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The dual role of conflict in Free and Open Source Software development.

Anna Filippova
National University of Singapore
Singapore
annaf@nus.edu.sg

Keywords

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Advisor: Ass. Prof. Hichang Cho

Anna has a BA in Communications Writing (First Class Honors) from the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Monash University (2008)

Abstract.

The voluntary and computer mediated nature of FOSS work presents unique challenges and opportunities for effective collaboration. Conflict is one such challenge, magnified by the distributed nature of work and limited communication channels. Though conflict is recognized as an important social process in FOSS development teams, few studies have adequately addressed this issue. Drawing on theoretical frameworks in organizational behavior and social psychology, her dissertation investigates how conflict arises in voluntary distributed virtual teams such as FOSS, and its impact on group function. The work first explores the emergence and experience of conflict during the life cycle of a project. Different types and sources of conflict are identified, as well as their relationship with group outcomes. Various conflict types are expected to affect group function differently: some conflict sources may present a challenge, while others may prove necessary for successful group function. The dissertation expands theory and research on distributed work, in examining on-going processes of conflict in voluntary teams. This work also informs community design, as understanding conflict antecedents in voluntary virtual teams aids in reducing unproductive conflict and facilitates conflict that spurs innovation.

Biography.

Anna Filippova is a PhD student in Communications and New Media at the National University of Singapore. Her research focuses on conflict within distributed collaboration, specifically FOSS development teams. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Communication from Monash University, and has previously worked as a Communications manager, bridging gaps between technology and the consumer.