

Shared Design: Design Discourse in Open Source Software Communities

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Abstract

Design — at the junction of technology, organizations, and individuals — is important to Information Systems research. In this study, open source software projects provide the context for exploring design. Communities often have specialized discourses and vocabularies that are embodied within actions of the community. To understand design as a shared process, I propose a qualitative field study to examine design discourse in large collaborative corporate design processes through interviews and content analysis of trace data. I tell a story of shared design as it occurs in three open source software communities — CHAOSS, Kubernetes, and Hyperledger. Specifically, I explore the central role of discourse in these complex environments through the lens of Stigmergy. Through the examination of discourse and coordination in open source projects, I will provide a theoretical critique of Stigmergic Theory by extending the many paths of discourse evident in the shared design processes associated with open source software development.

Keywords

Shared design; discourse; open source software; design theory; open source communities

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