



open source vs. proprietary

in 10 mins or less

by Jason Gallagher



What is source code?

- Human-readable computer instructions
- Source code is used by an interpreter or compiler to turn human readable instructions into machine instructions

eg.

```
#include <stdio.h>
int main (int argc, char *argv[]) {
    printf("Hello World!\n");
}
```



What is open source?

-It's Free! (think of free as in freedom, not as in free beer)

-Published source code that is made available to the public, enabling anyone to copy, modify and redistribute the source code without paying royalties or fees

Examples of open source projects:

-Firefox Web Browser

-Apache Web Server(runs 66.95% of the million busiest sites)

-Linux Operation System

Why is it important?

- Allows peer review of software
- No vendor lock in
- Gives rights to the software users
- Free to make modification to suit your needs
- Do not have to rely on vendor for updates or upgrades

Why is Open Source important in the consideration of Electronic and Internet voting?

- Transparency

- Voters can audit the process for their own validation
- Not just a black box

- Accountability

- Auditability

- Canadian prototype could be used as a model for other jurisdictions and regions

- Security



How can open source be secure?

- The System needs to be designed with security as a main principle from the start
- The System should not rely on secrets for security (security by obscurity)
- Allows many eyes to view the source to find problems



Proprietary Advantages

- Ready made systems available
- Someone to blame when it goes wrong