



Open Source at Google

News about Google's Open Source projects and programs



After the Summer, the Code Lives On

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Labels: [20% time](#), [gimp](#), [gnome](#), [guadec](#), [olpc](#), [summer of code meme](#), [ubuntu](#)

By Post by *Manu Cornet*, *Software Engineering Team*

The first time I wrote a piece of code with the intention of making it open source was, like many other people, when I was still a student. As a project for a computer vision class, a classmate and I wrote a [plugin for The GIMP to smart-generate textures](#).

Since this was just a project for college, I wasn't expecting very much from it except good marks, which we got. However, I was pleasantly surprised to receive a lot of kind feedback from the GNOME community, and especially from happy users. I then realized that the community was one of the most important parts of the open source world, probably as important as the code itself. I certainly wouldn't have bothered to maintain and enhance this software, releasing a version 2.0 a few months later, if I didn't get all this feedback showing me that my code was actually useful to people out there.

So when Google announced their first "[Summer of Code](#)" program in [2005](#), I thought I'd give it a try, even though the competition looked pretty tough. I was, again, pleasantly surprised to be selected to work for [Ubuntu](#).

This time I wasn't just coding alone or with a classmate - things got international! I spent a lot of time on IRC discussing my project, seeking advice from developers all around the world: French, German, Australian, American, Mexican, you name it, everyone was hanging around in the IRC channels. They were always kind and patient with my newbie questions, especially my mentor for this program, Sebastien Bacher. Interacting with the community was one of the best parts of this experience, along with writing code and designing user interfaces that would be used by everyone running Ubuntu. If you hate that dialog to add an applet to your panel, or the Ubuntu logout dialog, you now know whom to rant at!

I had so much fun that when Google announced they would have the same program in 2006, I applied again, and was pleasantly surprised yet again to be selected to work with the [OLPC project](#). This time my mentor was none other than [Federico Mena Quintero](#). Things were getting serious.

I decided to go to [GUADEC 2006](#), GNOME's annual conference, so that I could meet Federico, and also Sebastien whom I hadn't had the chance to meet yet. It was really interesting to see all those familiar IRC nicknames suddenly transform into actual people and be able to communicate with them in ways more sophisticated than "/me pings seb128"! Here's a [short video](#) (about 10 minutes) explaining what I did during these two summers.

GUADEC also allowed me to discover a bit more about Google and find out that it looked like a really great company to work for... and here I am now, a few months later, working for Google! I must say it is as great as I had imagined. And even though I'm obviously busy enough with my main project, [GMail](#), I have chosen to work on GNOME as my "20%" project. I thought it was the best thing to do given how much I have learned from Sebastien, Federico, and everyone in the open source community. See all of you soon on IRC!

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