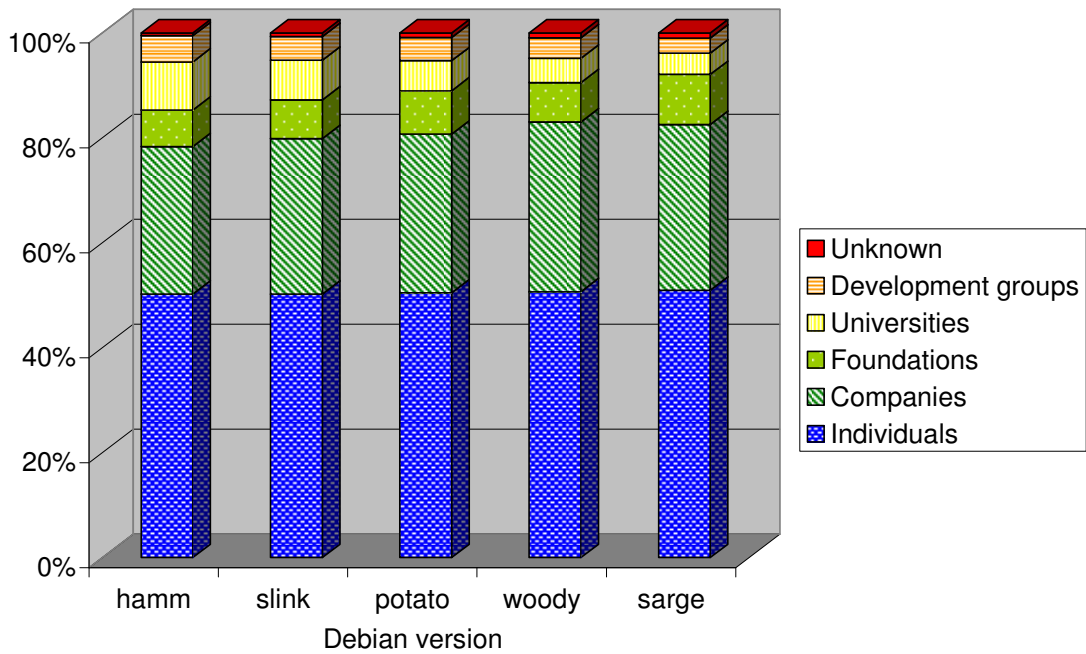


Figure 3

Share of code reuse by type of contributor

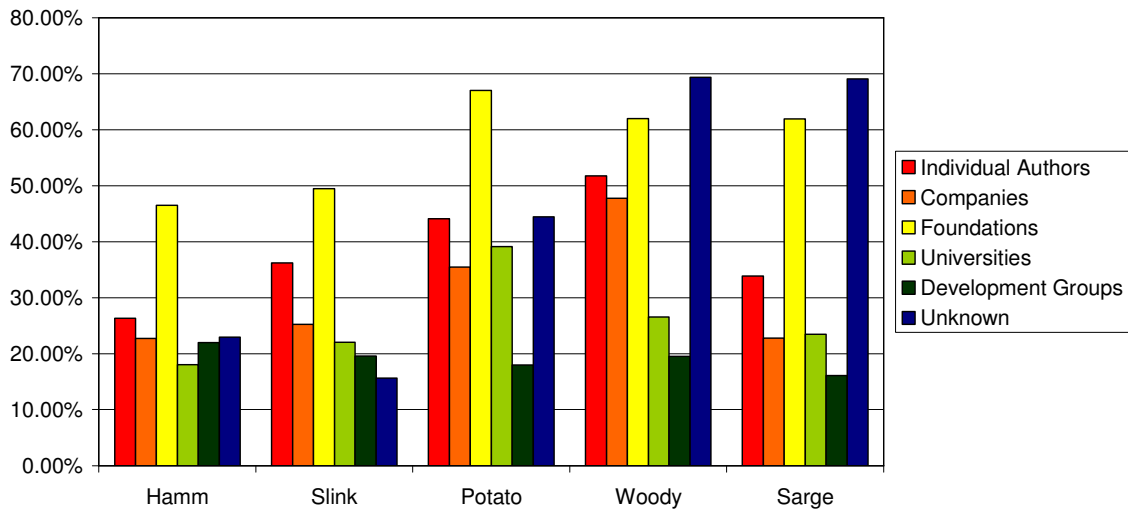


Figure 4

Distribution of the size of each firm-version contribution

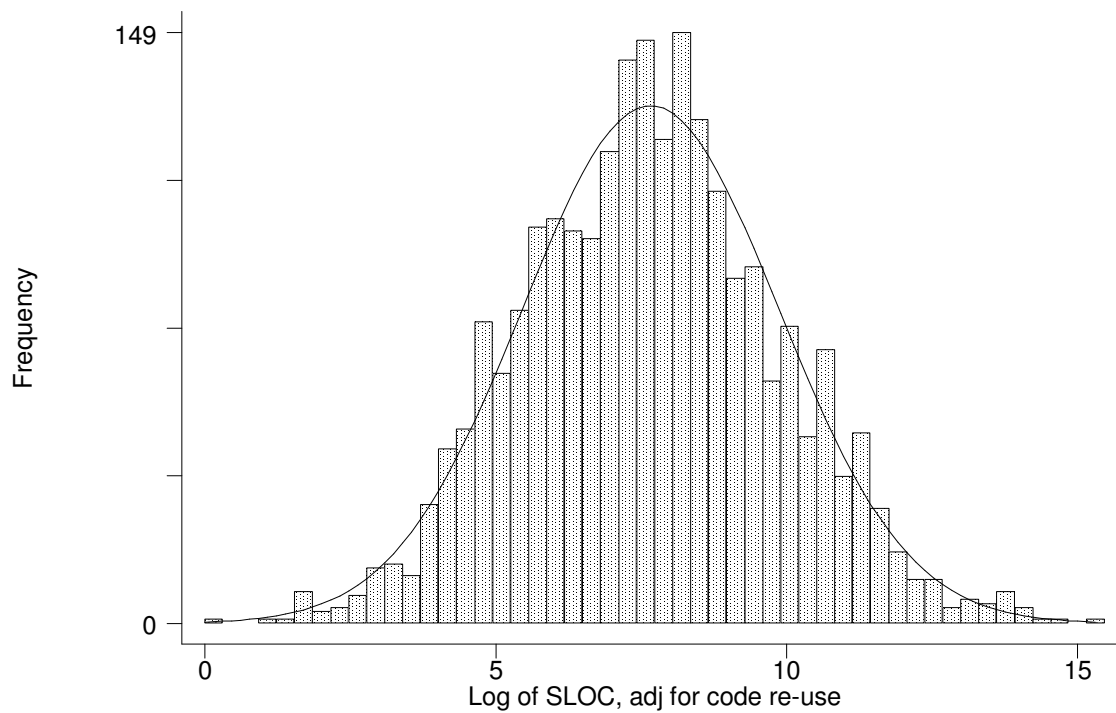


Figure 5

Size distribution of firms and contributions

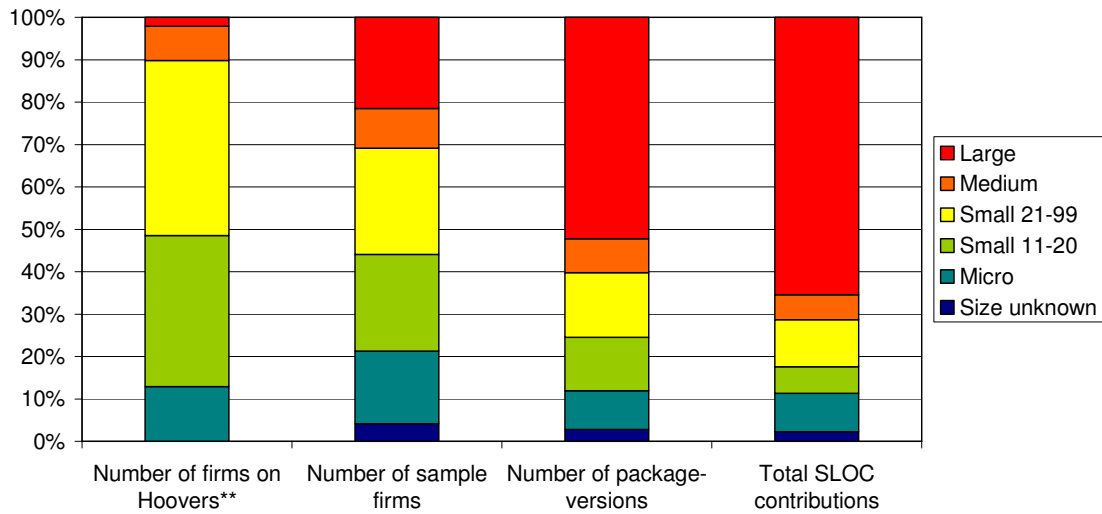


Figure 6

Geographic distribution of firms and contributions

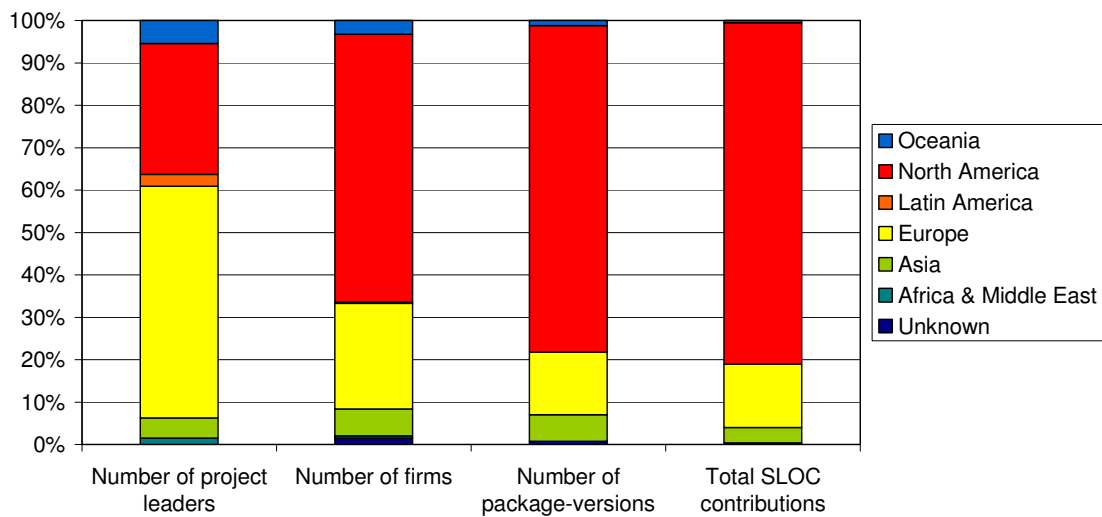
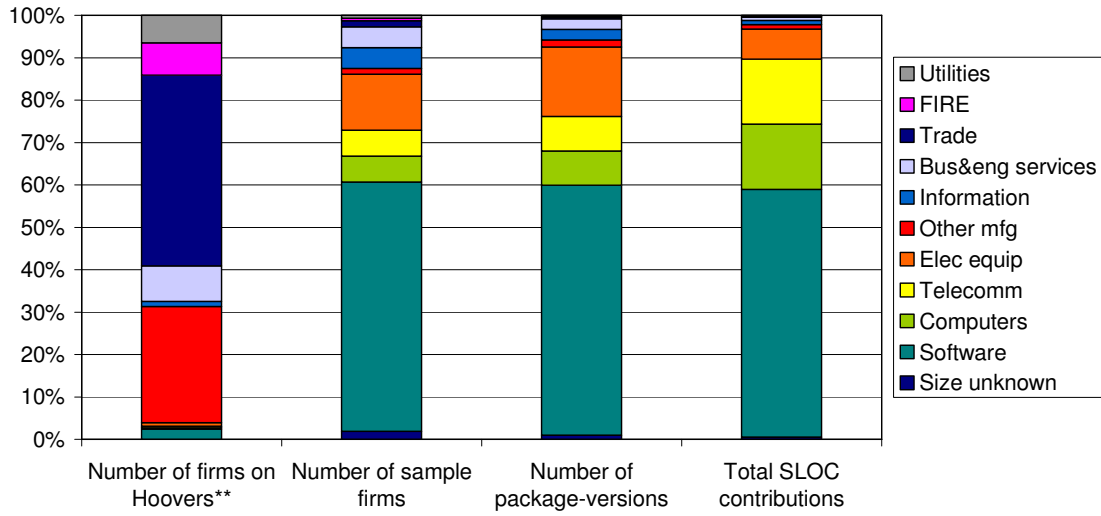


Figure 7

Industry distribution of firms and contributions



Appendix A: Additional tables

Table A1

Various Sectoral Decompositions					
Sector description	US SIC (Hoovers)	Number of		Number of firms	Total number*
		firms	US NAICS (Hoovers)		
Software incl. services	737x	358	511xxx, 5415xx	350	570
Electrical equipment	36xx and 38xx	120	335xxx	7	128
Computers	357x	86	334xxx	186	74
Wholesale and retail trade	5xxx	36	42, 44, and 45	35	14
	7000-9999 not used				
Other services elsewhere		35	55,56, 71 to 99	20	0
Telecommunications	48xx	31	517xxx	24	59
Business & engineering services	87xx	20	54xxxx ex 5415xx	22	48
	1000-3999 not used				
Other mfg elsewhere		14	31,32,33 ex 334, 335	25	13
FIRE	6xxx	12	52 and 53	11	6
Information	27xx	11	51 ex 511xxx, 517xxx	35	47
Utilities (not telecom)	41xx, 49xx	3	22 and 48	3	6
Total		726		718	965

* This is the number of firms in our sample after hand-classification of the remainder and reclassification of some of the firms based on web information. Recall that 18 observations are missing their sector.

Table A2

Largest firm contributors to Debian

Firm	SLOC (non duplicate)	Number of version-packages	Industry	Region	Size class
By total SLOC					
SUN MICROSYSTEMS	8,847,747	739	Computer hardware	North America	large >499
NETSCAPE COMMUNICATIONS	4,626,637	77	Telecomm services	North America	large >499
HEWLETT PACKARD (incl. DEC)	4,096,353	599	Computer hardware	North America	large >499
IBM	3,508,815	190	SW and comp services	North America	large >499
SILICON GRAPHICS	2,546,502	296	Computer hardware	North America	large >499
RED HAT	1,801,838	267	SW and comp services	North America	large >499
TROLLTECH	1,298,280	84	Computer hardware	Europe	small 20-99
ALADDIN ENTERPRISES	1,108,572	251	SW and comp services	North America	micro <10
SAP	1,078,549	3	SW and comp services	Europe	large >499
AT & T	1,059,226	199	Telecomm services	North America	large >499
MYSQL AB (now part of SUN)	1,004,863	15	SW and comp services	Europe	medium
By number of version-packages					
SUN MICROSYSTEMS	8,847,747	739	Computer hardware	North America	large >499
HEWLETT PACKARD (incl. DEC)	4,096,353	599	Computer hardware	North America	large >499
RSA DATA SECURITY	62,727	367	SW and comp services	North America	
SILICON GRAPHICS	2,546,502	296	Computer hardware	North America	large >499
RED HAT	1,801,838	267	SW and comp services	North America	large >499
ALADDIN ENTERPRISES	1,108,572	251	SW and comp services	North America	micro <10
AT & T	1,059,226	199	Telecomm services	North America	large >499
IBM	3,508,815	190	Computer hardware	North America	large >499
LUCENT TECHNOLOGY	611,113	144	Elec equipment	North America	large >499
INTEL	518,849	114	Elec equipment	North America	large >499
XEROX	762,067	113	Other manufacturing	North America	large >499
APPLE COMPUTER	153,551	113	Computer hardware	North America	large >499
ZOPE	502,794	107	SW and comp services		
SOFTWARE RES ASSOCIATES	220,145	105	SW and comp services	North America	

Appendix B: Collecting the population of firms

In order to compare firms doing open source to other firms within the same industry and region, we needed a stratified sample of non-contributing firms, as well as an overall picture of the population by geographic region, industries and size classes. Obtaining a population was feasible for many of the relevant cells, however, in some instances there were simply too many firms (more than 3000 in a cell) to download all of them. For region-industry-size categories of a manageable size, staying under the 3000 records limit was achieved by refining the number of employees, allowing us to download the reference data for all the sectors we were particularly interested in. For the largest sectors, which were “other services”, “wholesale and retail trade” and “other manufacturing”, we limited the query to firms within the relevant region-sector-size categories that had data on growth rates of the key variables like employment and sales. There is no reason to expect any bias like this, and it was just used as a filter.

Table 1
Contributions to Debian by Release Version

Debian version number	Debian version name	Release date	Total size*		Share contributed by firms	
			All code	Adjusted for code re-use	All code	Adjusted for code re-use
2.0	hamm	24-Jul-98	33.40	23.40	12.45%	13.82%
2.1	slink	9-Mar-99	50.44	32.32	12.64%	14.78%
2.2	potato	14-Aug-00	108.09	57.85	13.60%	16.39%
3.0	woody	19-Jul-02	175.31	78.99	13.01%	15.00%
3.1	sarge	6-Jun-05	249.27	159.06	16.01%	18.69%

Contributions by all types of contributors (adjusted for re-use)*

Debian version number	Individual				Develop- ment Groups		Unknown
	Authors	Companies	Foundations	Universities			
2.0	13.137	3.234	4.274	2.334	0.167	0.254	
2.1	19.032	4.776	4.842	2.905	0.311	0.453	
2.2	34.670	9.479	6.574	5.069	1.046	1.007	
3.0	51.023	11.848	7.295	6.139	2.131	1.473	
3.1	98.146	29.733	12.508	8.893	5.789	3.164	

*In millions of SLOC = source lines of code

Table 2
Trends in Firm contributions to Debian

Version number	Version name	Number of firms	SLOC adjusted for re-use			
			Mean	Median	Min	Max
2.0	hamm	168	19,248	1714	14	804,250
2.1	slink	210	22,741	1722	5	1,129,123
2.2	potato	331	28,636	2065	5	2,651,195
3.0	woody	534	22,188	2439	6	1,258,856
3.1	sarge	903	32,927	2149	1	5,182,003
All		982	27,526	2143	1	5,182,003

Table 3a
Distribution of contributions by package-versions

Number of package- versions	Number of firms	Share	Total SLOC*	Share	Mean SLOC*	Median SLOC*
1	326	33.2%	2,966,964	5.0%	9101	883
2	168	17.1%	2,175,897	3.7%	6476	700
3 to 5	180	18.3%	4,021,080	6.8%	6038	728
6 to 10	107	10.9%	3,437,479	5.8%	4265	521
11 to 20	107	10.9%	5,912,068	10.0%	3849	235
21 to 50	58	5.9%	4,394,125	7.4%	2504	93
51 to 100	22	2.2%	10,361,871	17.5%	6651	317
More than 100	14	1.4%	25,800,299	43.7%	7159	362
All	982	100.0%	59,069,783	100.0%	5579	344

* Adjusted for code re-use

Table 3b
Distribution of contributions by number of firms

Number of firms contributing	Number of package-versions	Share	Total SLOC*	Share	Median SLOC*	Total SLOC**	Share	Median SLOC**
1	2,345	59.0%	12,238,630	13.9%	666	10,231,446	17.3%	433
2	739	18.6%	8,135,053	9.3%	660	6,305,024	10.7%	403
3 to 5	623	15.7%	17,592,958	20.0%	969	12,905,736	21.8%	452
6 to 10	152	3.8%	14,999,898	17.1%	1224	9,747,997	16.5%	537
11 to 20	77	1.9%	16,829,637	19.1%	1616	11,676,434	19.8%	377
21 to 50	21	0.5%	6,660,909	7.6%	1489	3,887,777	6.6%	158
51 to 100	8	0.2%	3,361,779	3.8%	2335	1,727,854	2.9%	160
More than 100	10	0.3%	8,117,196	9.2%	2335	2,587,515	4.4%	0
All	3975		87,936,060		1145	59,069,783		344

* Not adjusted for code re-use

** Adjusted for code re-use

Table 4
Firm size distribution

Employee size class	Number of firms on Hoovers**	Number of sample firms	Number of package-versions	Total SLOC contributions	Share of SLOC contributions
unknown*	0	41	296	1,334,364	2.3%
Micro: <10	359,517	168	964	5,343,285	9.0%
Small: 10-19	992,953	224	1340	3,701,518	6.3%
Small: 20-99	1,149,218	246	1612	6,543,144	11.1%
Medium: 100-499	224,683	92	843	3,491,430	5.9%
Large: >500	57,810	211	5532	38,656,042	65.4%
Total	2,784,181	982	10587	59,069,783	100.0%

* Most of these will be very small, as they were not found on Hoover or in other sources.

** excluding subsidiaries.

Table 5
Firm geographical distribution

Geographic region	Number of project leaders	Number of firms on Hoovers**	Number of sample firms	Number of package-versions	Total SLOC contributions	Share of SLOC contributions
Unknown	0	0	15	78	189612	0.3%
Africa and Middle East	19	40,277	5	4	3,044	0.0%
Asia	62	415,154	62	664	2,148,930	3.6%
Europe	705	770,462	245	1559	8,840,526	15.0%
Latin America	36	410,624	3	4	1,212	0.0%
North America	398	1,045,532	620	8151	47,596,821	80.6%
Oceania	70	102,132	32	127	289,638	0.5%
Total	1290	2,784,181	982	10587	59,069,783	

** excluding subsidiaries.

Table 6
Firm industry distribution

Industry	Number of firms on Hoovers**	Number of sample firms	Number of package- versions	Total SLOC contributions	Share of SLOC contributions
unknown*	0	18	85	250,471	0.4%
SW and computing services	53,065	570	5044	26,508,542	44.9%
Computer hardware	38,588	74	2721	20,663,075	35.0%
Telecomm services	8,156	59	695	6,960,535	11.8%
Elec & electronic eq	17,966	128	1407	3,226,000	5.5%
Other manufacturing	612,458	13	142	473,098	0.8%
Information services	26,295	47	210	454,414	0.8%
Bus & eng services	186,937	48	212	330,562	0.6%
Whlsle & retail trade	1,005,490	14	35	80,919	0.1%
FIRE	168,553	6	18	70,043	0.1%
Utilities -not telecomm	145,108	6	18	52,124	0.1%
Other services	521,565	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	2,784,181	983	10587	59,069,783	100.0%

* Most of these will be very small, as they were not found on Hoover or in other sources.

** excluding subsidiaries.

Table 7
 Predicting the log probability of Debian contributions
 Dep. Var. = log (share of Hoovers's firms contributing to Debian)
 106 observations (cells)

	Unweighted			Weighted*			Weighted**		
	Coeff.	s.e.		Coeff.	s.e.		Coeff.	s.e.	
Asia	-0.98	0.27	***	-1.39	0.28	***	-1.02	0.29	***
Europe	-0.09	0.23		-0.12	0.16		-0.21	0.12	*
Oceania	0.60	0.30	**	0.25	0.38		1.11	0.40	***
Bus & eng services	-3.60	0.35	***	-4.18	0.31	***	-3.81	0.25	***
Computer hardware	-1.78	0.34	***	-1.80	0.27	***	-2.03	0.34	***
Elec & electronic eq	-0.57	0.32	*	-0.34	0.22		-1.05	0.44	**
FIRE	-4.58	0.53	***	-4.66	0.86	***	-5.55	0.30	***
Information services	-1.51	0.34	***	-1.86	0.32	***	-1.79	0.41	***
Other manufacturing	-4.76	0.44	***	-4.96	0.57	***	-5.68	0.26	***
Telecomm services	-0.22	0.33		-0.61	0.30	**	-1.00	0.63	
Utilities -not telecomms	-3.98	0.60	***	-4.28	0.86	***	-4.79	0.40	***
Whlsle & retail trade	-6.15	0.45	***	-7.56	0.56	***	-6.38	0.24	***
Micro	-0.03	0.34		-2.10	0.26	***	-2.13	0.38	***
Small	-2.82	0.24	***	0.46	0.22	**	-2.50	0.35	***
Medium	-1.81	0.29	***	-2.88	0.18	***	-3.62	0.33	***
Intercept	-2.26	0.31	***	-1.73	0.18	***	-1.30	0.41	***
Adjusted R-squared	0.874			0.900			0.945		
Standard error	0.935			0.675			0.475		

The left-out category is a large software firm in North America

* The weights are proportional to the number of contributing firms in each cell, which is presumed to vary as the inverse of the variance of the shares.

* The weights are proportional to the total number of firms in each cell, which is presumed to vary as the inverse of the variance of the shares.