From closed to open: Job role changes, individual predispositions, and the adoption of commercial open source software development

When trying to attain the benefits of open source software (OSS), proprietary closed source software (PCSS) firms are struggling to adopt this radically different practice of software development. We approach these adoption challenges as a problem of gaining support for organizational innovation. Through a mixed-method research design consisting of qualitative interviews and a survey of employees of a large telecommunications firm, we find that the organizational innovation to commercially engage in OSS has different impacts on technical and administrative dimensions of different job roles. Accordingly, individuals enacting different job roles are—on average—more or less well aligned with the OSS practice and OSS processes per se. We find that individual-level attributes can counterbalance the job role changes that weaken support for adopting OSS, while perceived organizational commitment has no effect. Suggestions for PCSS firms are presented and implications for innovation literature are discussed.