



## Stanford eCorner

### When Should You Open Source?

Kim Polese, *SpikeSource*

November 09, 2005

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1517/When-Should-You-Open-Source>

Polese believes that entrepreneurs should open source their proprietary software only if the open source supports and enables their core business.



#### Transcript

So a lot of businesses are thinking about today open sourcing their proprietary software. It's a trend you're starting to see. And in fact just this week, computer associates spun off the inverse project and formed a company around it that used to be a proprietary piece of software, obviously. And so, more and more that's happening. I'd say the rush now, the decision around whether to do that or not. First of all, why would you want to open source this software? If you're interested in license revenues unless you've got a big support business and infrastructure, you've already built up around supporting the open source project, it's probably not wise. But if that software can help leverage another product, the sales good example is a company called Digium that was in the PBX device business. They were competing against very large companies and decided to build and then open source their own VoIP PBX software product that's driven hardware sales for them and made them a much more successful company. So you got to figure out what's the core as they say, you know, this is sort of core versus contacts topic and what's important, what's critical to your business? And what's supporting it in enabling that? So if the open source supports and enables your core business, that's probably the right decision.