Introduction to Open Source

Developed Mark Surman and Jason Diceman,
The Commons Group, for APC

Workshop presented by: <add name>
What is open source?

• **Free:** The software doesn't cost anything to obtain – although there are costs involved in configuring and maintaining it.

• **Open:** Because the software code is open it can be modified by anyone ... allowing for the translation into local languages or the addition of new features.

• **Collaborative:** People who improve or modify programs must give the software back to the open source community.
Who's using open source?

• **SchoolNet Namibia** uses open source operating systems, e-mail clients and office tools to provide Internet access and training to the nation's schools.

• Human rights organizations have begun to adopt the **Martus** open source software to securely document incidents of abuse.

• The **APC** uses open source for a wide variety of applications including its global network of web mirrors that fight corporate censorship.
Why use open source?

- Lower information technology costs: Especially for organizations who need advanced servers, databases and web applications.

- Flexible software solutions: Allowing civil society organizations to meet local needs.

- Better security: Mature open source applications are more secure than proprietary tools.

- Collaborative, cooperative values: Open source is based on collaborative and cooperative values.
Open source landscape

• **Server software** – open source very strong in here. Majority of Internet runs on open source. *e.g.* Apache, SendMail.

• **Desktop software** – getting better here but still compatibility issues. *e.g.* OpenOffice.org, Evolution.

• **Web applications** – open source very useful here as flexibility very important. However, quality of applications varies. *e.g.* ActionApps, PHPCollab.
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