

Open Source 2.0 : From Open Source Software to Open Source Resources?

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Abstract

What is « open source »? Commonly associated with software whose source code is available under a licence following the « Open Source Definition » (OSD) of the Open Source Initiative (OSI), the definition of open source remains a major source of confusion and conflict. Within software communities the OSD is controversial, and with the democratisation of other openness movements (open science, open education, open hardware, etc.) there is an increasing question regarding open source beyond software for digital resources where source files are provided. The topic of « open source resources » can be essential to enable modifiability of openly available resources in these various domains, greatly enhancing the ability to collaborate. Based on the review of more than 200 documents related to debates and usages of the notion, conducted as independent citizen research, this paper argues for a paradigm shift in the very meaning of « open source ».

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1 Introduction

This work is rooted in an intent to provide education on digital commons and open models — open science, open education, open software, open standard, open hardware, etc. — and in the practical need to understand « open source » clearly enough to explain it. However, the more we delve into the meaning of « open source », the more confusing it becomes, especially at the intersection of open models making it particularly difficult to understand and therefore to explain. This research aims to stimulate a more in-depth discussion in order to examine and clarify this concept, and given its significance in IT and these trends towards openness this potential paradigm shift in the meaning could have far-reaching implications.

Originally the notion emerged around software, derived from the concept of source code and its availability. In its most widely accepted interpretation, open source is defined in relation to the Open Source Definition (Open Source Initiative [2026b](https://opensource.org/licenses/OSD-2.0)) of the Open Source Initiative. Not only must the source code be available but the licence must also comply with a set of criteria, including no discrimination against « persons or groups » and « Fields of Endeavor ». The OSI presents itself as the kilogram of open source (Open Source Initiative [2019](https://opensource.org/licenses/OSD-2.0)). With the growing importance of open source software, this liberal approach has divided software communities, with competing interpretations emerging that restrict certain actors for commercial or ethical reasons (Coraline Ada Ehmke [2020](https://cortado.org/2020/08/01/open-source-2-0/); Dan Brown [2026](https://danbrown.org/2026/08/01/open-source-2-0/)). The meaning of « open source » has thus become a source of conflict and

debate in the software industry, where understanding the concept requires navigating semantic and political conflicts.

Beyond these internal divergences in software communities, there is a nascent debate around the meaning of open source beyond software with the term being already used in other openness movements. Open source is frequently used vaguely to refer to any kind of freely available resources, but it also takes on a specific meaning around other types of resources in relation to the availability of their « source files ». In their glossary, GitHub — the main platform where open source software is hosted — does not define open source strictly as a software topic (GitHub 2026), a position that followed a debate in which Ben Balter, a GitHub employee at the time, concluded in an article « Open source, not just software anymore » (Balter 2014). Similarly, The Turing Way — an open science handbook — updated its glossary definition (The Turing Way 2026) of open source following a community debate initiated by the author (Simon Rossi 2024), acknowledging that the concept extends beyond software with consideration of research articles source files. In open education, the notion of « open source educational resources » (OSER) (Bothmann et al. 2021) has been proposed to qualify Open Educational Resources (OER) with available source files, an idea similarly developed by the Journal of Open Source Education (Journal of Open Source Education 2023).

2 History: The Origins of Open Source

In the early days of computing, software was provided with its source code or binary code for technical reasons, the industry’s business model was based on the sale of hardware. Later, the software began to be sold as a separate product, and the source code was no longer distributed. IBM’s unbundling announcement in 1969 (IBM 1969) and later their object code only policy in 1983 (IBM 1983) symbolise this evolution. As a new type of artefact, software’s legal protection was subject to some uncertainty until the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976 broadened the definition of «

literary works » to unambiguously include software, guaranteeing ownership.

In reaction to this enclosure of software, in 1983 Richard Stallman initiated the « free software » movement by launching the GNU project (Richard Stallman 1983). The concept of free software formalised this practice of sharing software with its source code, with the idea of providing « four essential freedoms »: to (0) run, (1) study, (2) redistribute copies and (3) distribute modified versions (Free Software Foundation 2026). Mirroring copyright around the notion of copyleft, these freedoms were ensured with the creation in 1989 of the GNU General Public License.

The concept of « open source » truly emerged afterwards, as part of a long history of sharing source code. The catalyst that led to the formalisation and rise of this terminology was the publication of the essay *The Cathedral and the Bazaar* by Eric Raymond in 1997 (Eric Raymond 1997). Inspired by the development of Linux and the collaborative dynamics surrounding what was still called free software, and in a critique of Brooks’s Law — “Adding manpower to a late software project makes it later” — Raymond proposed a set of lessons for a more open approach to software development. Convinced of the superiority of a collaborative approach, this semantic evolution from « free software » to « open source » was part of an effort to reach the business world through a kind of « marketing campaign » (Eric Raymond 2000).

The history is contested with records dating back to at least 1985 (Plaetinck 2024; Martin Tournioij 2020), but the coining is regularly attributed to Christine Peterson in early February 1998 (Peterson 2018) to overcome the « confusion factor » surrounding « free software » — between freedom and gratis. The Open Source Initiative was founded shortly after, in late February 1998, by Eric Raymond and Bruce Perens (Open Source Initiative 2026a), the latter being the project leader of Debian at the time. Raymond and Perens created the Open Source Definition to define this new terminology — a document that was in practice mostly a rebranding of the existing Debian Free Software Guidelines drafted in July 1997 by Perens to specify Debian’s free software policy (Bruce Perens

1999; Eric Raymond 2000). Since then, in the dominant view, « open source » represents a software whose licence adheres to the Open Source Definition. The institutional foundations that define open source today thus rest on a rapid and arbitrary process — inherited from a document that predated the concept and was designed to serve an entirely different purpose. In fact, the concept of open source has never been rigorously defined.

The process surrounding the Open Source Definition demonstrates a **social construction of reality** (Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann 1966). We can witness the externalisation of a conception of open source from two people, followed by objectivation through the institutionalisation of this view with the Open Source Initiative, and internalisation as successive communities took it for granted as the presumed reality of what open source is.

« One of the meeting’s important results was a general agreement that, in all the variant definitions, public access to source was the most important and only absolutely critical common element. » — Eric Raymond on the Open Source Summit of 1998 (Eric Raymond 1998)

3 The Open Source Definition: A Source of Conflicts

« Ultimately, we are the heart and soul of FLOSS, not the Free Software Foundation or the Open Source Initiative or GitHub. We have the responsibility to put ethical principles over the philosophical purity of “software freedom”. » — Coraline Ada Ehmke, Founder of Organization for Ethical Source in the article (Coraline Ada Ehmke 2020)

The Open Source Definition as a basis to define « open source » is contested, dividing software communities around the meaning of the concept itself. The root of the conflict lies in the OSD’s liberal vision, based on its non-discrimination criteria the Open Source Initiative promotes the idea that open source soft-

ware should enable anyone to use it for any purpose. Several licences have emerged that introduce restriction clauses incompatible with the OSD, such as the Commons Clause licence seeking to limit selling or the Hippocratic Licence aiming to prohibit uses that violate human rights.

Two phenomena can be observed from this situation. On the one hand, the term open source is being used in a way that does not adhere to the OSD (Dan Brown 2026), and this usage is consequently delegitimised and rejected by the OSD’s proponents. They call for it to be referred to by a different name, and so, on the other hand, we see a proliferation of adjacent terms: source available, visible source, ethical source, fair source, fauxpen source, shared source, post-open source, etc. Underlying this conflict is also a contrast between two views of openness: a binary approach versus varying degrees of openness along a spectrum between fully closed and fully open states (Nick Vidal 2025).

As long as the Open Source Initiative does not change its view of open source, these conflicts will continue and are likely to escalate. The term is used intentionally outside the OSD framework not out of ignorance, but as a deliberate rejection of its authority (Kyle E. Mitchell 2020). This conflict illustrates a tension between a prescriptive institutional definition and popular usage — this paper argues for a more descriptive approach to defining what open source actually means.

4 Beyond Software: The Paradigm of Open Source Resources

Across other openness movements and outside the software sector, a new application of the concept of open source is emerging to qualify resources where some sort of « source file(s) » are provided. Source files are the editable, upstream formats used to develop and meaningfully modify a digital resource. For a wide range of digital resources, a common pattern can be observed: source files are used for creation, and

a final format derived from them and optimised for distribution and use. This duality between source and distribution files could stem from an inherent characteristic of digital resources, driven by the distinct information needs and constraints between development and end use such as portability or compression — an absolute convergence may be unachievable. In many domains, these initial formats are already referred to as source files. The concept of open source is thus no longer derived from « source code » but from « source file(s) ».

Access to source files becomes an essential requirement for enabling the meaningful modification of these digital resources. When creating « open resources », there is often a focus on open licences such as Creative Commons while completely overlooking this technical aspect of making sources available. In open practices, this frequently leads to a situation where people have the right to modify a resource without the ability to do so.

To address this gap, we propose the notion of « open source resources » — extending the meaning of open source beyond software to a broader set of digital resources — for which we propose the following definition:

Open Source Resource: a digital resource made publicly available alongside its source files.

Examples: open source software, open source article, open source educational resource, open source image, open source hardware.

The following examples illustrate this pattern across different types of digital resources.

4.1 Open Source Article



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#OpenAccess is all nice and fair, but I think we need to think more about #OpenSource publications. I don't even mean the full reproducibility cycle, but simply editable source formats instead of PDFs. CC BY PDFs are freeware, not open source. Claiming your rights to create derivative versions basically requires disassembling a compiled artifact. (This rant was brought to you from trying to read yet another Zenodo deposited document on a phone.)

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This principle applies to research articles and documents, typically distributed in PDF format — this article is itself a performative demonstration. It is made available as a PDF under the Creative Commons CC0 Public Domain Dedication, which permits modification. From this distribution format someone may copy the text into an editor, but that won't be the most appropriate way to edit it, for example to handle references. This paper was produced using a Markdown file rendered using Quarto, built upon a BibTeX file to manipulate references, with PNG images integrated into this final document which can be created from an SVG file. All of these source files composing this article are made publicly available on Zenodo to archive it and Codeberg to produce it. Access to these elements is required to fully benefit from the ability to modify this open resource. Complex resources may themselves contain nested open source artefacts, a full release as open source could be far from trivial.



Figure 1: Preprint article on arXiv (Bothmann et al. 2021) with PDF and TeX source both available under CC BY licence

The practice is not limited to this article; it is already present in academic publishing more broadly. This paper on arXiv shows that providing both components can be done in some places, with the LaTeX file explicitly designated as the source — directly em-

bodying the notion of a source file as defined above. It is also an open source article.

The open science movement focuses on the idea of open access articles — freely available under open licences — but largely overlooks source file availability, limiting the practical ability to modify and build upon research outputs. A consequence of viewing articles as a finished product, this will be part of a broader cultural shift. Modern file formats could emerge to supersede PDFs through this transformation, with more living and connected documents increasing the explorability and evolutivity of research. Open source practices in research may be a critical dimension for a truly collaborative research ecosystem and to realize « Open Science 2.0 » (Thibault et al. 2023).

Open source may be the future of open access.

4.2 Open Source Educational Resources

In open education, the concept of open source is more theorised than in other domains, emerging as an extension of the established notion of Open Educational Resources (OER). The notion of « Open Source Educational Resources » has been proposed (Bothmann et al. 2021) to qualify OER with source files publicly available. The Journal of Open Source Education uses the notion of « open source educational materials », explaining in their about section that « “open-source” implies that there are source files that are converted and rendered into a final learner-presentable form » (Journal of Open Source Education 2023). Alongside this conceptual theorisation, we can observe a growing consideration of source files in open education as reflected in UNESCO’s recommendations on Open Educational Resources, which specify “developing mechanisms to support and incentivize all stakeholders to publish source files and accessible OER using standard open file formats in public repositories.”(UNESCO 2019)

The Turing Way project demonstrates the confusion surrounding the notion. The community described the handbook as open source while simultaneously explaining open source strictly as a software topic

— despite the handbook itself being a non-software resource distributed with its source files. From this contradiction, a community debate on the meaning of open source was initiated by the author around the question « Is The Turing Way Open Source ? » (Simon Rossi 2024), leading to an update of the definition of open source in their glossary recognising open source beyond software (The Turing Way 2026).

Open Educational Resources (OER) face a similar challenge to research articles — typically distributed in PDF format such as for textbooks or presentations with source files frequently being omitted. The creation of interactive activities using H5P technology offers another example of this open source practice: created using `.h5p` source files — downloadable and editable by anyone — and then rendered to HTML to be displayed in a browser. This relationship between source file and final resource can take various forms — from Markdown rendered to PDF, to `.h5p` files rendered to interactive HTML — but the underlying pattern remains the same.

4.3 Open Source Image

These principles can be applied to images — typically distributed as compressed image files such as PNG or JPG, with editable source files such as SVG or layered files such as PSD enabling meaningful modification.

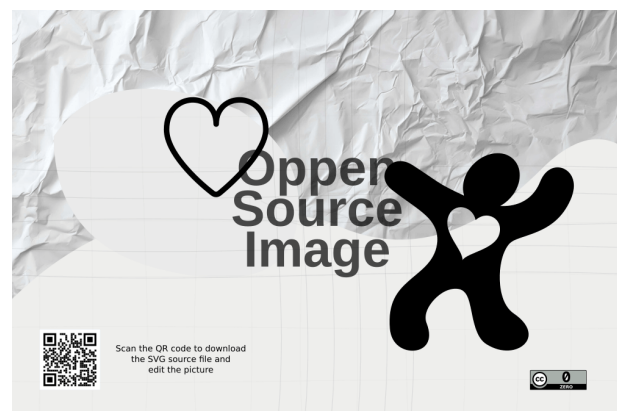


Figure 2: The Open Source Image

This image demonstrates these mechanisms. Provided in PNG format the modification is very complex, but with the access to SVG source file through the QR code the modification becomes straightforward, for example to edit the text using an editor such as Inkscape.

4.4 Other Digital Resources

The examples examined here — articles, educational resources, and images — are illustrative rather than exhaustive. The same logic with source files and distribution format can apply across a broader range of digital resources, such as:

Resource type	Source files	Distribution file
Hardware	.FCStd, .scad	.stl
Font	.ufo, .glyphs	.ttf, .otf
Music	.flp, .als	.mp3
Video	.kdenlive, .prproj	.mp4

Each domain presents its own technical specificities in defining what constitutes a source file, and further work is needed to explore the meaning and implications of open source across these various typologies of resources. As part of this research, a Wikipedia article on source files was created to support distributed investigation of these components. ([Source files 2026](#)) The study of source files for the development of digital artefacts appears largely unexplored, whether for open or closed practices. This context may reflect a collective blindness to the means of production, symptomatic of a consumerist digital culture.

In this framework, open data may be a special case. Rather than source files, open source may relate to the sense given in Open Source Intelligence (OSINT): the use of publicly available sources of information. An open source dataset could thus be seen as one built from combined open datasets or strictly from publicly available information.

5 Software Infrastructure for Open Source Resources

To benefit from this paradigm shift, a new generation of infrastructure will be required to fully enable col-

laboration around open source resources. Software forges (or wikis), such as GitHub or Codeberg, can be a source of inspiration to think these new environments — software forges being already repurposed for the production of other digital resources due to their functional value at the cost of high entry barriers. With features such as versioning and edit history at the file level, mechanisms to suggest edits or raise issues, discussions or peer-review spaces, quality control, retraction or funding systems, etc. Implemented directly in the platform or linked to other services to provide the variety of tools needed for open practices. Weak signals, such as researchers' calls, are gradually pointing in this direction of production infrastructure (Lorig [2026](#)).

It will be essential to consider the standards used — whether for file formats or infrastructure protocols — to enhance accessibility, interoperability and durability, by prioritizing open standards or even developing new ones. Open source resources can be built using private and expensive solutions, limiting in depth the external ability to interact with them — the tooling constituting one dimension of this spectrum of openness. As part of this research to enhance the semantic web, a [SourceFile property](#) has been suggested to schema.org in order to enable software tools to distinguish source files from distribution files. (Simon Rossi [2026](#))

We desperately need modern forges for the production of digital commons, adapted to the diversity of openness movements.

6 Open Licenses, Copyright and Copyleft Philosophies

« CC licenses are a patch, not a fix, for the problems of the copyright system. » — Organisation Creative Commons on Copyright Reform (Creative Commons [2026](#))

The legal framework must be examined to understand open source. The Open Source Definition defines open source primarily through licence compliance, yet this entire framework is subject to evolution — poten-

tially making our current open licensing landscape obsolete in the future. Under the current copyright framework, literary works are automatically protected upon creation, with no simple mechanism within the law enabling creators to share their works openly by default. This tension between copyright law and digital practices has driven the development of a complex ecosystem of open licences, however this context raises significant questions regarding a potential copyright reform.

As a mirror to copyright’s protective regime, the philosophy of copyleft emerged to encourage sharing. The first known use of the concept of copyleft appeared in 1976, the same year the Copyright Act broadened the definition of literary works to include software, originally as a simple claim by Li-Chen Wang (*Li-Chen Wang* 2026) and later taking legal form in the 1980s with the first open licence created by Richard Stallman (Donald Robertson 2015). Progressively, open licences have proliferated to cover other types of digital resources such as Creative Commons licences developed by Lawrence Lessig following unsuccessful legal advocacy for broader cultural sharing rights (Lawrence Lessig 2005). After several decades, with the democratization and institutionalization of openness movements, increasing pressure is being exerted on the copyright framework with debates over the integration of sharing mechanisms into the law (Goss 2007). If the entire sharing philosophy behind copyleft were to gain widespread acceptance to shape copyright, this could transform the way we publish digital resources through another paradigm than open licences — a definition of open source based on licences will probably not stand the test of time.

Should a legal dimension be established as a constitutive element of open source? It seems perilous to impose a specific framework. Around the definition of open source, there is a conflict between a binary and a spectrum view of openness based on the licensing scheme. The Open Source Definition imposes licensing criteria that allows anyone to use the resource for any purpose, but extending this binary view to open source resources would exclude an entire set of resources that provide their source files. For example, the use of non-commercial licenses is widespread in

open education, the OSD view would perpetuate a whole set of semantic conflicts when deciding what constitutes an « open source educational resource ». The challenge is to draw a line between openness and closedness, the right rule to follow which seems to depend heavily on the context and culture of the actors producing their resources. It is also a matter of establishing governance rules that stakeholders wish to create for their digital commons, and imposing a uniform policy does not seem reasonable. Openness can be dangerous — consider an “open source” book banned by a government: access to source files enables collaborative co-production within a trusted semi-open network, while forced complete openness could expose contributors to political risk. On top of that, new mechanisms are continuously emerging through open licenses to address challenges faced by stakeholders, such as PolyForm licenses which can limit usage to small businesses or specific fields (*PolyForm Licenses* 2026). Any definition of the legal aspects of open source should take the granularity of openness into account.

Providing a universal answer on what the legal dimension of open source should be seems impossible. The legal aspect would need to be more adaptive to align with the evolving global copyright framework within this spectrum of openness. A definition of open source grounded in source files reflects an immutable technical reality, providing a more robust theoretical framework.

7 The Nature of Language : From prescriptivism to descriptivism

Despite an attempt to trademark « open source », the Open Source Initiative holds no legal authority over the terminology; the term belongs to common language and is shaped by social convention (Kyle E. Mitchell 2020). « Open source » itself exhibits the characteristics of an **essentially contested concept** — value-charged, multi-layered, variously describable, subject to contextual evolution, and consciously dis-

puted (Gallie 1956). This configuration sets the stage for endless disputes over its definition, rendering it impossible for any central authority to crystallize its meaning.

In linguistics, two approaches to definition can be distinguished. A prescriptive approach imposes rules on how a term should be used, the current OSI perspective. Conversely, a descriptive approach observes how a term is actually used, the tradition this paper aligns with. Descriptivism recognises that language is living and evolving; meaning shifts with usage and no authority can fix it in place. By relying on an arbitrary, rapid, and unrigorous process, the OSI's prescriptive stance is fighting against the very nature of language.

8 Discussion

The start of a definition process, a need to move beyond the Open Source Definition. This paper proposes a conceptual revolution of a major notion of our digital world, affecting a whole range of openness movements leading « open source » into a new and much broader dimension. This represents a change in the nature of the concept; this shift in association from « open source software » to « open source resources » could fundamentally change our perception of this phenomenon in the coming years. Given the significance and controversy of this terminology, the scarcity of literature regarding the definition of this notion, further empirical and conceptual research is needed to shed light on its meaning and resulting implications. Aware of the risk of crystallisation and ossification, of our human tendency to form beliefs through social constructs, we have deliberately kept this definition simple in order to encourage debate rather than reach a definitive conclusion. Several decades after the concept first emerged, it seems that no real effort has ever been made to define it rigorously; this marks a new beginning. The Open Source Initiative has always claimed to define the notion through the Open Source Definition, the result of a brief and arbitrary choice involving two people, which then became set in stone basing a key concept on weak

foundations. Legal compliance is a real complexity to consider, yet it should not be a defining feature of such a concept. The position championed by the OSI is therefore merely one flavour of open source, and it may be time to embrace diversity whilst refocusing on the sources rather than the licences. With the ubiquity of digital technologies and the changing historical context brought about by ecological, political and social crises, claiming to know the right path forward seems rather presumptuous, and advocating such a liberal view of technology could be a major political mistake. Especially at a time when open source software policies are emerging that may be based on the interpretation of the OSI. Neutrality does not exist, it is certainly in the interest of society to explore new avenues across this spectrum of openness. The redefinition of the concept is already taking place outside the OSI, first and foremost by those who challenge it as words are shaped primarily by usage. If this renewed vision of open source were to be confirmed, it would mean that the Open Source Initiative and its surrounding community have been off topic and that the Open Source Definition cannot be used as a reliable basis to define « open source ». As creating new terminology is a well-established tradition in disputes surrounding the meaning of open source, one might suggest doing so here — yet we believe instead that along with the democratisation of other openness movements we are witnessing the evolution of a concept that is, all things considered, relatively new.

Actors of other openness movements need to take ownership of the concept of « open source ». Systematically considering the availability of source files should become a standard part of open practices across these domains. The use of open licences alone is not sufficient to fulfil the rights they confer — open source resources become a key component in enabling meaningful modification, thereby fostering collaborative practices. This could contribute to the emergence of new kinds of collaborative resources, such as knowledge bases or living documents, that go beyond the static format of the traditional research article or textbook. The shift towards open source resources could play a significant role in supporting the contemporary

scientific and educational revolution brought about by digital technology. A shift in how this concept is perceived can lead to a change in mindset and practices regarding the creation and sharing of digital resources. Conversely, for IT professionals, this different perspective may lead them to pay greater attention to source files in other types of resources, where open source software communities have traditionally stopped at licences. The concept of open source should no longer be the exclusive preserve of computer scientists or associated solely with software; this implicit association is becoming a source of confusion. What is the role of an organisation called the Open Source Initiative if open source is no longer a software concept? What is an open source policy, an open source project? What is the role of an Open Source Programme Office? This change in meaning influences potential activities associated with it. We therefore need new, or at least more precise, terminology to describe these practices of making source code available. Terminological usage might lean towards « open source software », or alternatively, given that it is already used in some contexts, move towards the concept of « open software ». This could ensure semantic consistency with the other openness movements: open software, open science, open education, open hardware, etc.

Infrastructure and Format Implications. A new generation of software infrastructures will be needed to ensure source files are readily available, to provide suitable collaboration features and to offer user-friendly interfaces for all stakeholders. Current environments are not suited to handle source files, as research journals for instance provide no mechanism for their systematic availability. Control of source files is a means of controlling users; it is a tool for vendor or platform lock-in. « Digital textualities » (*Research Laboratory on Digital Textualities* 2026) is a concept that is gaining ground, but even simply writing text openly with advanced collaborative mechanisms tailored to scale remains a challenge. As the open software community provides more advanced tools, there is a growing tendency to repurpose software forges (e.g. GitHub, Codeberg) to create open source resources, which comes with significant barriers to entry. One example is The Forge of Digital

Educational Commons in France, based on GitLab, where an entirely new interface is being developed on top of it to enable teachers to produce open source educational resources (GTnum Forges 2026). The choice of source file format must also be taken into account as it is possible to create open source resources using closed formats. For example, an image using a `.psd` source file requires Adobe Photoshop to be edited meaningfully. An orientation towards open formats and open standards will help to support independence and interoperability.

Education on « open source ». How should open source be explained? This research journey started with the intent to understand open source in order to explain it — ultimately leading to this paradigm shift. Given these different interpretations, this evolution, and these established and emerging meanings, explaining open source in a simple way is a genuine challenge. Providing clarity on the meaning of open source will help to transmit it. Education on open practices is on the rise, including education on open science, open education and open software, making it worthwhile to explain this conception of open source resources in a cross-cutting manner to improve the management of resources in each of these areas. Under the premise of providing clarity, the Open Source Initiative could actually be the main source of confusion, making open source education more complex. Education about open source therefore has a political dimension, which leads us to question what the right vision to convey is. Education has an emancipatory purpose; presenting open source through the prism of the Open Source Definition could, in reality, constitute the transmission of a dogma.

9 Conclusion

This paper proposes a conceptual revolution in the meaning of « open source » — a paradigm shift from « open source software » to « open source resources ». We propose a simple definition: open source resources are digital resources made publicly available alongside their source files. We demonstrate a framework in which digital resources typically have both an editable

format — the source files — and a final format derived from it and optimised for end use. We have illustrated how this concept applies to different types of resources. Beyond software, we have shown how open sourcing works for research articles, educational content and images while suggesting that this could be extended more broadly to other resources. By making its own source files publicly available, this article is itself a performative demonstration of the concept it proposes. With the progressive democratisation of other openness movements (open science, open education, open hardware, etc.), we have argued that open source resources have direct implications for their practice regarding the management of resources. An improved management of source files can enhance collaboration across all open models. We have retraced the origins of the concept of open source to justify the idea that there has never been a rigorous process of defining this concept. This paper exposes the intrinsic limitations of the Open Source Definition from linguistic, technical, juridical, and sociological perspectives, arguing that it can no longer serve as a reliable foundation to define open source; its status as a normative standard should therefore be reconsidered and ultimately superseded. This citizen research makes no pretence of an illusory neutrality to embed a political stance, it is intended as a kiss of death against some beliefs. We invite the research community and society at large to help advance our understanding of this key concept of our digital world.

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11 Bibliography

An extended bibliography of sources consulted and useful for understanding the debates surrounding « open source » is archived on the Zenodo repository of the article (doi: [10.5281/zenodo.20237079](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20237079)), also available from the following shared Zotero library: https://www.zotero.org/groups/5352918/open_source_undefined/library.

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