

Eric Raymond, “The Cathedral and the Bazaar”

Read the article at <https://edtechbooks.org/-bGA>

Background

Largely because of this paper, Eric Raymond is one of the leading voices and proponents of open source software. The open source software movement traces its roots back to the free software movement of the 80s and 90s. Rather than being motivated primarily by ideology, as is the case with free software, the open-source community is driven largely by the utilitarian gains that can be realized through participation in open source. As society has moved more towards open source models, Raymond’s thinking and the community he inspired has heavily influenced intellectual property rights and laws as well as cultural norms regarding software production and development. For example, it is widely accepted that The Cathedral and the Bazaar persuaded Netscape to release the source code for its web browser and launch the Mozilla / Firefox project.

Key Points

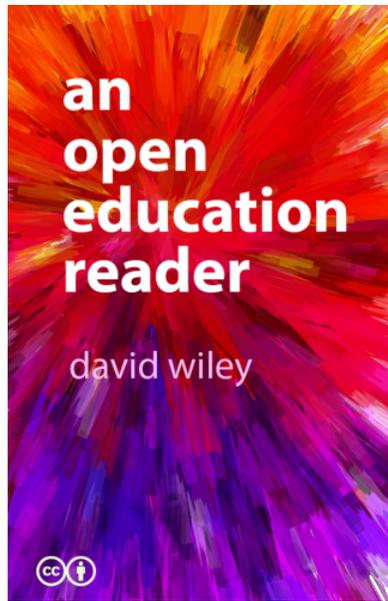
In “The Cathedral and the Bazaar” Eric Raymond provides an outline of 19 lessons he has learned from his participation in the open source community. The thematic thread running through each of these lessons is the superiority of open source and open coding over proprietary software. Raymond offers a strong argument that open source software communities develop software faster, produce software with fewer bugs, are more innovative, and offer a better fit for the end-users than do proprietary software production companies. Raymond also outlines the various preconditions which must exist in order for an open source software community to thrive.

Discussion Questions

1. According to Raymond, what pre-conditions must be met before open source software communities can flourish? Do you agree or disagree?
2. Besides open source software, what other creative works are developed using similar principles to those outlined by Raymond in this article?
3. What other production environments could benefit from incorporating these principles? Why?
4. Which type of production environments would not benefit from the open source software approach? Why?

Additional Resources

<https://edtechbooks.org/-lxb>



Wiley, D. (2016). *An Open Education Reader*. EdTech Books.
<https://edtechbooks.org/openedReader>