

# PAY IT FORWARD: HOW SHARING EXPERIENCES CAN DRIVE INNOVATION

It's hard to overstate the value of the community approach to technology adoption. It has arguably lifted the cloud and the internet to become dominant forces in the world of business and computing. That's why it's important to share your experiences with your peers as you tread the multi-cloud pathway.

The key drivers of computing innovation over the past two decades have largely resulted from community collaboration in what has become known as the open source movement. And it is accelerating.

## FREELY SHARING

As [WIRED](#) observed about a year ago, "Now more than ever, even the most powerful tech companies and entrepreneurs are freely sharing the code underlying their latest technologies. They recognize this will accelerate not only the progress of technology as a whole, but their own progress as well. It's altruism with self-interest. And it's how the tech world now works."

Open source can trace its roots to the academic computing community of the early 1950s, when computer scientists [freely shared software](#) they had created. That was followed by a long period where virtually all commercial computer systems were aimed at ensuring customers—and their money—were forever held captive by proprietary lock-in.

In 1983, Richard Stallman announced he would [develop the GNU operating system](#), a Unix-like operating system meant to consist entirely of free software. Using a GNU compiler, Linus Torvalds wrote a Unix-like kernel that would become Linux.

According to the Open Source Initiative, the "[open source](#)" label came out of a 1998 strategy session after the release of the Netscape source code. It grew "from a realization that the attention around the Netscape announcement had created an opportunity to educate and advocate for the superiority of an open development process."

## ENTERPRISES GETTING ON BOARD

But while open source spurred countless startups and has won over legacy vendors, enterprises have been slower to catch on. According to the recent Rackspace report, [The State of Open Source](#), businesses cite a wide range of benefits from using open source. Over half (56%) expected that it will help them be more innovative, and a similar number expected to save costs (49%) and be more competitive (46%).

"Simply stated, software innovation has decisively shifted to open source," [writes CIO contributor Bernard Golden](#). "It's difficult to think of a single software segment that has a proprietary packaged software vendor defining and leading the field."

Furthermore, Golden says, "For IT organizations to fulfill their role as the factory of the future, they need to embrace open source, with all its benefits and drawbacks."

As enterprises move to adopt multi-cloud environments, that open source community spirit is going to be a vital component of innovation. Think of it as a giant user group aimed at spurring

everyone on to greater accomplishments.

## INSPIRE AND BE INSPIRED

Does sharing your experiences go against the grain of your competitive spirit? It shouldn't.

Rackspace Chief Digital Technologist Mike Bainbridge offered his perspective on how a sense of community can help professionals gain insight from their peers at the company's [Solve London conference](#). "Learning what experts do well, and understanding common mistakes, is a great way to develop a strategy," he said. "The experiences people were willing to share over the two days was truly inspiring."