
Codeplex: "Summer of Code" or "Winter of Discontent"?

Microsoft have just launched a new initiative with the aim of "enabling the exchange of code and understanding among software companies and open source communities"

You can read the blurb yourself, but I couldn't spot what's in it for you, the coder. It seems like an opportunity to give Microsoft access to your code, and while (speaking as amateur), the assignment agreement, looks fairly OK in that you, the coder, still get to use the code, it's silent on the big issue of why you want to assign the code to Microsoft in the first place. Then, while the site is all about "exchange", unless I've missed something, I couldn't see what code Microsoft was going to hand out. Further, even though it suggests that such code as is created in this environment will be released under a "standard open source licence" better language is used in the Summer of Code (see below).

I was also unclear about the reasons for perpetuating the myth that all FOSS coders are unpaid amateurs (" We know that commercial software developers are under-represented on open source projects. We know that commercial software companies face very specific challenges in determining how to engage with open source communities."). For example at one end of the scale a recent report from the Linux Foundation demonstrated that 70% of kernel developers work for large corporations. At the other end of the scale Mandriva sponsors k3b.

By comparison; in Google's Summer of Code you the coder get paid, and any project mentoring you, e.g., KDE gets expenses to cover the costs of mentoring. All Google want you to do is release the code under an OSI approved licence

I'm not verywhelmed with this Microsoft initiative but as a curiosity it seems like an interesting one to watch, (more so than, e.g., tracking the current status of some wet paint),

-- Gerry Gavigan, OSC Chairman, 10th September 2009

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