

What does ROSPA do?

ROSPA operates like many professional associations, performing functions like:

- Advocacy on behalf on its members and their craft
- Monthly meetings, alternating between a downtown lunch meeting and a 7:00 PM evening meeting
- Conducting technical presentations
- Providing an electronic forum for its members, including email lists and a place to place to publish papers and request peer review
- Facilitating knowledge sharing and peer support between its members
- Research and projects in the field of our craft
- Participating in the annual Regina Open Source Expo

What does ROSPA discuss?

Anything related to open source and open standards, especially as it relates to the local community.

Our goal is to provide active forums that will support the members in getting the most out of open source software and methodologies. We want to raise the bar for our craft and foster a local IT climate that embraces the use of open source and open standards.

Partnerships

LOSURS Historically, ROSPA grew out of (and today remains a sibling group of) LOSURS², which is an open source user group for hobbyists in the Regina area. Many members are involved in both groups, depending on where their interests lie.

SAGE SAGE, the System Administrators' Guild, is an international organization that aims to advance the status of computer system administration as a profession, establish standards of professional excellence and recognize those who attain them, develop guidelines for improving the technical and managerial capabilities of members of the profession, and promote activities that advance the state of the art or the community. ROSPA acts as a local SAGE group for the Regina area.

²<http://www.losurs.org>

About open source

What is open source all about?

Open source is a term created by the Open Source Initiative³ to increase the visibility and impact of the technical cultures that built the Internet and the World Wide Web. The OSI has this to say about open source:

“The basic idea behind open source is very simple: When programmers can read, redistribute, and modify the source code for a piece of software, the software evolves. People improve it, people adapt it, people fix bugs. And this can happen at a speed that, if one is used to the slow pace of conventional software development, seems astonishing.”

Open source software is widely used and often best-of-breed. It includes such notable products as:

- The Apache web server, with 60%+ marketshare⁴
- The BIND DNS daemon & Sendmail mail server⁵
- Samba, a complete file-and-print server providing seamless service to SMB/CIFS (Windows) clients
- Firewalling, OpenSSH, Kerberos, Squid, and many other “network plumbing” services
- C/C++, Java, Perl, Python, and other programming languages
- Commercial products such as: Apple OS X, IBM WebSphere, Netscape Communicator, StarOffice, and many more ...

ROSPA and open source

ROSPA is focused on the day-to-day technical and professional issues facing practitioners in the field, and believes in advocating and supporting the use of open source tools based on their merits.

³<http://www.opensource.org>

⁴See <http://www.netcraft.com/survey/> for details

⁵The OSI mentions that “DNS and sendmail are especially interesting because they’re ‘category killers’; not only are they extremely capable and robust, they’re so good that no commercial competition has ever been successful at replacing them as the most widely used product on their respective categories.”

About open standards

“There is an intrinsic partnership between open standards, open documentation, and open sources. This partnership produced the Internet and will produce additional wonders in the future.”⁶

In addition to supporting and advocating the use of open source of behalf of its members, ROSPA also supports and promotes the use of open standards in professionally-maintained computer systems.

About ROSPA technical projects

ROSPA supports a number of technical projects. The purpose of these projects is to act as a “sandbox” to provide experience with technologies that are provided by open source software.

The Meta-Network

The meta-network is a network on top of the Internet composed of OpenVPN and IPsec tunnels tying together diverse networks. It’s purpose is to act as a sandbox for VPN technologies and provide a base for other network-oriented projects.

Dynamic routing

Working with open standard routing protocols, like OSPF and BGP, across the meta-network. This

Kerberos

Working with Kerberos to provide secure centralized authentication. All the ROSPA network services use the Kerberos project for authentication.

Other projects

Other proposed or upcoming projects include compiling a “success stories” database, starting a mentorship program, creating local case studies, and creating a local Certificate Authority root for use with public-key encryption. If you’re interested in proposing other projects, please become a member and do so!

⁶Scott Bradner (codirector in the IETF and elected trustee of the Internet Society)

