Abstract:

This paper analyzes the use of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) in 22 real-world graduate computer science projects mentored by industrial partners in the past 2.5 years. It serves as a case study on how FOSS is used in an academic setting as well as by the mentoring companies. A diverse list of FOSS was used, suggesting its ubiquity. The general recognized advantages of FOSS drove their adoption: no licensing cost, flexibility of modification, niche functionality, and perceived growing popularity. Our experience agrees with the perceived advantages of FOSS in engaging students with interesting technologies. It also agrees that the potential to communicate with software professionals was beneficial and sometime inspiring, provided that the students took the initiatives to do so. To provide a complete perspective, the paper also includes a section written from the students' point of view on their experience with FOSS in one project.

Citation: