

New Foundation to Create Open Source Church Management System Software



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ARIZONA, USA—October 10, 2011. Spark Development Network, an association of unaffiliated software developers, has taken steps to establish an organization from which they will launch an open source, extensible Church Management System (ChMS) and framework called Rock ChMS. The foundation's purpose is twofold; 1) to provide all Christian church and parachurch organizations an effective software solution for managing their daily membership operations, and 2) to create and nurture a vibrant third-party community for the development of extensible functionality inside Rock ChMS.

While there are currently a variety of ChMS products in use by many churches, the foundation feels they have the right team and experience in place to create a free, open source solution, which is highly extensible and church-model agnostic, as well as beautiful, free, and easy to use. Additionally, several of the existing ChMS solutions involve yearly licensing, which can often cost a church tens of thousands of dollars or more and many of the free solutions are unattractive, inextensible, or unintuitive to use. One application the foundation likes to compare Rock ChMS to in this regard is WordPress, a popular blogging platform that is also free.

When combined, the current members of Spark Development Network represent more than 20 years experience with direct or indirect ChMS development, and are represented by artists, writers, and software engineers. Members are also active in their home churches and together bring a combined 20+ years of practical church management experience.

In Q1 2012, the foundation will expand their core team membership by inviting additional developers, technical writers, and support technicians from several large and small Christian churches. Following that, Rock ChMS will be opened to other interested developers that share the passion of the foundation to create a free, open source ChMS.

The foundation also says the time is ripe for creating and developing open source systems using the Microsoft application stack and suite of development tools. Traditionally, open source applications have been written for various UNIX and Linux technologies, while in later years, PHP (an operating system agnostic Web application language) has also been widely used. "With so many advances by Scott Guthrie and his .NET teams, Microsoft has definitely become the leader in language and technology advances. Now that Microsoft gives away free 'express' versions of their development tools and applicable servers, there's really no reason why a low-to-no-cost application shouldn't be developed as an open source project. Open source for Windows day has arrived."

Interested groups and individuals are asked to visit the Spark Development Network website (<http://sparkdevelopmentnetwork.org>) to sign up for additional news and details about the project.

About Spark Development Network

Formed in 2011, Spark Development Network members include Nick Airdo, Jon Edmiston and David Turner. Nick Airdo is a developer and co-creator of RefreshCache (<http://www.refreshcache.com>), an annual conference for church software developers that takes place in Arizona. Jon Edmiston and David Turner have previously created several generations of church management systems. Spark Development Network's website is <http://sparkdevelopmentnetwork.org>.

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