

PREFACE

In this special issue, we have tried to find the pluralistic themes of the OS researches, such as interdependence between proprietary firms and OS projects, business model hired by individual firms or governments for enhancing the OS technologies and IT industry, governmental and local policies on OS technologies to enhance the global and local economy, collaboration processes within projects and communities, and novel theoretical perspective to analyze OS phenomena at the different viewpoint. Especially, we have tried to persist on the pluralistic approach to compare the different OS contingencies in various East Asian countries. The remarkable success of OS has invited many practical or academic agents to focus on its diffusion and development processes, but the most of researches on OS are implemented at the contingency of U.S. and its analytical theory also heavily biased on the view of U.S. IT industry and economy. But, the impacts and implications of OS phenomena are not so simple. Because OS is a complicated technological and social behavior, its value and meaning can be different for the economic agents at the various industrial, political, and social environments. They all try to utilize OS technologies to attain their economic and social goals, but they take surprisingly variant patterns in utilizing OS technologies.

When I and professor Noda have decided to collect the researches on OS phenomena in East Asia, we were soon known that development and utilization patterns of OS technologies in East Asian countries could not be combined with one simple issue, but reflect the diverse economic contingencies in each country related with its governmental policy, market competition structure, and patterns of demand growth in IT industry as well.

We already have known that many Asian countries have achieved so fast economic growth on behalf of intentional and intensive market interventions by powerful governments. But we have found the significant differences in the style of market intervention and power of governments between multiple Asian countries when after we contrasted the OS practices of one country and the others, and the differences we found cannot be summarized by the prior-studied theorizing about OS practices in Europe and America.

Therefore the meaningful characteristics of OS technologies can only be found when we tried to focus on the contingent variables in the diffusion and development process of each country. To take an advantage of this pluralistic approach, we have made a plan to hold a special academic conference to collect the research on the diffusion and development of OS technologies in East Asian countries. This trial was one of the continual collaborations by researchers from three Asian countries, Japan, South Korea, and China. By maintaining this relationship, we have gained the chance to compare the three contingencies for the different style of adoption and involvement of OS technologies, and that is the minimal goal that we have tried to attain.

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