The Future of Open Source is Polarized

Peter Zaitsev,
Founder at Percona
5 Dec 2023

My Perspective

- **Involved in Open Source since late 1990s**
- **Early Staff member of MySQL AB**
- **Founder, until recently CEO at Percona**
- **Investor, Advisor, Mentor in Open Source Businesses**
- **Open Source Advocate**

Better

Everything being Equal Open Source is a better choice

Investment

It is smarter to invest in your resources in making Open Source better rather than paying for Proprietary Software

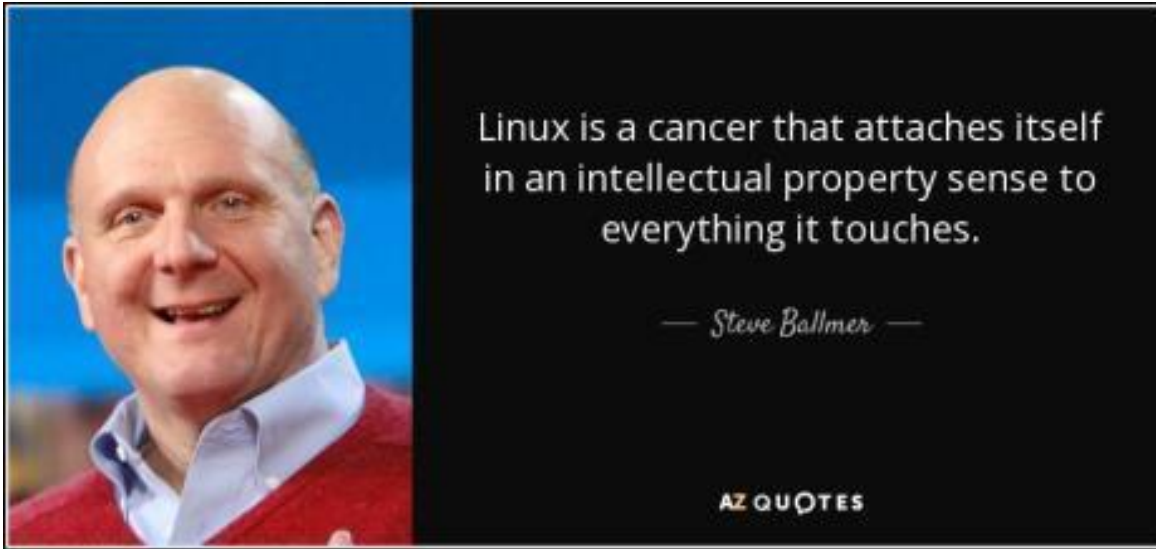# Brief History of Open Source

Emerging

Romantic, Early Adopter

Commercial, Mainstream

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Emerging

Romantic
1980–1990s

Linux is a cancer that attaches itself in an intellectual property sense to everything it touches.

— Steve Ballmer —

AZ QUOTES

SUN TO ACQUIRE MYSQL

Sun announces agreement to acquire MySQL AB, developer of the world's most popular open source database. » Learn More

Jonathan Schwartz, Rich Green, Marten Mickos (CEO of MySQL) and Greg Papadopoulos

Commercial
2000s+

Conflicting Goals

- Open Source Movement
  - Freedom
  - Choice
  - Permissionless Innovation
  - Sharing
  - Benefit of Everyone

- Commercial Company
  - Profit
  - Create the Moat (lock-in)
  - Monopoly
  - Value Capture
  - Benefit of the Company

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Results

Corporation Pursuit of "Shareholder Value" tends to erode their Open Source Commitment

License Changes and other Steps
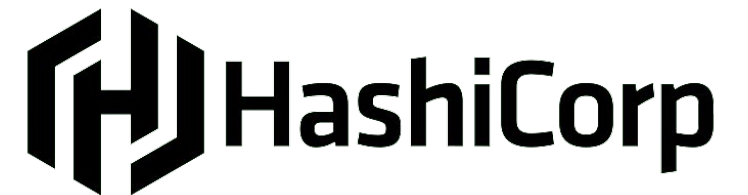
Can't Trust Corporate Promises

Honest talk from MongoDB

"MongoDB was built by MongoDB. There was no prior art. We didn't open source it for help; we open sourced it as a freemium strategy"

https://techmonitor.ai/leadership/strategy/mongodb-ceo-interview

Less Honest Talk

elastic   Platform   Solutions   Customers   Resources

Blog

27 FEBRUARY 2018   NEWS   EN   JP   KR   CN

Doubling Down on Open

By **Shay Banon**

https://www.elastic.co/blog/doubling-down-on-open

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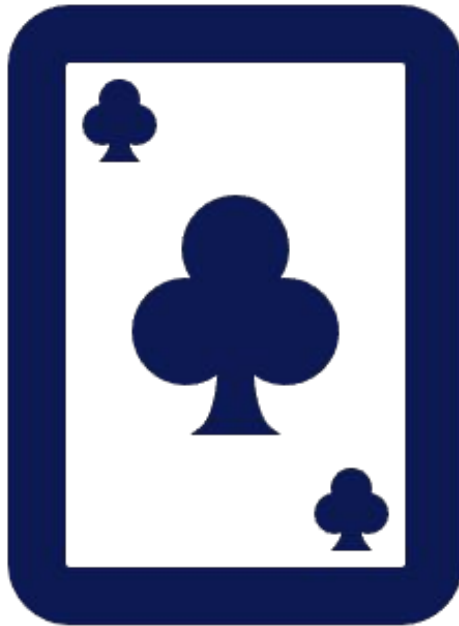# Open Source is Great

For Driving Software Adoption

Proprietary License

Great for Extracting Value

Outcome

Expect to see Corporations to "abuse" Open Source
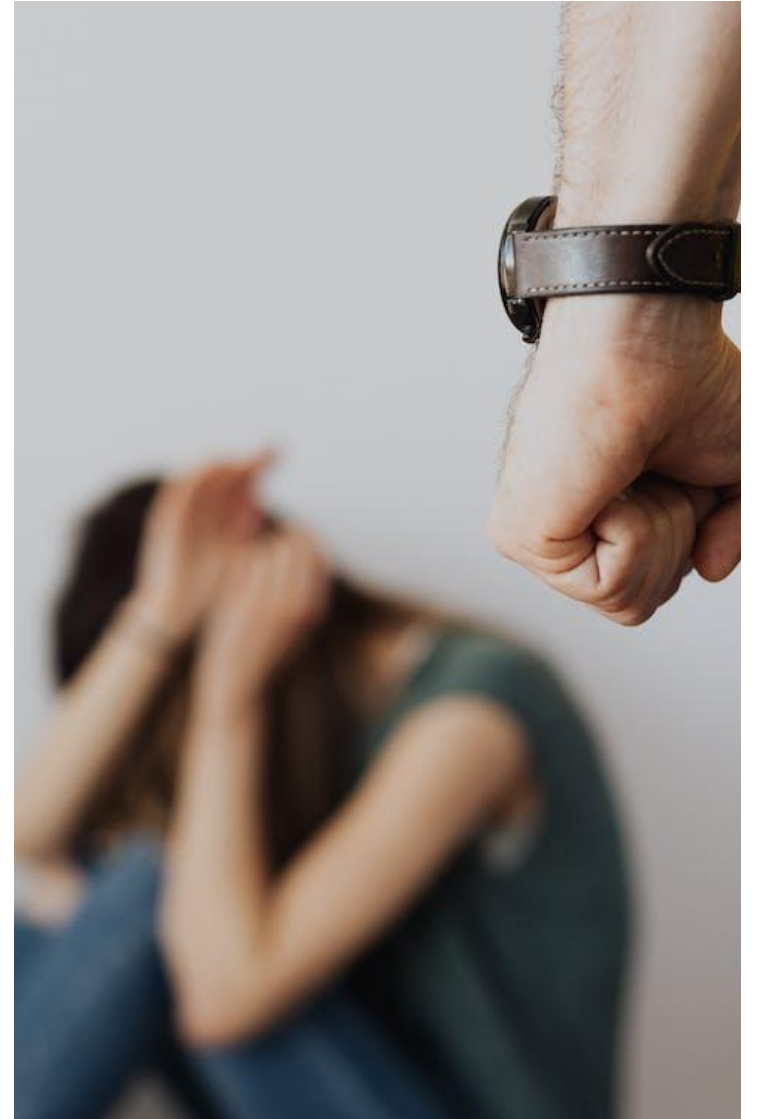
How to Abuse Open Source

"Open", "Open Source Compatible", "Open Source Based" language games

Claiming Source Available Licenses as Open Source

Licensing Bait and Switch

Customer only "Open Source"

"Useless" Open Source

Some can be confused

LICENSE

MongoDB is free and the source is available. Versions released prior to October 16, 2018 are published under the AGPL. All versions released after October 16, 2018, including patch fixes for prior versions, are published under the Server Side Public License (SSPL) v1. See individual files for details.

https://github.com/mongodb/mongo

What is MongoDB?

MongoDB is an open-source document database built on a horizontal scale-out architecture that uses a flexible schema for storing data. Founded in 2007, MongoDB has a worldwide following in the developer community.

https://www.mongodb.com/why-use-mongodb

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Can it be Solved ?

Yet to see For-Profit model where it is Possible, OpenAI may be showing us a path… or may be not

Pay Attention

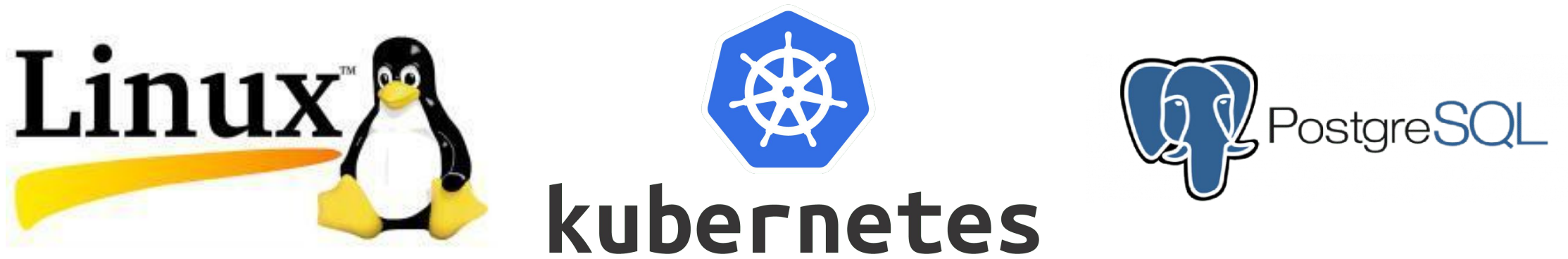**"Open Source" Alone is not enough!**

Polarized

- **For Profit Open Source**
  - Maximize Value to the Owners

- **Non-Profit Open Source**
  - Maximize Value to the World

Is Success Possible?

Non-Profit Project Ownership

Multiple Competing Vendors

Governance

Governance in the interest of Ecosystem at Large

Ownership

✓ **Source Code**

🚫 **Trademarks**

🚚 **Distribution**

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Three Communities in Healthy Open Source

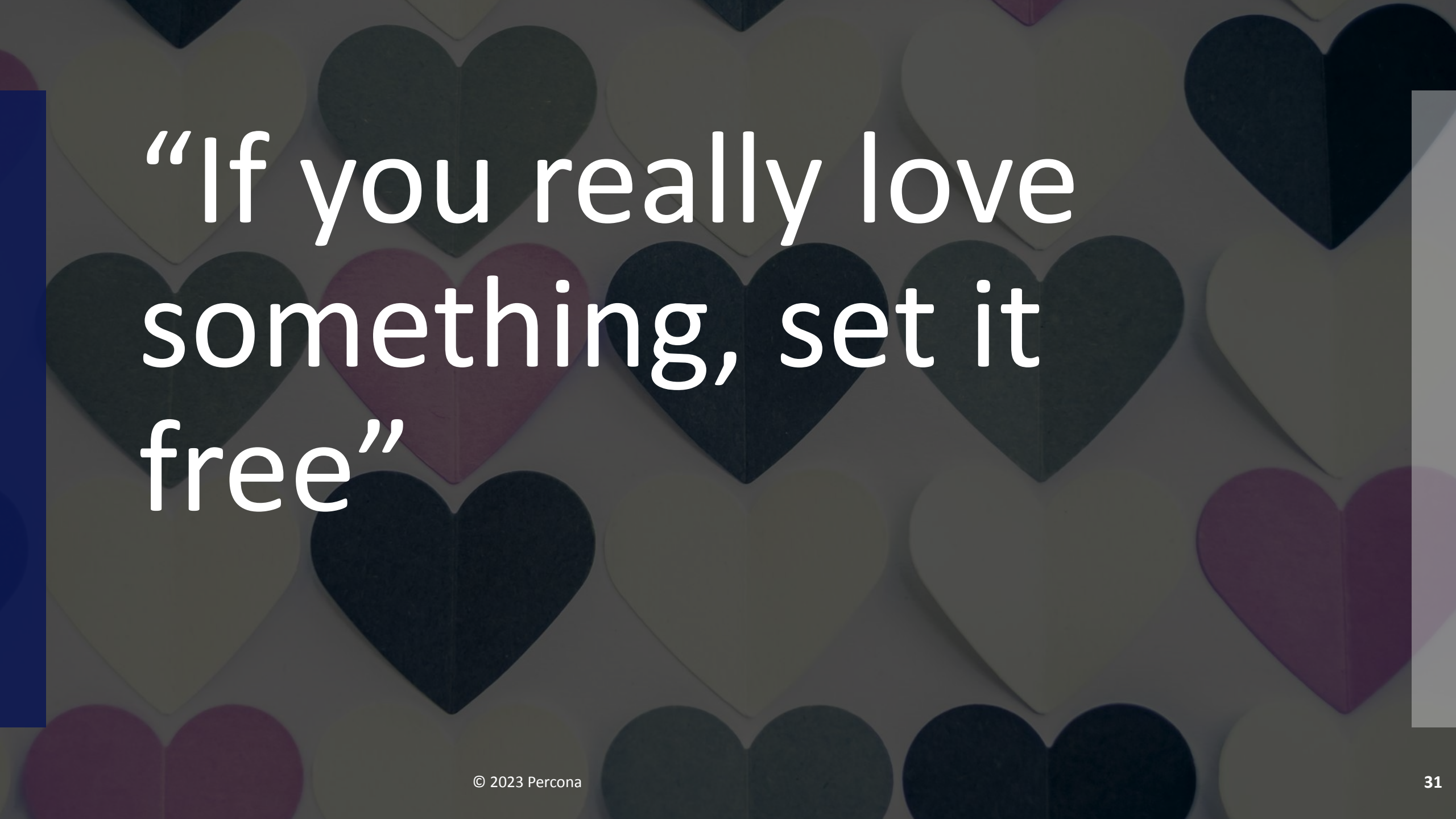Users Community

Contributors Community

Vendors Community

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Embracing Coopetition

Multiple Vendors is Great for Open Source Project Success, They Cooperate and Compete at the same time

Creators

What can Open-Source Creators do ?

"If you really love something, set it free"

Opportunity

- **Transferring project to Non-Profit Governance**

- **Encouraging Development for User Needs**

- **Building Separate Commercial Business**

SERVICE BASED BUSINESSES

COMMERCIAL EXTENSIONS

SAAS BUSINESS

Business

As Creator you will have advantage vs competition

Yet you can't be complacent

Risks Exist

Competition?

Linux Story

Commercial Open Source

May not be all that bad

MySQL

MySQL Community is good enough for a lot of applications

Understanding Risk

Risk is not what will certainly happen, but what may happen

The Future of Open Source

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Thank you, Let's Connect!

https://www.linkedin.com/in/peterzaitsev/
https://twitter.com/PeterZaitsev
http://www.peterzaitsev.com

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