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Subject: Open Sources

24 September 1993

Robert D. Steele:

I've been meaning to write this quick letter to you since the 1st OSS Conference last year. In general, I feel that the 1st OSS Conference was a great success and of significant value to all participants. I do have one comment (naturally, why else would I be writing!).

I think that the 1st OSS Conference had one very glaring flaw, which seems as if it will be repeated in the 2nd OSS Conference. That is, you did an excellent job of presenting the users side of open source information, but you completely failed to address the "source" itself. The person out there in the hinterland who is actually doing the grunt work of researching, interviewing and writing the article, report, etc. that will become and "open source."

As a "source" (see note below) I didn't know how to feel after the last conference - after all with extreme relish and enthusiasm, I had been "exploited..., digitized..., manipulated..., restructured..., interpolated..., databased..., repackaged..., extrapolated..., etc. Not that this is all that bad, if sources didn't want such attention they wouldn't be plying their craft.

What, however, are the needs, concerns, strengths, weaknesses, etc. of "open sources"? How can the intelligence community assist "open sources" in their work? Can it be of any help? Should it help? These and other issues are important, and I believe need to be addressed through the OSS conferences.

Well off the soap box now. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,
Joe B.
Jane's Intelligence Review

Robert Steele comments: Joseph is absolutely correct. His input arrived too late to affect the OSS '93 schedule, but we will ensure that the "sources" speak for themselves at OSS '94.

SECOND INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM: NATIONAL SECURITY & NATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS: OPEN SOURCE SOLUTIONS Proceedings, 1993 Volume I - Link Page

[Previous](#) [OSS '93 Richard Horowitz, Understanding Sources: The Real Challenge,](#)

[Next](#) [OSS '93 David Brodwin & Sandra Bernardi, Information Overload,](#)

[Return to Electronic Index Page](#)