Monetary Rewards in Open Source Software Development
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Abstract

The open source software (OSS) movement thrives on innovation and volunteer effort of developers. Scholars have expressed widespread concern about the sustainability of the OSS movement due to high levels of volunteerism. In this paper, we address a central challenge to the sustainability of OSS-developers' acceptance of monetary rewards. We strive to explain why some OSS developers accept monetary rewards and others do not. Viewed through the theoretical lens of the private-collective innovation model (Von Hippel and Von Krogh 2003, 2006), this allows us to describe when developers will accept private financial rewards. Our main research objective is to clearly map the web of relationships between causal antecedents, and developers' acceptance behavior. Using a unique dataset that combines survey and behavioral measures, we find that a) intention to accept monetary rewards mediates the impact of motivational elements on developers' acceptance of monetary rewards; b) intrinsic and extrinsic motivations positively affect their intention to accept monetary rewards, community motivation negatively impacts intention and ideological motivation does not affect the intention to accept rewards and c) these effects are obtained even after inclusion of several control variables. The theoretical and managerial implications of our work are described.