OFBizProposal

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This proposal outlines the creation of a new, top-level Open for Business (OFBiz) project within the Apache Software Foundation.

Rationale

The Open For Business Project is an open source enterprise automation software project. By open source enterprise automation we mean: Open Source ERP, Open Source CRM, Open Source E-Business / E-Commerce, Open Source SCM, Open Source MRP, Open Source CMMS/EAM, and so on. It is one of the few apps of this type to be under a "BSD-style" license, and developed by a community, rather than one corporation. The maintainers of OFBiz are interested in joining the Apache Software Foundation for several reasons:

- The legal umbrella. There are no outstanding legal issues with OFBiz, but the protection that Apache affords is valuable to the developers' peace of mind as their project grows. It is a benefit for both contributors and end-users to have a trusted entity involved with this aspect of the software.
- Resolve current potential licensing issues with copyright license assignment and patent license grants that are addressed in the Apache 2.0 license, but not in the MIT license. We had considered making this change independently earlier this year.
- Increase public awareness of OFBiz and of the application of Apache licensing to business aplication level software. Lately the news is full of companies that are using a dual-license (GPL and commercial) model for enterprise software and OFBiz working with Apache opens an opportunity to strengthen what we feel is a much higher value way of doing things for both contributors and users.
- Help the project attract contributors and service providers to attract clients who would feel more comfortable with the licensing coming through a well known and established organization like Apache.

Criteria

Community

OFBiz has striven to foster a diverse community that is open to everyone. It is released under a non-reciprocal license to encourage the maximum possible adoption by all potential users and developers. The OFBiz community encourages suggestions and contributions from any potential user, and more developers have joined as contributors since the project's inception in 2001.

Meritocracy

OFBiz was originally created by David E. Jones and Andy Zeneski in May 2001. The project now has committers and users from around the world. The newer committers of the project joined in subsequent years by initially submitting patches, then having commit privileges for some of the applications, and then privileges over a larger range of applications. The project members understand the importance of letting motivated individuals contribute to the project after they have proven themselves.

Scope of Subprojects

OFBiz is distributed as one large subversion tree, but contains two distinct parts: a framework, and a number of applications built with that framework. At some point in the future, it is conceivable that these become two subprojects, or more, were applications deemed suitable to be developed independently. Additionally, the OFBiz subversion repository contains a "specialized" directory with vertical applications specific to particular businesses. Where these are grown and contributed to, they could also potentially take on a "life of their own", or split off into separate projects that do not ship with the core.

Features

OFBiz is both a set of flexible, extensible applications such as "e-commerce", "order management", "catalog management", "work effort" and so on, designed by engineers with years of experience in the problem domain, as well as a framework that makes it possible to create new applications that exist with others.

Initial Source

OFBiz was developed by David E. Jones and Andy Zeneski.

Resources to be Created

User, Dev, and Announce mailing lists. Copy current subversion code, and create a commits mailing list. Copy JIRA issues into Apache system. Create Wiki?

Avoiding the Warning Signs

Orphaned products:

The OFBiz code is currently used and maintained by the authors and others, who depend on it for their livelihood. Continued development of OFBiz continues on a daily basis, and there are on average 50 new commits to the OFBiz SVN source tree per week. In fact, there is a weekly development summary on this web site: http://ofbiz-new.blogspot.com .

Inexperience with Open Source:

The developers use a number of other open source projects within OFBiz, and are interested in how best to make open source work with their project, both from a community and business perspective.

Homogeneous Developers:

The developers are diverse, both geographically and in terms of their employers:

- David E. Jones and Andy Zeneski are from the United States (Orem, UT and New York City) and are the founders of Undersun Consulting LLC (which is a separate and independent entity from The Open For Business Project and has no ownership or other legal relationship to it, as was planned from the beginning).
- Hans Bakker is from the Netherlands but now lives in Thailand and runs consulting and services companies in both countries.
- Al Byers is from Utah and is an independent consultant.
- Jacopo Cappellato is from Italy and works on manufacturing management and related software for his company, TAU Informatica SrL.
- Si Chen is from Los Angeles and is both an OFBiz user at his company Gracious Style, Inc. and service provider at Open Source Strategies, Inc.

In addition, there are other contributors from France, Germany, Portugal, the UK, US, Canada, Australia, India, Japan, China, and various other countries.

Many contributors come from a software background, but OFBiz has also attracted many people from business and other backgrounds that are somewhat technical and have learned enough of the technology to contribute significantly to the project.

Reliance on Salaried Developers:

There is a good balance of developers in the OFBiz community today. Many of the developers are independents who rely on OFBiz for their consulting work, while others work at end user organizations for whom OFBiz is a core part of the technology mix.

No Ties to other Apache Products:

Many Apache products are used within OFBiz, including Tomcat, Derby, Xerces, Jakarta commons, Lucene, Xalan, ORO, Log4j. Also, the proprietary bug tracking tool used at the ASF, JIRA, is based on technology from OFBiz.

A Fascination with the Apache Brand:

The developers of OFBiz have been quite successful on their own and could continue on that path with no problems at all. They are interested in joining the ASF in order to increase their contacts and visibility in the open source world.

Committers

- David E. Jones
- Andy Zeneski
- Si Chen
- Al Byers
- Jacopo Cappellato
- Hans Bakker

Proposed Apache Sponsor

Incubator PMC

Champions

- David N. Welton <davidw@apache.org>
- Yoav Shapira <yoavs@apache.org>
- J Aaron Farr <farra@apache.org>