

# Seasons of Code

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## Introduction

“There are two parts to learning craftsmanship: knowledge and work.” ~ Robert C. Martin

Free (Libre) and Open Source Software (FLOSS) provides the users the freedom to execute, study, distribute and make modifications to the software source code. It is licensed software, and the license permits these four freedoms as mentioned in the definition of Free Software [1]. The experience of working in a FLOSS project will open up your minds to endless possibilities. Apart from improving your technical and non-technical skills, it gives you an opportunity to work with team members from different parts of the world. There are a number of “Seasons of Code” programs for FLOSS projects that students can participate for free to enrich their work experience. This is more than an internship opportunity that one gets from working in a company. In this article, we will explore some of these programs that are held during the Summer or Winter months in a calendar year.

## Google Summer of Code

The Google Summer of Code, or GSoc [2], is the most popular program in the community that began in 2005. It is held annually, worldwide, between the months of April and May. A number of FLOSS projects participate in the program, and the software artifacts are released under a FLOSS compatible license. The “Help” link [3] in their web site provides useful resources for both students and mentors about the program. A timeline exists from the announcement of the program to selection of participating organizations, submission of student application and accepting the student proposals. Project evaluations are done periodically, and the results of the pass/fail status are announced at the end of the program. The student participant is given a stipend on successful completion of the project. Over 14,000+ students from 109 different countries have participated in the program over the years.

## Dgplug Summer Training

The Linux Users’ Group of Durgapur (Dgplug) [4] follow the “learn and teach others” principle, and meet online at #dgplug on irc.freenode.net (Freenode server) [5]. They organize a summer training program [6], every year, starting in the month of June. Unlike other training programs, this never ends, and the participants continue to interact with the Dgplug members even after a three month period. The training is conducted through Internet Relay Chat (IRC) [7], and thus requires a basic Internet connection. Using a GNU/Linux distribution for hands-on exercises is highly recommended. A number of topics ranging from communication guidelines, shell commands, editors, documentation, licensing, and FLOSS tools are taught as part of the foundation training. After the three month time frame, students are equipped to work on FLOSS projects. This program has been running online since 2008.

## Kharagpur Winter of Code

The Kharagpur Open Source Society at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur organizes the Kharagpur Winter of Code, or KWoC [8], every year in November. It is a five week long program for students to contribute to FLOSS projects. Mentors can register their projects and interested students can engage with them. The prime audience are freshmen and sophomore students who need one-to-one mentorship in working with FLOSS projects. A Mentor’s Manual [9] is available on their web site for reference. The actual project development starts in the first week of December. The final reports are submitted by the first week of January for evaluation. Program managers oversee the communication between the mentors and the participating students. This program was started in 2016.

## Rails Girls Summer of Code

The Rails Girls Summer of Code [10] program is to encourage women to participate in Free (Libre) and Open Source Software projects. It is a not-for-profit organization that relies upon donations from sponsors and the community. The participants work in two-person teams along with the guidance of a mentor. The program is suitable for those who are interested in taking up programming as a full-time profession, and also to improve their knowledge and skills. The participants get a stipend for the three-month project work. This program runs between the months of July and September, annually and worldwide. You can engage with the program as a student, sponsor, coach, mentor, or supervisor. The program has been running since 2013.

## Outreachy

Outreachy [11] program is a three-month, paid internship program, which was formerly known as the Free and Open Source Software Outreach Program for Women. The program is not just limited to students and developers, but also for

people interested in changing careers or who are returning from a break or a long leave of absence. A stipend of \$5,500 USD is given to the participant and remote work is allowed. Interns are also provided \$500 USD for attending conferences or events. A detailed Call for Outreachy Community Participation guideline document is available on their web site [12]. The program runs between May and August, every year and worldwide. It first began in 2006, and is today organized by the Software Freedom Conservancy [13] and funded by the GNOME Foundation [14], Google, participating organizations and other software companies.

## Conclusion

“Never stop learning because life never stops teaching.”

Learning is a continuous process, and in our field it is important to keep reading and studying to improve ourselves periodically. The different Season of Code programs give participants an opportunity to gain knowledge and work experience that can greatly broaden their horizons. It is also important that students continue to engage with the FLOSS project after the end of the program, for not just the time that they have spent, but also a way to continue to give back to the community. In the long run, the experience gained is valuable to help the participants grow professionally, and it also helps the sustenance of FLOSS projects.

## References

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## About the Speaker:



Shakthi Kannan is a Free Software enthusiast who blogs at shakthimaan.com [1]. He has been organizing numerous Free (Libre) Open Source Software (FLOSS) workshops in India over the years [2], and also writes for Open Source For You (OSFY) [3] magazine. Apart from the large volume of FLOSS documentation and presentations that he has created [4], he has also written a book for students and IT professionals on getting started in working with FLOSS projects titled "i want 2 do project. tell me wat 2 do." [5] At present, he plays a Senior DevOps Engineer role at Aerospike Inc. in Bengaluru. His online presence goes by the name @shakthimaan, and his documented photo gallery is accessible [6]. He holds a Master of Science in Information Technology degree from Rochester Institute of Technology,

Rochester, New York.

- [1] Home page. <http://www.shakthimaan.com>
- [2] F/OSS workshops. <http://www.shakthimaan.com/work.html>
- [3] OSFY author page. <http://opensourceforu.com/author/shakthi-kannan/>
- [4] Documentation and presentations. <http://www.shakthimaan.com/downloads.html>
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- [6] Shakthimaan's photo gallery. <https://gallery.shakthimaan.com/>