POLICY ON FOSS CONTRIBUTION FUND - Approved 03.06.14

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to outline the BC Libraries Cooperative's (the "Co- op") policy on a fund to provide ongoing financial contributions to open source projects and the larger open source software ecosystem

Intent

The Co-op has a commitment to Free and Open Source Software (FOSS). Our core service, Sitka, is built on the FOSS application, Evergreen. We contribute back code and resources to this project as much as possible, as well as on other projects whenever feasible.

However, the Co-op absolutely depends on hundreds of other FOSS projects, big and small, for our daily operations. Many of these are critical and yet can be severely under-resourced projects run solely on volunteer time. An example of the impacts of this underfunding is the Heartbleed bug in the OpenSSL library that was publicly revealed in March 2014. This software library, which secured the traffic on hundreds of thousands of websites globally, was supported by three part- time, unfunded volunteers.

The intent of creating an Open Source Contribution Fund is to allow the Coop to support software development and other supporting activities (legal, travel, promotion) of the wider FOSS ecosystem. It is self-interested in that we derive benefit for ourselves and members from a stronger ecosystem and more robust software, and because of the nature of FOSS, it will also end up benefiting the wider community too.

The Co-op:

- Will set aside on an annual basis a set of funds, starting in 2014 with $2500, for the explicit purpose of contributing to the betterment of Free and Open Source Software and its surrounding ecosystem.
- Under the direction of the Executive Director, contribute these funds on an annual basis in one of the forms described below, to recipients based on the criteria below, and report back these contribution to the board and wider membership at the annual meeting.
- In the event that the funds are not used in a given fiscal year, they will not roll over, but will be returned to general operating funds of the Co-op.

Forms of Contribution

Some of the ways in which the funds may be used to improve FOSS include, but are not limited to:

- Donations directly to specific projects, for example Perl Foundation.
- Donations to foundations or other umbrella organizations which aggregate and redistribute resources across multiple FOSS projects and initiatives. Examples are Oregon State University Open Source Lab or Apache Software Foundation.
- Sponsorship of bug bounties to help fix or improve specific software functionality, through sites such as Bountysource.
- Purchasing of support contracts from entities that have an established track record of code contributions to the project they support. An example is: Ubuntu.
- Hire a Coop Student to improve documentation or create an alternative theme or extension on a product which is important to the Co-op or our members, for instance DokuWiki.

Selection Criteria

The following are general criteria which the Co-op will use to guide the choice of funding recipients:

- Is it FOSS actively in use at the Co-op?
- Can the project or organization meaningfully accept and use the donation?
- Is the project receiving funding stable and mature enough that it will continue in the immediately foreseeable future?
- Does the project or organization have fiscal need? Does the project or organization have a commercial arm or business model that already serves to sustain it?