Charlie Schweik

Successful Internet Collaboration: A Study of Open Source Software Commons

Abstract:
What leads some open source projects to ongoing collaborative success while many others become abandoned? This talk summarizes a 5-year National Science Foundation funded study, and a forthcoming book (MIT Press, 2012), that investigates this question. Coming from a socio-technical perspective, Schweik will describe: (1) a theoretical framework for studying open source software projects and samples of over 40 hypotheses tested; (2) the dataset of 107,000 Sourceforge.net projects and his own online survey data of 1400 developers; (3) statistical methods; and (4) results and findings. While over the last few years a tremendous amount of research has been done looking at various components of the open source phenomenon, this is one of the first studies grounded in a sizable amount of data that supports some of the conventional thinking about open source collaborative practices. Moreover, Schweik will report a few of the surprising findings that came out of this research.
Biography:
Charles M. Schweik is an Associate Professor in the Dept. of Environmental Conservation and the Center for Public Policy and Administration at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He also is the Associate Director of the National Center for Digital Government at UMass Amherst (http://www.ncdg.org). He has a PhD in Public Policy from Indiana University, a Masters in Public Administration from Syracuse University, and has an undergraduate degree in Computer Science. A primary research interest is in the use and management of public information technology. For more than six years, between his undergraduate degree and his MPA, he was a programmer with IBM. His research focus is on environmental management and policy, public-sector information technology, and the intersection of those domains. Some of his past work was connecting GIS and remote sensing with social science methods to study landscape change (e.g., deforestation in Nepal). More recently, Schweik has a forthcoming book entitled Successful Internet Collaboration: A Study of Open Source Software Commons (expected June 2012 MIT Press) that looks at collaborative principles in open source software projects. He teaches mostly in the area of information technology in the Environmental Conservation and Public Policy and Administration programs at UMass, Amherst.