

## Editorial

The present issue of *Science Studies* is a special issue on free and open source software (FLOSS) guest edited by Dr. Yu-Wei Lin & Dr. Lars Risan. FLOSS offers an interesting terrain for science and technology studies (S&TS) in that research and public discourse on FLOSS has gained impetus and moved on from the hype and manifestos characteristic to its early days. This maturation of research has raised many questions that S&TS has previously asked of other technologies. Yet FLOSS offers new kinds of objects, politics, motivations and ways of organization. The guest editorial contextualizes the papers in the issue in more depth, but we wish to make a short remark on S&TS implications of each paper here.

The opening paper by Darking and Whitley explores the fine line between 'vapourware' and 'software' at the early stages of promising technology. To succeed, such an object needs to retain a 'fluid' and mutable character whilst it also has to be constructed as a 'fire-object', built in relation to projected others and shifting environments in the recent registers of (post) actor network theory. Should the fire and fluid characteristics of this object collapse into each other, the result would indeed turn to vapour instead of software.

The second paper by Demazière, Horn and Zune examines the forms of regulation in a mid-size FLOSS project. The espoused imagery of highly autonomous regulation in FLOSS projects is known to be paired with control regulation by a limited group of core developers. So too in the project analysed. However, a third form, distributed community regulation among peers, is also witnessed as central to the functioning of the project. Such

complementary modes of regulation and sources of agency in organizing distributed development efforts were perhaps always to be expected from an S&TS vantage point. Nonetheless, these present an important opposition to the 'hacker ethic' as a sufficient explanation for how FLOSS works.

The third paper by Freeman continues the debunking of FLOSS myths by focusing on motivation of the contributors. Freeman critiques the underlying assumptions and set-ups in extant studies that typify motivations into intrinsic and extrinsic ones and shows an alternative by tracing the 'personal paths of participation' and how these are tied to varying and changing motives and objects. Her analysis adds to the growing S&TS literature on object-related sociality and motivation.

The final paper by Chan examines the political and social efforts that have gone into paving the way for the proliferation of FLOSS in Peru, showing how FLOSS is not a technical or organizational inevitability as perceived by many of its proponents. Her account re-instates S&TS findings on 'heterogeneous engineering' yet questions the descriptions and concepts of how this happens in distributed and multi-vocal network of people.

These research articles are complemented by two interesting book reviews related to internet mediated peer production communities, namely those on *The Internet Imaginaire* by Patrice Flichy and *Cutting Code. Software and Sociality* by Adrian Mackenzie. In all, the special issue provides an important contribution to research on the social dimensions of free and open source software.

With this issue we welcome Dr. Janne Lehenkari as the new book review editor for Science Studies and warmly thank Dr. Mikko Rask for his outstanding work in developing and managing the book re-

views in Science Studies from 1/2005 to 1/2007.

*Editors in Chief*  
*Sampsa Hyysalo*  
*Tarja Knuuttila*