

## Proposal for Workshop at OSS2006

Title: Evaluating the Business Readiness of Open Source Software

### Organizers

Anthony Wasserman (Co-Chair and primary contact)

Professor of Software Engineering Practice, Carnegie Mellon West, Moffett Field,  
CA 94035 USA; email: [tonyw@west.cmu.edu](mailto:tonyw@west.cmu.edu); tel: +1.415.641.1180

Murugan Pal (Co-chair)

Chief Technical Officer, SpikeSource, Inc., 2000 Seaport Blvd., Redwood City,  
CA 94063 USA; email: [mpal@spikesource.com](mailto:mpal@spikesource.com)

Others to be named

### Summary

The goal of this workshop is to explore quantitative and qualitative aspects for evaluating free and open source software, with a focus on helping potential users assess the suitability of selected open source components for adoption and use in their organizations. A starting point is the evaluation framework proposed for the Business Readiness Rating, as described on the community-based site <http://www.openbrr.org>. The BRR framework identifies 12 categories that are frequently used in evaluating open source software, including performance, licensing, support, documentation, scalability, security, quality, usability, and community.

### Target Audience

We are hoping to attract people from several different groups to this workshop:

- 1) researchers working on models and mechanisms for evaluating open source software;
- 2) people with experience in evaluating and adopting open source software into their organizations, particularly in commercial businesses and government
- 3) open source developers and vendors seeking to have their software widely adopted by businesses and government

Based on previous presentations on this topic, we believe that the topic will be of interest to these different groups. Open source software is transforming the software industry, presenting new mechanisms for software delivery and new business models for software companies.

However, many potential users of open source software, particularly in industry, are used to acquiring software from established commercial vendors and have not established programs and policies for acquiring open source software (other than Linux), even when that software is supported by commercial vendors. Evaluation is a key aspect of the acquisition process, so a standard and widely-accepted evaluation framework is needed before companies will adopt and use open source software on a widespread scale.

We think that each of these groups can make a substantial contribution to the evaluation framework. We hope to attract representatives from each group as a basis for identifying a common set of goals and cross-pollinating ideas across the different groups.

#### Planned Workshop Activities

The goal of the workshop is to advance knowledge of open source evaluation techniques in four key areas:

- 1) refining the evaluation model proposed by the community-based Business Readiness Rating project
- 2) collecting and reviewing evaluations of open source components prepared by workshop participants and others
- 3) improving tools for automated collection of data from open source projects as a way to aid in the evaluation process
- 4) identifying functional characteristics of software in specific functional areas, such as content management, database management, etc.

Additional, related, goals are to expand the community of interest around evaluation of open source software, identifying people and groups for such involvement, and creating a research agenda for additional work on evaluation.

We would ask prospective workshop participants to describe their own experiences with open source software and its evaluation, as well as to submit a position paper related to one or more of these key areas. We would expect to produce a workshop proceedings from the accepted papers.

#### Qualifications of the Organizers

The Business Readiness Rating was announced and presented by the Co-Chairs at the O'Reilly Open Source Conferences in Portland, Oregon (USA), and Amsterdam in August and October, 2005. This topic will also be discussed at the forthcoming Open Source Business Conference West ([www.osbc.com](http://www.osbc.com)) in February, 2006.

Professor Wasserman was the General Chairman of a conference titled Adopting and Using Open Source Software, held in the San Francisco Bay Area in September, 2005. The conference program, including presentations and video of the various sessions, may be seen at <http://cosi.west.cmu.edu/conference05/program.htm>

Professor Wasserman has extensive experience as a conference organizer, and has previously served as General Chair for leading technical conferences. He has also served on the program committee for more than 50 conferences, including 10 or more of the International Conference on Software Engineering and the Conference on Advanced Information Systems Engineering.

Mr. Pal is Co-Founder and Chief Technical Officer of SpikeSource, Inc., which provides its clients with an integrated stack of business-ready open source components. In this role, he is a frequent participant in technical conferences and has extensive experience working with companies seeking to deploy open source software components in their organizations.