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Abstract

Open Source Software (OSS) is software whose source code is available free or under a license. OSS adheres to open standards and provides vendor independence, which will be highly beneficial in delivering public services. Irish local authorities appear to be slow in adopting the OSS. The main objective of this study is to identify what factors influencing or inhibiting OSS adoption in the Irish local authorities. In order to attempt to provide an answer to this question, this study investigates what IT managers of the local authorities perceive to be the influencing factors and inhibitors to open source adoption.

The primary research used is effectively a qualitative pragmatic study exploring factors influencing and inhibiting the adoption of Open Source Software in local authorities. The factor that found to be not consistent with the literature is the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO), the local authorities consider the TCO of OSS to be an inhibitor and this finding contradicts the literature findings. This study identified factors specific to local authorities in OSS adoption. The lack of OSS champion or a leading authority, lack of skills, lack of support, training, guidance and TCO found to be inhibitors to the adoption of OSS in local authorities. Interoperability, compatibility, vendor independence, stability and reliability considered as the influencing factors. The findings lead to the conclusion that there is a strong need for an OSS champion who can provide accountability, support and guidance to local authorities. Another conclusion drawn is that the OSS is rarely free and there is switching costs associated with the adoption. Local authorities are happy to adopt OSS if it offers solution to the business problems by delivering the products on time, budget and quality.