IBM Digital Business Group

Developer & Open Source Community as a Competitive Advantage

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If we hold on to our past for too long, we will not be able to let go and realize the value of our future.

The Importance of Developers

Just how much influence do developers really have?

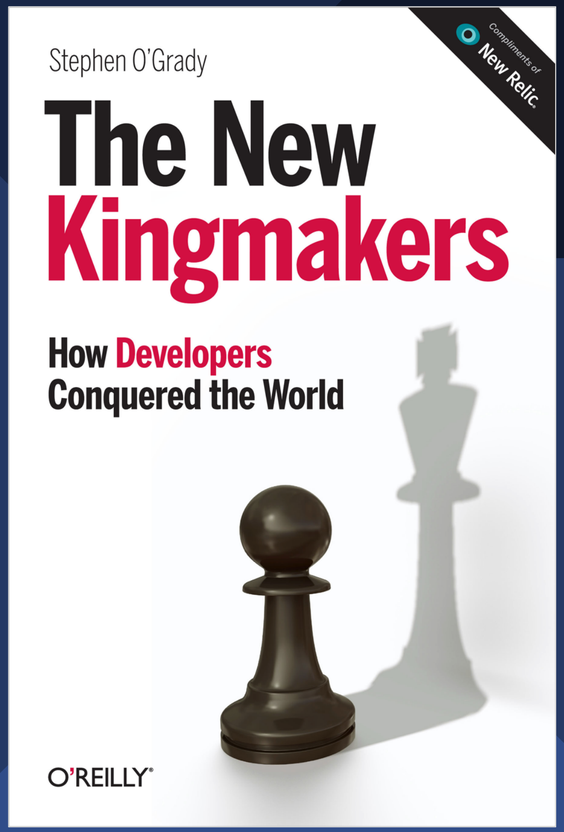
The New Kingmakers

de·vel·op·er

/dəˈveləpər/

An individual that builds and creates software and applications.

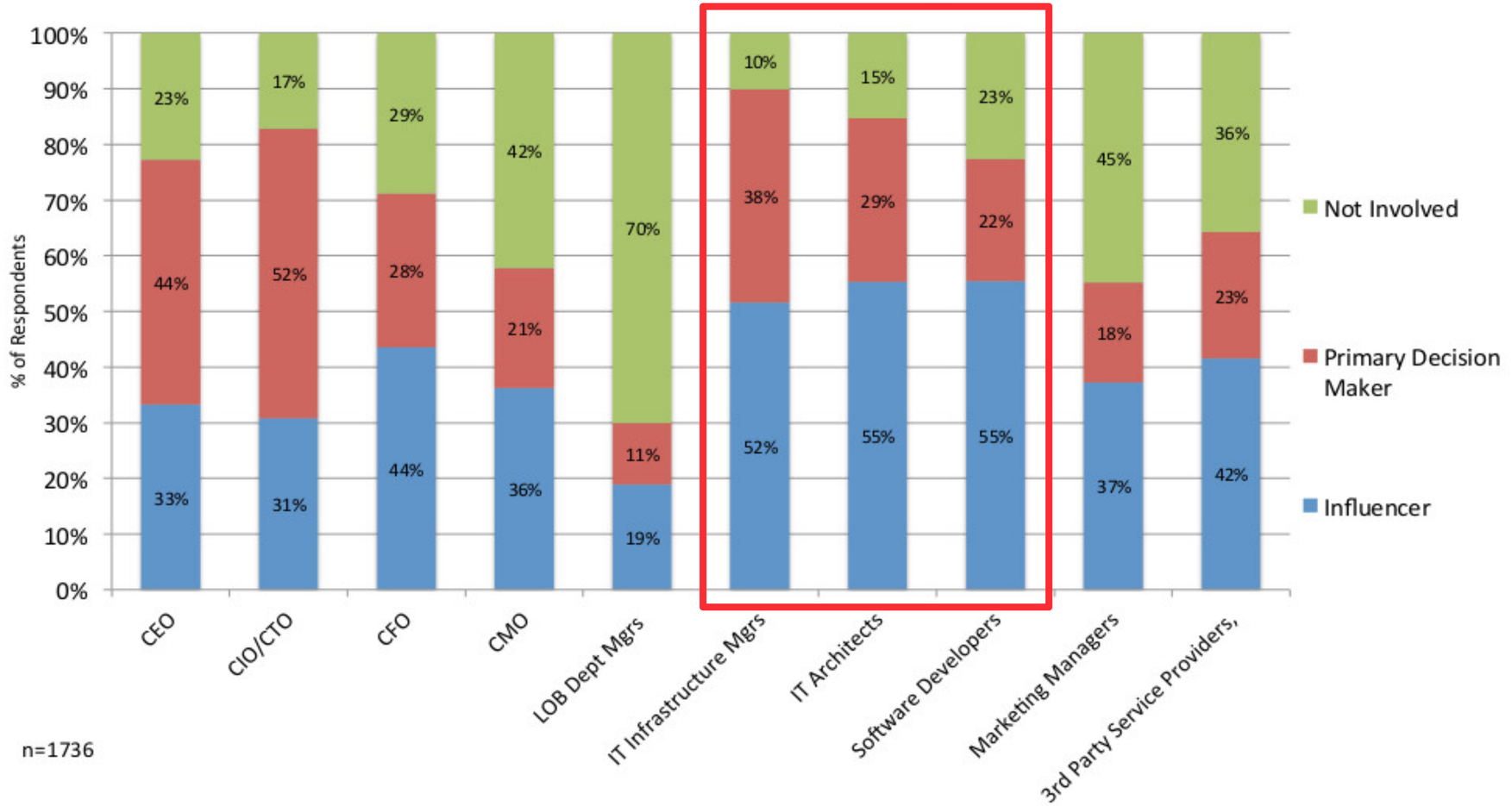
“Developers are the most-important, most-valuable constituency in business today, regardless of industry. Technologists [...] are no longer content to be mere stage players. They’re taking an active hand at direction. That genie is out of the bottle, and will not be returned to it.”



Ms. Ginni Rometty, Chairman & CEO, IBM

"In the last 2 years developers physically making purchasing decisions have doubled."

Stakeholder Decision Making Authority



D9. When evaluating service providers for hosting and cloud services, describe the level of decision making authority each of the following stakeholders has at your organization. Think about the most significant projects or investments.

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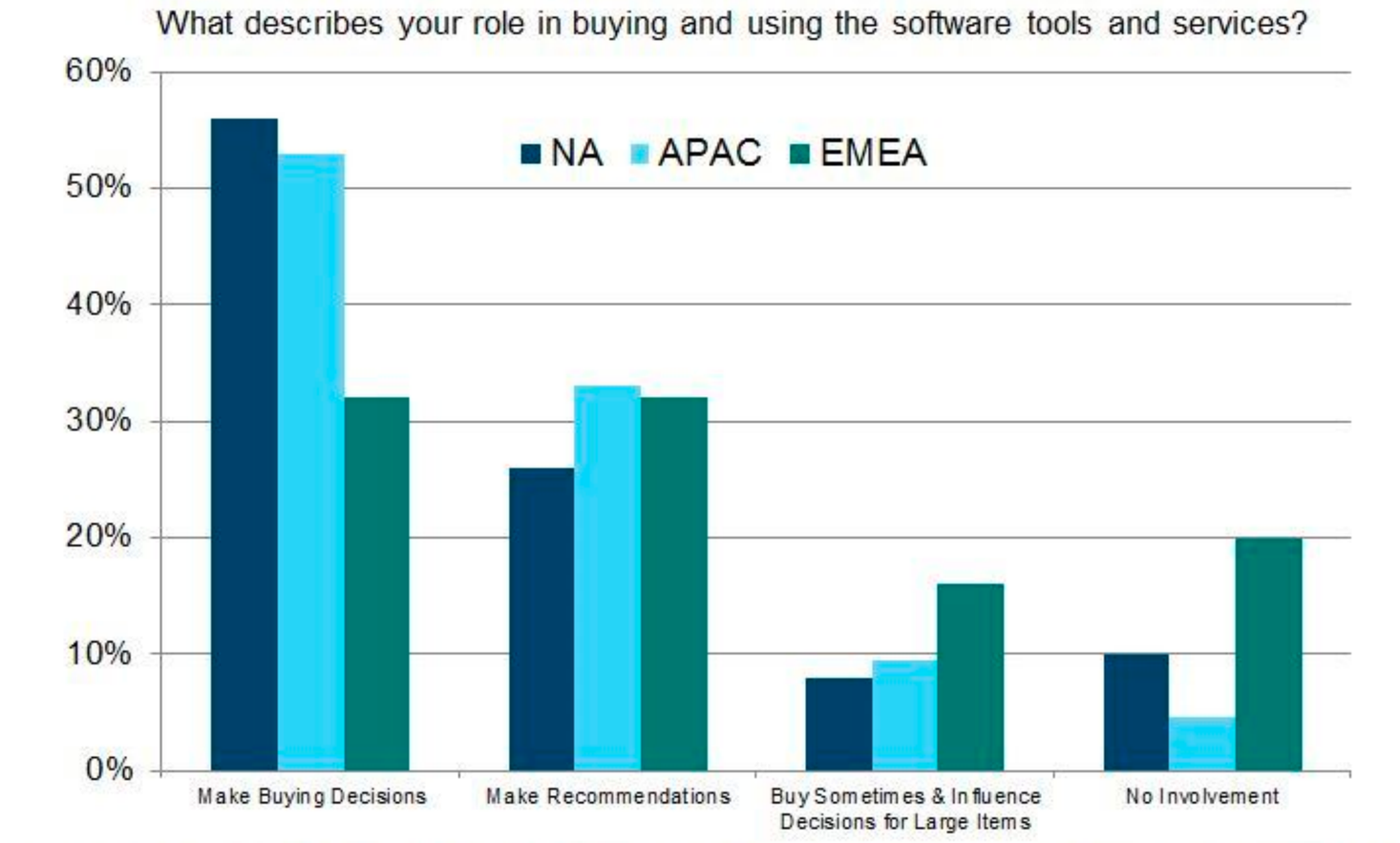
Once relegated to influencer-only roles, developers now have real buying power



Source: Evans Data Corporation, NA Development Survey Vol 1, 2015; APAC Development Survey Vol 1, 2015; EMEA Development Survey Vol 1, 2015 (June 2015

Source: MD&I, Developers Have Influence and Now Buying Power Too, June 2015

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There is a symbiotic relationship between developers and open source technology

What is Open Source?

It is a brilliant distribution model to increase adoption and awareness

It is a great facilitator of collaboration

It is not a business model

Why are Open Source Communities Important to Developers?

- It’s a path to achieve something greater.
- By working on a free and open source software, a developer gets the chance to collaborate with fellow developers spread across the world.
- Collaborating with an army of developers is the best way to do things and tell the world about their ideas.
- Enables developers to develop lots of connections, making more friends in the industry.
- Developers also feel that it’s fair to contribute back to the tech world and work to make this world a better and smarter place.
- Peer review and acclaim is important, **to build software that is admired by their peers**. Highly prized factors are clean design, reliability and maintainability, with adherence to standards and shared community values preeminent.

Open Source Community Benefits to a Business

A successful and thriving open source community and philosophy:

- Project (internal or external) becomes open and no single person controls it and uses the same for personal benefit.
- A thriving open source community attracts very bright, motivated and disciplined developers, which becomes a great talent pool for recruitment.
- Increases awareness of your product offering without expensive go-to-market investments.
- Users of the product will often discover and correct defects themselves. If no commercial entity benefits from that work, the motivation to do so for the common good is **much higher**.
- Auditability – open source code makes claims for qualities of security and adherence to standards simple.
- Can be used as an offensive or defensive business tool
- Clients are increasingly demanding open source as part of your product portfolio

Who Controls Open Source

- There are two types of Open Source Organizations – Commercial and Community
- Commercial Open Source projects are run by a benevolent dictator
- Community Open Source projects are run as Meritocracies
- More and more projects are supported by paid open source developers with relatively small groups making up the majority of contributions.

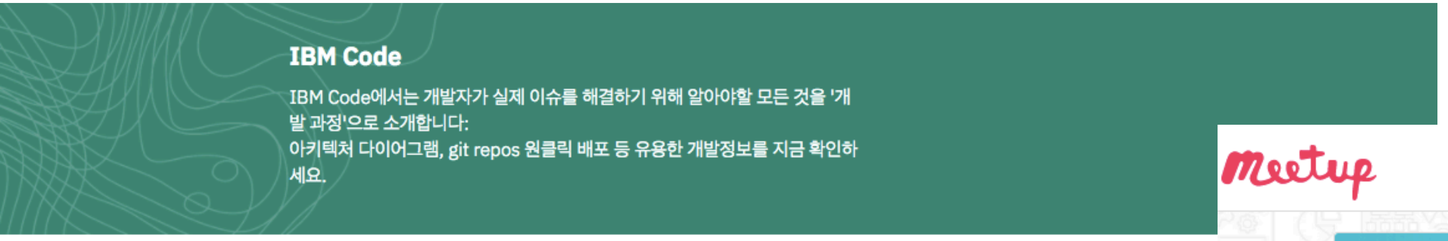
"OpenStack, as many other FOSS projects, has an uneven contribution pattern where a small group of developers has authored a major part of the project. In summary, 80% of the commits have been authored by slightly less than 8% of the authors, while 90% of the commits correspond to about 17% of all the authors.... The OpenStack Foundation estimates that around 250 developers work professionally in the project."

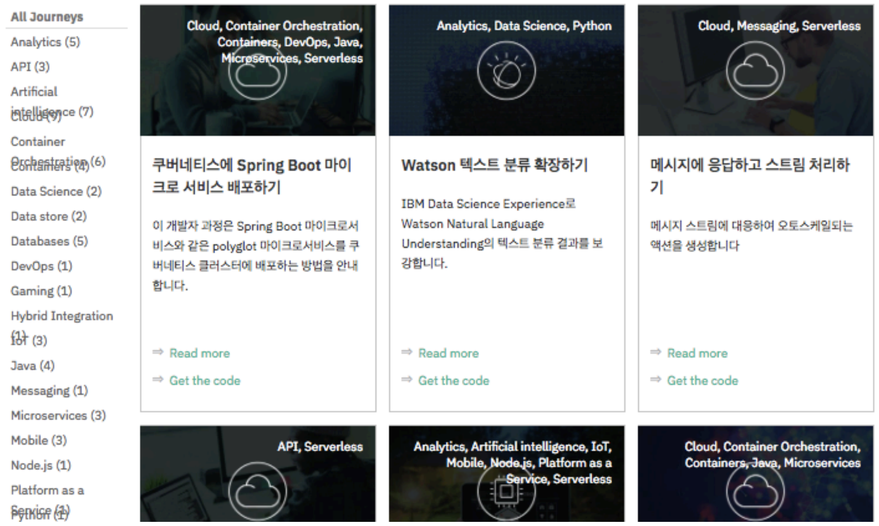
Creating an Open Source Community

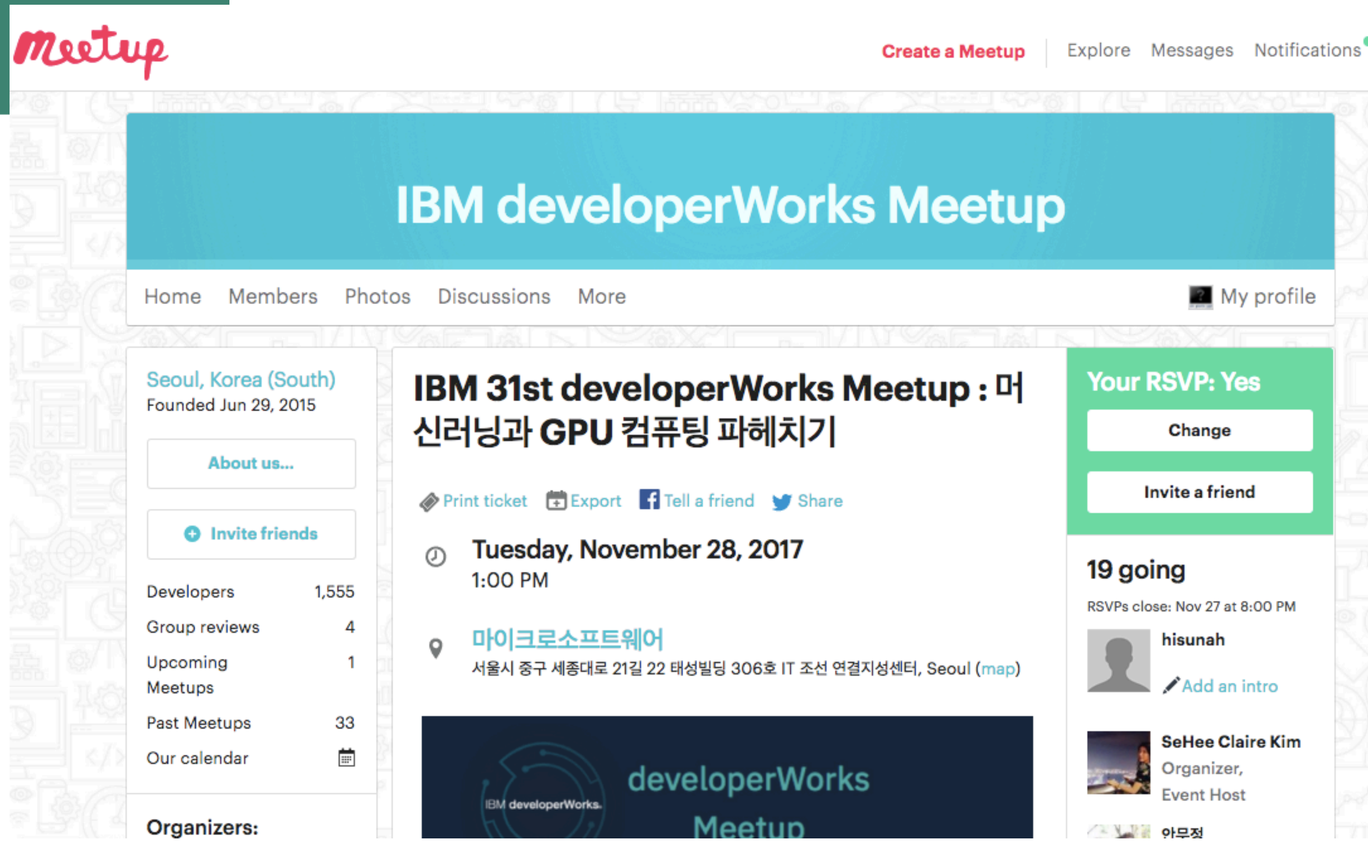
License Considerations

- Licenses range from permissive (Apache) to restrictive (General Public License, or GPL, variants, with Affero GPL the most restrictive), and everything in between.
- There are 71 different licenses available (opensource.org)
- Permissive license will generate a community faster, and a stricter license will require substantial investment in building a community
  - If you're behind or in a competitive market, a permissive license would help you catch up
  - If you believe you're in a unique first mover advantage, a stricter license may work.

New IBM Developer Assets and Communities – Seoul







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IBM and Open Source

- IBM has been involved and leading the launch of:
  - The Apache Foundation, The Linux Foundation, The Eclipse Foundation, The Cloud Foundry Foundation, The Node.js Foundation, The CNCF Foundation, …
- IBM has certified 78,000 Developers and Technical staff on Open Source
- Contributing to 6,500 open source projects
- Example of our commitment to FOSS: We have invested $1B into Linux and other open source projects to support our Power Systems servers – in addition to the $1B that was invested into Linux in 2001.

"We've recouped most of it in the first year in sales of software and systems." - Bill Zeitler, IBM, 2001