



The Value of Engaging with Open Source Communities

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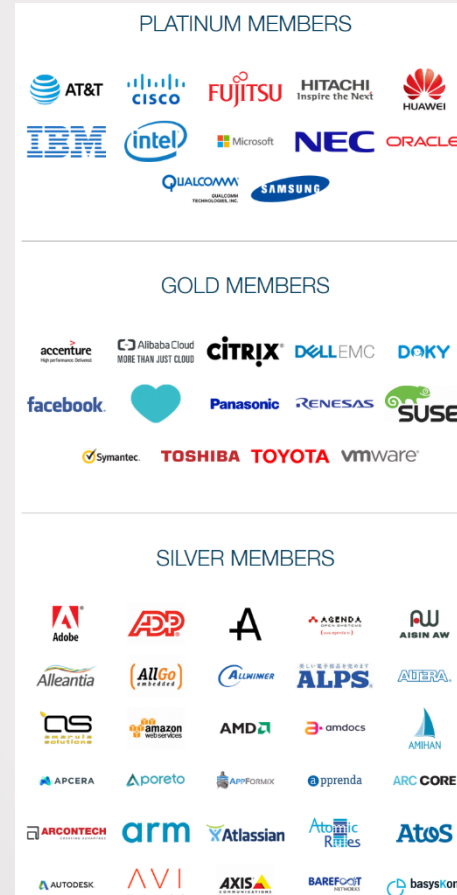
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The World Out there

LF Projects



LF Members



- Open Source Ecosystem is maturing
- 430,000 projects on SourceForge
- 64 million projects on GitHub
- In 2008, \$10.8 billion for Linux Fedora 9 distro
- In 2015, \$5 billion for only 17 other projects
- 271 companies are Linux Foundation members
 - 15+ joining each month
- **Organizational-Communal Engagements are increasingly important**

What we know

- Organizational-Communal Engagements impact communities (Fitzgerald, 2006)
 - Strategic focus
 - Professional coding practices
 - License compliance practices
 - Long-term stability
- Open source is part of organizational innovation streams (Germonprez, Kendall, Kendall, Mathiassen, Young, & Warner, 2016)
- Need to perceive value in open source (Fitzgerald, 2006)
- Value is deciding factor (Poba-Zaou, Raymond, & Fabi, 2014)

What we don't know - Research Question

How do organizations perceive value in their engagements with open source communities?

I am in good company



<https://wiki.linuxfoundation.org/oss-health-metrics/start>

Theoretical Lens

- Signaling Theory (Spence, 1973)
 - Job market (Spence, 1973)
 - E-commerce of used goods (Dimoka, Hong, & Pavlou, 2012; Ghose, 2009; Gregg & Walczak, 2008)
 - Careers, Strategy, Recruiting, Psychology, Consumer Psychology, Anthropology (Karasek III & Bryant, 2012)

| Concept | Example in Open Source |
|-----------------------|--|
| Information asymmetry | Value of engagement in open source community |
| Signal | Metrics from trace data and other sources |
| Signal Credibility | Difficulty to influence metrics |
| Perception of Signal | Beliefs about metrics and their connection to value |
| Signaling Equilibrium | Expectations are reinforced: Perceived value is actually obtained |

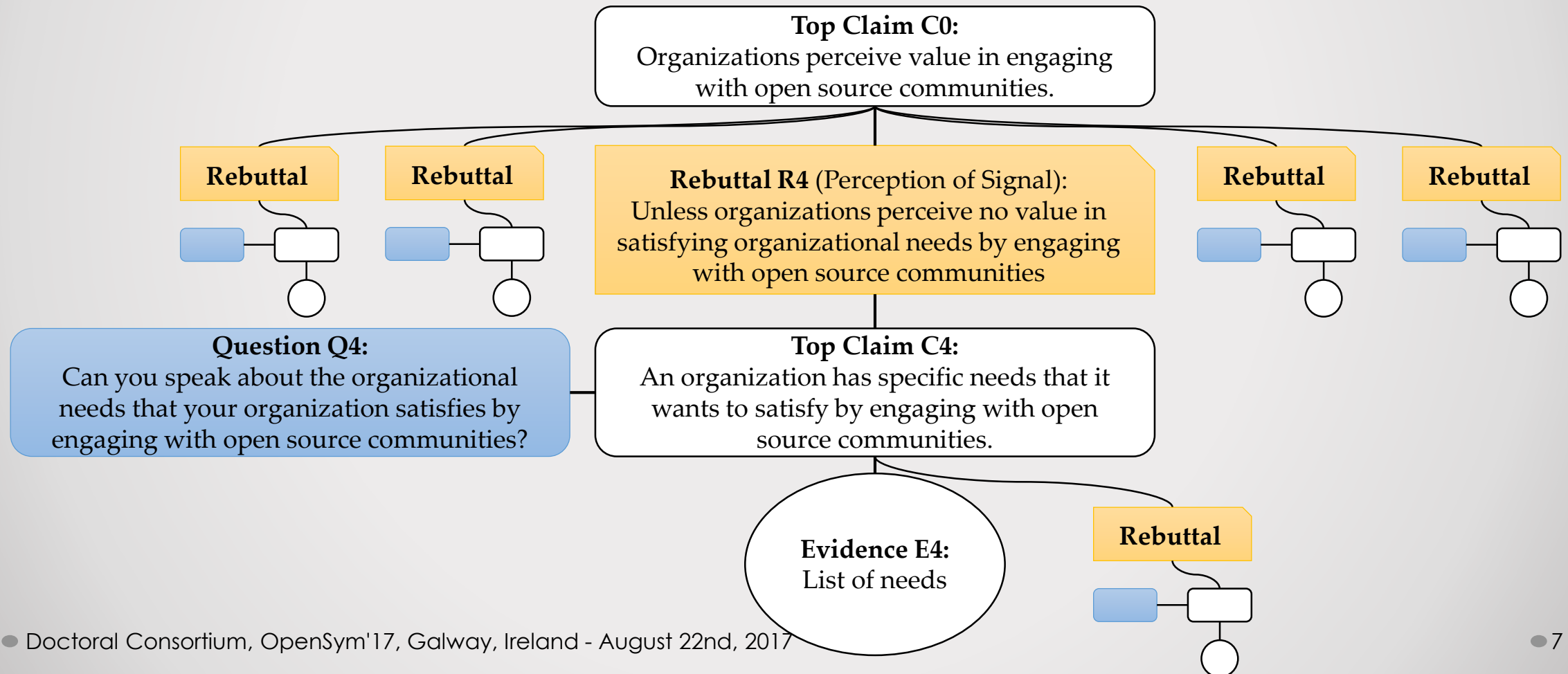
Method

- Engaged scholarship (Van de Ven, 2007)
- Netnography (Kozinets, 2015)
- Case Study (Yin, 2009)
- Data
 - Observation and Field Notes (van Maanen, 1988)
 - Interviews with organizational community members (Creswell, 2013)
- Analysis
 - (Pattern) Coding, Matrix displays, & Memoing (Miles & Huberman, 1994)
 - Software: NVivo, Excel, and Word



Interview Design

- Assurance Case (Gandhi & Lee, 2009)



Expected Contribution

- Critiquing signaling theory (Mathiassen, Chiasson, & Germonprez, 2011)
 - Open source ecosystem works different from market places
 - Organizational-communal engagement is different from a purchase or hiring decision
- Advance knowledge on organizational-communal engagements
 - Better understand the role of perceived value
- Organizations could optimize their engagement with open source
 - Better informed value-judgements
 - Higher confidence when defending or eliminating open source engagement
 - Strategically engage with open source communities
- Open Source Communities
 - Purposefully attract organizations and build lasting relationships

Thank You

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