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A la Carte Community

Identity and values in the open source software project TYPO3

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Abstract: The exchange of open source software is a phenomenon that is becoming increasingly significant to IT users. This article presents the results of a study of the TYPO3 community, a community related to an open source CMS software. The article explores the community, identity and values of TYPO3 and shows that there are high levels of virtual as well as face-to-face interaction among the members. The participants feel that they belong to the community and many also feel that they are recognised as part of the community. However, the members do not share common values neither in relation to software production nor generally. Instead, they stress that you are free to choose your own values. Against this background, the authors introduce the notion of an 'a la carte community', i.e. a community where individuals pick and choose their degree of participation and integration into the community and its values.

Key words: Open source software, community, values, participation, organisation

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1 Introduction

The term open source software refers to software that has an open source code and is fully accessible to its users, who may access, read, modify and redistribute the code. Open source software implies a particular kind of software development that differs fundamentally from that associated with proprietary software. Proprietary software development usually takes place in a hierarchical organisation where it is handled by a group of developers who receive a salary for their efforts. The development of open source software, by contrast, is placed in networks—or communities—that have no formal hierarchy. Participating in open source development is completely voluntary, and open source communities may involve hundreds of users who both use and contribute to the development of the programme (Sharma 2002; Weber 2004). For this reason, users of open source software are called users-producers (Couldry 2004; Uricchio 2004).

This immediately begs the question of why any person would choose to contribute voluntarily to the production of a piece of software that he or she can access and copy for free. This question is intimately linked to one of the fundamental problems of political economy, namely that of collective action and the problem of free-riding presented by Mancur Olson in *The Logic of Collective Action* (1971). This article argues that in order to understand why people contribute to open source software development—and why open source software apparently bypasses the problem of free-riding—it is necessary to consider the social dimensions of open source software development and organisation. In particular, it is important to address the questions of community and values: Do open source software users feel that they belong to an actual community, and if so, do the members of open source communities believe in the same set of values? Finding the answers to these questions will contribute significantly to an understanding of what motivates people to contribute to a piece of software which they can access and copy for free.

Several studies have analysed motivation in open source software communities (Hertel et. al. 2003; Lakhani and von Hippel 2003; von Krogh and von Hippel 2003; Bonaccorsi and Rossi 2003; Weber 2004; Roberts et al. 2006). These studies conclude that open source software developers are not driven by altruism. Their contribution to open source software is inspired by a number of factors: (1) a professional concern to fill a gap in the market; (2) a need for self-expression and personal satisfaction; (3) a desire to gain recognition from other developers, perhaps even professional ego-boosting; and finally (4) to have fun. Thus, it is often argued that open source software developers have an itch to scratch (Raymond 1999, p. 32).

The fact that factors such as personal satisfaction and fun play an important role in open source software development has led scholars to categorise open source software developers into two groups: A large group of hobbyists, who contribute lines of code simply for the fun of it; and hackers who dedicate a considerable amount of time to open source software development because they use it as a way of expressing themselves. The latter group often takes an artistic approach to programming, feeling challenged by the prospect of creating a beautiful piece of code—that is, a piece of code that is as simple and pure as possible (Bonaccorsi and Rossi 2003).

These are important points to draw attention to when exploring motivation in open source software communities. However, it is equally important to raise the question of what the concept of community means in open source software communities, and if it involves a sense of

belonging and a belief in the same set of values—factors that may enhance the motivation of open source software developers.

Several studies have investigated open source software communities. These studies conclude that open source software communities constitute collections of individuals and small companies that contribute to the continuous development of a public good by making their innovations available to the entire community (Bergquist and Ljungberg 2001; Hertel et al. 2003; von Krogh and von Hippel 2003; O'Mahony 2003; Bagozzi and Dholakia 2006; Elliott and Scacchi 2008; Stam 2009). The communities are usually anchored in the Internet, where the majority of activities take place. Communication is organised through mailing lists, some of which are national while others are task-specific. Furthermore, a large number of open source software communities have user-groups—fora where developers meet face-to-face to discuss and solve problems relating to software.

In the following we introduce the concept of community and describes the methods employed in the TYPO3 study. Thereafter, the article explores the patterns of interaction and identification in the TYPO3 community. This is followed by an analysis of the values of the TYPO3 community, i.e., values related to open source software as well as moral values represented by the main developer. The article concludes that the members of the TYPO3 community share a sense of belonging. It is less evident, however, that the community has a distinct set of shared values. On this basis, the article argues, it would be too bold to claim that the TYPO3 community constitutes a 'thick community'. It seems more appropriate to argue that it constitutes an a la carte community. It is within the realm of this kind of community that one should look for reasons as to why people choose to contribute to the development of a piece of software that they can access and copy for free.

2 The concept of community

The concept TYPO3 community is employed by the users and developers of TYPO3 themselves and it has been coined by some of the leading developers. For the TYPO3 developers and users the term community is clearly a positive term. This is typical for most laymen uses of the concept. Zygmunt Baumann draws attention to the fact that community: 'is always a good thing' (Baumann 2001, p. 1). It is a place where people care about and trust each other. For the critical social scientist this common sense use of the term must be considered either wishful thinking or a way to govern people's understanding. It begs the question of how we should conceptualise and analyse communities in contemporary social theory.

Scholars argue that the concept of community—like many other social science concepts—is indeterminate and problematic. Community is often associated with the notion of 'Gemeinschaft' forwarded by Ferdinand Tönnies (1957) which implies social relations characterised by stability, embeddedness and belonging (Calhoun 1998; Wittel 2001). However, scholars have drawn attention to the fact that there is also a dark side to this positive image of community. In a classic text, Gusfield (1975) points out that a strong community may lead to closure. Richard Sennett (1998) is also very critical towards the linkage of trust, mutual responsibility and commitment to the concept community. He argues that it involves an illusion of unity as a source of

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strength in communities and the concomitant fear that conflict threatens communities. Instead, he suggests an understanding of community that places conflict at the very centre of the notion. In so doing, he claims that it is, in fact, dispute and confrontation that ties people of unequal power and differing interests together (Sennett 1998, p. 143-144). Thereby, the focus shifts away from the substance of communities to the boundary-construction of them. In this article, we do not address the question of positive or negative features of communities. Instead, we use the term community in a descriptive way and focus on a number of characteristics that are often defined as important elements of a community in order to be able to evaluate the character of the TYPO3 community.

Poplin has argued that the concept of a community refers to significant social relations characterised by social interaction and social ties that take place at a specific territorial unit (Poplin 1979). Participation and identity are central to community life but the traditional understanding of the notion of community is inadequate for the interpretation of complex societies because many contemporary communities are not constrained by space (Piselli 2007). Information and communication technologies have enabled the creation of so-called virtual communities (Reingold 1993; Jones 1994; Smith and Kollock 1999; Baym 2000; Slevin 2000; Castells 2003, 2009). However, as pointed out by Butkeviciene and Rinkevicius (2006), there is little agreement in the literature about the character of such communities. Just like physical communities, virtual communities can vary in amount and type of participation. There are persons who are (perhaps just for a certain period of time) core members of the community, while others (for instance people who are list members but do not contribute to the interaction) have a much more limited attachment to the community.

It has been argued that information and communication technologies have erased the importance of place. However, in many cases virtual communities are, at least for some members, combined with psychical communities—places where they meet to discuss the same problems and ideas as in the virtual communities (cf. for instance Nip 2004, Simi and Futrell 2006). In the case of the TYPO3 community, some users meet at the home of a developer or meet at regular intervals at the Stammtich at a bar. Thus, both virtual and physical interaction are characteristics of virtual communities.

The second general characteristic of a community—identity—may be divided into two components: belonging and common values. In both cases participants negotiate their affiliation with the community (Williams 2006). Participants of a community share, at least to some degree, a sense of common identity. They experience a kind of affiliation to the community allowing participants to define themselves as TYPO3 developers/users. The fact that the software is relatively difficult to learn may contribute to the feeling of identity and belonging. Finally, following the literature on social cohesion community may also include common values. Such values are favourable for creating identity and mutual trust (Parsons 1968; Dekker and Bolt 2005; Kearns and Forrest 2001). As will be shown below this characteristic is especially relevant for TYPO3 because the founder of the community often expresses his personal moral beliefs to the members of the community. The motto of the community "Inspiring people to share" is an example of such attempts to create common values.

Based on such deliberations we can empirically ask to what degree members of a virtual community: (1) interact on the Internet; (2) interact psychically; (3) experience themselves as belonging to the community; and (4) share certain values or beliefs.

3 Methods

The analysis presented in this article draws on a study of the TYPO3 community carried out from September 2004 to April 2007. This study relied on three different methods: focus group interviews (so-called interventions cf. below), a survey, and interviews. The empirical material from this study consists of videotapes and transcripts of the interventions (eight interventions of approximately three hours each), a survey, and finally interview transcripts. Central themes in the interventions, the survey and the interviews were the TYPO3 community's organisation, its division of labour, its work processes, and its identity and values.

The interventions were carried out from September 2004 to May 2005, and inspired by the French sociologist, Alain Touraine's intervention method ((Touraine 1981; Clark and Diana 1995; Hamal 1998; McDonalds 2002). They took place once a month and included ten members of the TYPO3 user group in Copenhagen. This group represented all parts of the TYPO3 community: the TYPO3 main developer, Kasper Skårhøj, his co-developer, people who offer TYPO3-related services, and general users of TYPO3 and other open source software. All interventions were carried out in Danish.

The development of the intervention group and its relationship to the research team was inspired by Touraine. The TYPO3 study wished to employ Touraine's intervention method but detach it from its theoretical grounding in social movement theory. In so doing, the study contributes to the general tendency to employ the intervention method independently from its theoretical foundation, using it as a focus group method (Clark and Diana 1995; Hamal 2001; McDonalds 2002; Brincker and Gundelach 2005).

The intervention methodology differs from traditional focus group interviews. The researchers engaged themselves in the discussions more strongly and the method aims at creating a deeper of the group's visions. In order to help this process the researchers present their social science analyses to the group, interlocutors are invited to the group and the group is invited to participate in activities that will promote the research process.

Further into the study, it became evident that many of the questions raised in the interventions called for further investigation. Consequently, the research team and the TYPO3 participants agreed to conduct a survey among all TYPO3 users during the summer of 2005. The aim of the survey was to gain knowledge about the community but the construction of a questionnaire was in itself a method to gain a deeper understanding of the community because it forced the participants to focus on the elements of the community they found most important and to make these more explicit. The research team and the participants designed the survey together and the content was discussed at two meetings in the group. The participants were in particular interested in the more technical and organizational features of TYPO3 while the researchers introduced some sociological thinking about communities and organisations. The survey was carried out electronically to all members of the community. The population was defined by the participants as people on all existing Danish and international TYPO3 mailing lists as well as the TYPO3 newsgroup. This included 1.675 persons; 32,5 per cent of the questionnaires was returned. This response rate is quite high compared to other email surveys (Sheehan 2001). The amount of successful responses may be explained by the fact that the questionnaire included a letter from the main developer in which he strongly encouraged members to respond to the

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questionnaire. The basic results from the survey were presented by the researchers at the last meeting of the group. The participants found the results interesting and debated among other things possible differences among TYPO3 participants in various countries and the results concerning recognition and interaction in the community. A few results from the survey have been presented on a TYPO3 website by the main developer.

In addition to the interventions and the survey, the TYPO3 study is also based on interviews with the main developer of TYPO3, a leading TYPO3 consultant, and a member of the TYPO3 research and development team (The TYPO3 Association). These interviews were carried out from May 2005 to April 2007. They allowed the research team to inquire further into specific aspects of the TYPO3 community and may therefore be considered to be elite interviews (Kezar 2003; Stephens 2007).

4 Interaction in the TYPO3 community

Kasper Skårhøj, who is referred to as TYPO3's main developer, developed this open source software about 10 years ago. It is a highly complex but versatile piece of software that has gained popularity all over the world. The main developer and a small group of developers close to him are responsible for maintaining the main elements of the software. This group is referred to as the core group. However, a very large number of users also contribute to the maintenance of the software, e.g., by offering suggestions to extensions, bug fixes, etc. The core group then evaluates and incorporates the suggestions they deem useful into the official version of the programme. This pattern is typical of the development and organisation of open source software (von Krogh and von Hippel 2003: 1152).

4.1 Internet interaction

All members of the intervention group stressed that the development of the software is a collaborative effort. They argued that this has several consequences, one of the most important being that the correction of errors and the improvement of the software is carried out faster and more smoothly in an open source community than in proprietary software companies that are hierarchically organised. This view is very common among open source developers and constitutes part of the reason why they believe that the code of open source software is superior to that of proprietary software (Stamelos et al. 2002; Weber 2004).

Since users are scattered all over the world, and consequently cut off from each other, email constitutes the primary means of communication and collaboration. Table 1 shows how often the respondents email other TYPO3 users.

The table offers a first impression of the TYPO3 community. About 25 per cent of the respondents communicate less than once a month with other members of the community, and half of the respondents email other users a few times a month. However, a small group maintains frequent email contact. Thus, it appears that the TYPO3 community is characterised by a high degree of differentiation, i.e., a small group of members has a high level of communication,

whereas the majority communicates relatively rarely. This is confirmed by studies of other open source communities (Hertel et al. 2000; Mockus et al. 2000; Koch and Schneider 2002).

	E-mail other users	*Responds to other users*
0 times per month	23	30
1-5 times per month	53	46
6-10 times per month	9	8
11 times a month or more	10	11
No answer	5	5
Total	100	100

Table 1: Frequency per month of email relationships with other TYPO3 users in per cent. Note: Number of respondents = 1675.

4.2 Face-to-face interaction

The TYPO3 community has a large number of user groups. These groups constitute places where users meet physically and try to resolve problems relating to the software. A surprisingly high level of 26 per cent of the respondents replied that they have user group membership. This high number is no doubt somewhat biased because it is likely that self-selection takes place in the population, which means that people with user group membership are more inclined to answer the questionnaire than people without user group membership. However, the very high percentage of user group membership may also indicate that the virtual part of the community has an important physical counterpart. The relative strength of face-to-face interaction in the TYPO3 community is further underlined when considering the annual TYPO3 snowboard event. This event attracts users from many countries who meet to snowboard, discuss the software and develop it further. The snowboard event has about 100 participants every year. In the survey, a total of 6 per cent of the respondents replied that they had participated in the snowboard event at least once. The snowboard event also illustrates the gendered character of the TYPO3 community, i.e., snowboarding and the development of software is generally considered 'male activities'. This assumption is corroborated by the survey, which showed that less than 5 per cent of the TYPO3 community members are female.

5 Belonging and recognition

It is likely that almost all of the communication between members of the community is instrumental, directed towards solving problems in relation to the software. In some cases, though, the messages may be a mixture of 'work and pleasure' because communication between friends or acquaintances will often be both problem-oriented and symbolically strengthening social

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bonds. This may be illustrated by the following quotation from the interventions. A member of the groups said about his relationship with the core developers:

> We are not friends. I have the possibility to mail them. And then sometime I go to a meeting and I have a couple of conversations with one of the developers and things like that. Well that does not mean that we have to be friends (Ken 5th meeting, authors' translation).

The Internet helps disseminate information, but does it also facilitate the creation of a common identity? Previous studies of the impact of computer-mediated communication on identity construction do not yield clear results. On the one hand, Diani (2000) concludes that computer-mediated communication is primarily instrumental in character. On the other hand, Myers (1994) finds that contact among participants does facilitate the construction of a collective identity. A number of studies of social movements (Nip 2004) suggest that the Internet helps to build a collective identity and promote political actions. Finally, Simi and Futrell (2006) have shown that virtual contact offered the members of a white power movement social support and a sense of belonging. The differences in these studies can be attributed to a number of factors: First of all, the Internet itself is constantly changing. Second, there are differences in the groups that have been studied. In the above mentioned cases, the Internet was used for political or social purposes. In contrast, the TYPO3 community uses the Internet primarily to discuss and solve problems related to the software albeit their activities are limited neither to the internet nor to software.

The TYPO3 study revealed that there is a tendency for people who use TYPO3 to participate in joint activities that arise from the software but which are not limited to it. This indicates that using TYPO3 is not just a matter of using a specific piece of software. At least for some of its members it also involves social aspects and activities. Furthermore, its social dimension is not limited to abstract communication in a virtual setting. It extends to participation in user groups and snowboard events. This immediately begs the questions whether TYPO3 members feel that they belong to the community and, furthermore, if they feel that they are recognised by others as members of the community, i.e., 'people know who I am'. Table 2 shows the extent to which respondents feel that they belong to, and are recognised by others as members of the TYPO3 community, locally, nationally and internationally.

Not surprisingly, the feeling of belonging is stronger than the sense of recognition. Furthermore, it is striking that a relatively large proportion of the respondents feel that they belong more to the international community than to the local or national community. This confirms that the TYPO3 community is, in fact, international in character and the respondents acknowledge this. In the case of belonging, it appears that face-to-face interaction is apparently not of great significance. This has to be seen in the context of the global scope of the Internet—the TYPO3 users' main medium of communication (Rheingold 1994; Jones 1994; Slevin 2000; Castells 2003).

Compared to the relatively high number of people who feel that they belong to the TYPO3 community, less people feel that they are recognised by others as members of the community. Moreover, people feel more recognised as members in the local and national setting than in the international setting. Thus, it appears that in the case of recognition people relate more strongly to their local and national environment than to the international environment facilitated by the

Internet, although their activities take place primarily on the Internet rather than in the local/national setting. In the case of TYPO3, the local roots are reinforced by the existence of user groups, i.e., feelings of belonging and recognition correlate with user group membership.

	All respondents	*Excl. missing and 'don't know' answers*
I feel that I belong to the TYPO3 community in my city/local area	24	30
I feel that I belong to the TYPO3 community in my country	35	43
I feel that I belong to the international/general TYPO3 community	52	62
People in the TYPO3 community in my city/local area know who I am	17	21
People in the TYPO3 community in my country know who I am	11	14
People in the TYPO3 community in the international/general TYPO3 community know who I am	7	9

Table 2: Percentage of respondents who say that they "agree strongly" or "agree" to questions about belonging and recognition in the TYP03 community. Note: Number of respondents = 1297-1675.

To sum up: Even though there are many variations, some members of the TYPO3 community are in close contact, and a significant proportion of the members express feelings of belonging to the TYPO3 community. The sense of belonging is strengthened by the existence of user groups and the annual snowboard event where members meet face-to-face. Although the experience of being recognised by others as a member of the TYPO3 community is less pronounced than the feeling of belonging, it still contributes to the overall impression that members identify with the TYPO3 community.

6 The values of the TYPO3 community

Having established that members of the TYPO3 community experience a sense of belonging, the question remains whether the community also involves a distinct set of values. The study concentrated on two types of values: Values related to open source software and moral values related to the main developer. The first set of values was chosen because it is likely that members of the TYPO3 community construct their identification against a common enemy, i.e. proprietary software (Weber 2004, p. 136). The decision to include moral values related to the main developer was motivated by the fact that the main developer of TYPO3 has expressed his Christian values strongly and repeatedly both during group discussions and on the Internet. The main developer has ironically referred to himself as "the King" of the community (www.typo3.

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org) and he has also stated that these values are part of the reason why he decided to release TYPO3 under an open source licence (Skårhøj 2005). The main developer was the uncontested leader of the community and we found it interesting to explore further whether his moral values had become integrated into the community and thus considered part of the social fabric of the TYPO3 community because this will tell us something important about the character of leadership in an open source community.

6.1 Values related to open source software

Open source software allows the user to access and copy the source code freely. The fact that the software is free is probably what open source software is best known for. However, it is often treated far too casually and considered exclusively from an economic perspective. The research carried out in the TYPO3 community revealed that the economic perspective was, in fact, of minor importance. Instead, the members share and ascribe major significance to the fact that the source code is open. In fact, 98 per cent of the respondents replied that their main reason for choosing TYPO3 was based on it being open source software. This supports the assumption that users value open source software for precisely the reason that it is open source. The survey enquired further into the position of TYPO3 community members on open source software versus licensed software.

	All respondents	*Excl. missing and 'don't know' answers*
It is wrong for public agencies to rely on commercially licensed software	45	54
It is wrong for private companies to rely on commercially licensed software	33	40
It is wrong to license software	19	23

Table 3: Percentage who "agree strongly" or "agree" to questions about licensed software. Note: Number of respondents = 836-1027.

Given their deep involvement in open source software development, it was quite surprising to note how liberal an attitude these users have towards proprietary software. This tendency was reflected in the intervention group. The participants expressed the view that the closed codes of proprietary software are problematic. Furthermore, their comments reflect that they have very little respect for the quality of these products. One participant argued:

> But I think that for many people who work with and use [open source software] it is a feeling of freedom from these big, very, very powerful companies… For me it is easier to use software that I can make work myself if it doesn't do what I want it to do. (Claus; 1st meeting; authors' translation).

This quotation aptly sums up the attitude of the intervention group participants. They want to be able to access, copy and modify software, and the closed codes of proprietary software prevent them from doing just that. Thus, it seems that technical and ideological arguments go

hand in hand. The users consider proprietary software as technically inferior and see it as representative of hierarchy and power. Yet, this rather negative and at times almost condescending attitude towards proprietary software is combined with a liberal attitude, as indicated in table 3. Contrary to the argument by Ljungberg (2000), it seems that there are no strong feelings of antagonism towards proprietary software. This claim is supported by the fact that there is no significant relationship between feelings of belonging to the TYPO3 community and attitudes towards proprietary software, i.e., there is no indication of a socialisation effect arising from feelings of belonging. The members of the TYPO3 community seem to believe that it is the privilege of each individual to choose his or her preferred software solution. In the case of TYPO3, at least, there are thus no grounds for arguing that identification with the TYPO3 community is constructed as a consequence of an conflict or against a common enemy, i.e., proprietary software. The conflict perspective suggested by Sennett (1998) seems of less relevance in this connection. In fact, most of the members of the TYPO3 community including the developers use proprietary software—at least once in a while.

6.2 Moral values

There is no doubt that the main developer of TYPO3 has a very special position in the community. This was expressed very clearly in the group discussions. He is the person to whom the other participants relate most strongly, and he is generally recognised as the leader of the TYPO3 community. His leadership is further emphasised by the fact that he has published several articles on TYPO3 websites, where he presents his moral values and his perspective on life—an activity that he carries on despite the fact that he stepped down as main developer ("the King") in Spring 2007 (www.typo3.org). The question we wished to explore further was the extent to which the main developer's moral values are adopted by the community members and may be considered part of TYPO3's social dimension. The survey analysed whether the TYPO3 community members were able to relate to the main developer of the programme, whether they recognised his leadership, and whether they were familiar with his values. Furthermore, the survey singled out three specific values presented by the main developer in order to establish the extent to which the community members accepted the integration of the main developer's values into the TYPO3 community.

	Incl. don't know; excl. missing	*Excl. missing and 'don't know' answers*
Strongly agree	14	16
Agree	43	52
Disagree	21	25
Strongly disagree	6	7
Don't know	16	.
Total	100	100

Table 4: Response to the question "I can relate to the main developer of the TYPO3 software" in percent. Note: Number of respondents = 1353-1635.

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The respondents were thus asked to respond to the following statement: "I can relate to main developer of the software". Table 4 shows the distribution of the answers to this question.

More than half of the respondents state that they can relate to the main developer of the software. Furthermore, only 17 per cent of the respondents reply 'don't know'. This indicates that they feel some kind of attachment to the main developer and that they are familiar with his values. However, during the group discussions, it became clear that several participants did not accept the view that the TYPO3 community embodies a particular set of values. One participant expressed this in the following way:

> [T]he only thing we have in common is our interest in a content management system. That's all we have in common. Well, [of course] we're Danes, and we are sitting here. I don't think that one can extract a morality based on that. Well, the main developer has announced that he is a Christian and all that, and people can relate to that from the beginning if they bother to read who the main person behind it all is, right? That's the morality that you may relate to: The person who has started [TYPO3] has a moral attitude towards life. You can take a stand on that or you can choose not to. (Simon; 3rd meeting; authors' translation)

It appears that the participants respect and even admire the main developer. They are aware of his moral values, but they do not necessarily share them. Instead, they advocate a liberal view: You are free to choose your own morals. The survey confirms this interpretation. The respondents were asked to relate to three particular values expressed by the main developer. Table 5 gives a summary of the responses this question rendered.

	TYPO3 should not be used for publication of sexually explicit materials		*Open software has the capacity to contribute to a society of plenty*		*People who use TYPO3 should strive to be honest and truthful in all matter*	
	incl. don't know	*excl.don't know*	*incl. don't know*	*excl.don't know*	*incl. don't know*	*excl.don't know*
Strongly agree	23	31	21	33	33	40
Agree	18	24	38	59	44	52
Disagree	23	31	5	7	5	7
Strongly disagree	10	14	1	1	1	1
Don't know	26	.	35	.	17	.
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of respondents	1675	1245	1675	1093	1675	1387

Table 5: Three questions on moral values in the TYPO3 community. Pct.

The answers to the first question: "People who use TYPO3 should strive to be honest and truthful in all matters" seem to confirm that the values of the main developer are integrated into the TYPO3 community. However, irrespective of their position inside or outside the TYPO3

community, most people would agree with this position. Therefore it would be too hasty to conclude that the affirmative response to this question is indicative of value integration in the TYPO3 community.

The second question deals with abundance. The notion of abundance is part of the ideology of open source software, i.e., it is believed that open source software can contribute to the creation of a society characterised by surplus (Weber 2004). The main developer refers to it regularly, which is why it was included in the survey. Some respondents' reactions to the survey indicated that they were uncertain about the meaning of the word 'abundance'. This may explain why 35 per cent of the respondents reply 'don't know' here. The fact that such a high number of respondents prefer not to take a stance on this issue may also indicate that they are slightly sceptical towards ideological statements—an issue to which we shall return shortly. On this basis, it would seem farfetched to conclude that the values of the main developer are integrated into the TYPO3 community, although some respondents clearly support the values expressed by the main developer.

The final question is inspired by a text written by the main developer, in which he urges users not to employ TYPO3 for purposes that he would disapprove of, e.g., New Age publications, anti-Christian messages, sexually explicit material and extreme political propaganda (Skårhøj 2005). The survey included a question about using TYPO3 for the publication of sexually explicit material. Table 5 reveals that approximately 25 per cent of the respondents reply that they do not know whether TYPO3 should be used for the publication of such material. Considering that the question has a quite normative formulation, it seems likely that the answers indicate a relatively low level of acceptance of the values expressed by the main developer. In other words, the respondents do not wish to accept limitations to their way of using the software.

It appears that the moral values of the main developer are not integrated into the TYPO3 community. In his articles, however, the main developer has expressed hopes that values that extend beyond the exchange of pure technical information may gradually develop in the TYPO3 community (www.typo3.org). This wish is partly acknowledged by the respondents. But the survey reveals that the respondents are reluctant to accept limitations to their freedom of software use.

7 An a la Carte Community

The study of the TYPO3 community reveals that although the community involves identification, it does not have a distinct set of values. In relation to values, the survey is generally characterised by a very high number of 'don't know' answers. A number of methodological problems may partly explain this. One of the consequences of conducting an Internet based survey is that there is no face-to-face interaction and hence no social control when the respondent answers the questions posed. Thus, the respondent may feel that it is easy to skip questions by simply answering 'don't know'. The level of English proficiency may also have caused difficulties. The questionnaire was written in English and some respondents indicated that they had difficulties understanding the questions. However, there may also be more substantial reasons as to why the number of 'don't know' answers is particularly high in relation to value questions. The respond-

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ents might refuse to take a position on these matters and are generally reluctant to consider the TYPO3 software in a broader social context. This suggests that the TYPO3 users constitute an a la carte community in which each member is free to pick and choose among attitudes and ideas relating to the software. The a la carte character of the community may be illustrated by the following quotation

> People are here out of their free will. Nobody pays them to be here. Of course we have the carrot, it (the software) is a good product but it's just 'take it or leave it'. And possibly people … have been attracted by a cocktail of factors (Martin 3rd meeting authors' translation).

The feeling of freedom was also expressed in the group discussions:

> But that's what the open source movement is aiming at: We say that if these people [proprietary software producers] suddenly become evil minded—if those in power become evil minded—then it will not affect us because at the end of the day we have the freedom to maintain our freedom (Martin; 1st meeting; authors' translation).

It appears that members are motivated by their ability to create software solutions that they feel are satisfactory from both a technical and ideological point of view. Members do not consider proprietary software an enemy. Instead, open source software confronts users with a set of technical problems—and challenges—that they are able to solve together, thus remaining independent of proprietary software and its distributors. Freedom, in turn, becomes the logic of the community. It implies, among other things, that members are free to adhere or not to adhere to the set of values that some believe are, or should be, present in the TYPO3 community.

8 Conclusion

The study of the TYPO3 community reveals that a significant group of users feel that they belong to the TYPO3 community, and many feel that they are recognised by others as members of the community. This supports the claim that open source software development and organisation are not just matters of technology. In order to understand the development and organisation of open source software, one has to consider the social context within which they are placed. However, it is also clear that the social factor should not be exaggerated. The findings of the study of the TYPO3 community indicate that it would be too farfetched to argue that an open source movement is emerging. Instead, we see a community in which the desire for freedom coexists with a feeling of belonging, involving values that some members of the community adhere to. It appears that the TYPO3 community is characterised by a mind set that might be described as belonging without believing. This in turn begs the question if the feeling of belonging to an open source software community may enhance the motivation of open source software developers to contribute to the development of open source software.

Against the background of the case study of TYPO3 it seems that there are two ways in which this may be the case. First, the TYPO3 case-study indicates that feelings of belonging and the experience of being recognised as part of the community are vital elements in the overall

understanding of the TYPO3 community. This suggests that developers contribute to open source software not only because they have an itch to scratch but also because they want to show their peers exactly how good they are at scratching. Thus, they contribute to open source software development because they aspire to be included into a group of people that they find attractive to belong to and to be recognised as part of. This involves a little more than just participating—something which is available to everyone. It involves that 'people know who you are', and the best way to achieve this is by delivering highly sophisticated pieces of source code. This brings us to the second way in which feelings of belonging to an open source software community may enhance developers' motivation. Open source software communities provide fertile soil for software developers, among other things, it offers an excellent learning environment. Thus, developers refine their programming skills and are inspired to explore new territory in programming through their participation in open source software communities. This in turn indicates that participation in open source software communities may foster more participation. To return to the TYPO3 motto, part of the raison d'être of open source software communities is precisely to 'inspire people to share'. If open source software communities succeed in bringing about such inspiration—and judging from the popularity of open source software solutions this certainly seems to be the case— we may have come one step closer to understanding why open source software apparently bypasses the problem of free-riding and escapes the logic of political economy.

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