

# Should You Donate To Open Source Projects?

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A project in which I'm involved, in the middle of a time of change, recently received an enquiry from a member of its user community. The enquirer was pleased with the software, concerned about the changes and wanted to provide support to the project to ensure it continued and as an expression of gratitude. "Where should I make a donation to support the software?"

It sounds like an easy question, but the issue is more complex than you might think. While open source projects are created by members of their co-developer community, that does not mean the development is funded through that community. Open source projects are collaborations between motivated individuals. I can think of very few projects where the community entity funds development - a tiny percentage of projects. When a charity or trade association supports a community, it typically does so by employing administrative, legal and financial staff, with a view to supporting the technical, community and market operations of the community and freeing community members to focus on the project itself.

In fact, most communities I know strongly oppose the idea of the community entity engaging in development.

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**Links:**

[1] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/72>

[2] <http://blogs.computerworlduk.com/simon-says/2011/09/should-you-donate-to-open-source-projects/index.htm>