

The City and Canary Wharf use these tools extensively too:

- No per-user, per-server licences or cumbersome/complex licence agreements
- No expensive licences, usually
- Good communities providing add-ons and mutual support for the bigger projects
- Freedom and flexibility to adapt because the source is available
- No pressure from artificial upgrade cycles

When used in public organisations, there's a potential multiplier effect, because council A can make their innovation or tool available [they can sell it, if they choose the licence] to their colleagues in a neighbouring borough or share a specific development without complex licencing issues.

Consulting

Our consulting is oriented toward finding open source solutions. In practice, this means that we prefer an open source tool, if there's one with a closed licence and an open source one and they are equivalent. If there's no open source tool, we can't suggest it and will say so, of course!

All our in-house computing is open source, we do not use any version of Windows currently, we practice what we bring to others.

However, it is feasible to run mixed Windows and open source solutions, the most well-known tool in this area is probably Samba:
<http://www.samba.org/>

This arrangement is used extensively in the City and Canary Wharf, using Windows desktops and Linux, Unix or Solaris servers.

Training

We can provide short, tailored courses on the concepts of open source [including the 'difficult' areas, support, types of licence http://developer.kde.org/documentation/licensing/licenses_summary.html] and specific tools such as the Perl programming language <http://www.perl.org/>, introductions to Ubuntu Linux: <http://www.ubuntu.com/> and integration with Windows tools and applications.

Rapid Development

The prototypes can evolve into usable systems or components. Clearly, this is a larger task because, it involves more programming, testing, documentation and perhaps some training.

However, remember, it's open source, so whatever we develop can be used in multiple copies or you can give it [or if the licence permits, sell it] to the neighbouring borough or authority!

Prototyping

Some ideas need proof-of-concept rather than weighty [and expensive!] reports. Good mastery of open source tools and a broad general experience of computing gives us competitive advantage in this area.

Often, these are not big systems or modules, but they are components that link A to B [have you something in your office that you are retyping? You probably have!] or get data and publish it quickly as a dynamic web page. A couple of examples, below.

Here's a sample of meter readings from a THH building processed and put onto the web as a graph: <http://www.barleymow-estate.org.uk/?p=78> The next step is to do this in real-time as a green monitoring initiative. Total programming time, one day, two open source tools: <http://wordpress.org/> for the blog and flot: <http://code.google.com/p/flot/> to graph the data.

Here's a sample of repair data, published as web data from an Excel spreadsheet: <http://repairs.barleymow-estate.org.uk/detail.php> total time, about two hours and tool used: <http://www.phpmyedit.org/>

Support

One of the potent pieces of FUD [fear, uncertainty and doubt] about open source is lack of support.

Remember this when you are number 127 in a support queue and you can't find a specific licence number for the software that has broken! None of your staff can look at its internals either, can you?

We don't currently offer support for the big, common components such as Apache, Ubuntu, Redhat, Drupal etc. but we do know companies that do so. We do offer support for anything that we develop, including as standard, free support for the first quarter of service.

Remember too, you have *all of it* not just an expensive black-box, so you can support it internally in the same way as you can modify it. However, if you make extensive modifications, it'll be more difficult for us to support that may change the price, for example.

Contact

If you'd like us to come and talk with you, email: info@big-wave-heuristics.com

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BIG WAVE HEURISTICS LTD

Open-source, consulting,
training, prototyping and
rapid development and
documentation using
open-source tools and
software

What is open source?

Open-source software (OSS) is [computer software](#) available in source code form for which the [source code](#) and certain other rights normally reserved for [copyright](#) holders are provided under a [software license](#) that permits users to study, change, and improve the software.

It's not necessarily free as in zero-cost, but it is usually free of complex per-computer, per-user licences. Major parts of the web and internet use open-source, for example, two thirds of web servers are Apache: <http://httpd.apache.org/> the best general purpose web server.