

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Project title</u>	<u>Decision No.</u>	<u>Decision date</u>	<u>Funding period</u>	<u>Funding</u>
livari, Netta	OY	Empowering the Technologically Illiterate Users Enhancing User Participation in Open Source Software Development Context	132939	29.09.2009	01.01.2010 - 31.12.2012	273 000

Project description

This research effort will critically explore the dynamics between the technological elites and the technologically illiterate in the open source software (OSS) development context. Specific focus will be on enabling technologically illiterate users' participation in technology development. OSS development will be highly influential in the future software landscape and user population of OSS solutions is becoming larger, including a larger amount of users without technical skills or knowledge. Currently, however, there is a clear lack of research on user participation in OSS development. This research effort follows Foucauldian and social shaping of technology traditions in critically examining the dynamics between the technological elites and the technologically illiterate in the OSS development context. In information technology IT research critical research has been called for recently. Within the approach it is assumed that during software development users are configured, i.e. the users and the parameters for their work practices are defined already during the development. The configuration of the user should be defined together with the user, or at least be based on the knowledge about the user. OSS development constitutes itself as user centered, but this can be questioned. Especially the research focuses on empowering the technologically illiterate users to influence technology development. In this research effort critical empirical and literature analyses addressing the role of users in the OSS development context will be carried out. Interpretive case studies will be carried out to examine the interaction between users and technology developers both in the community and company OSS development contexts. In addition, constructive research related to devising methods enabling user participation in OSS development will be carried out. This will result in an understanding of suitable ways on how to introduce and support user participation, in OSS development as well as in IT development in general.