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Maintaining Open Source BIMserver through Enhanced Contributor Support

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Building Information Modelling (BIM) is extensively used in the AEC (Architecture, Engineering, and Construction) industry to optimize processes throughout the design, construction, and operation of buildings and to promote collaboration among stakeholders. Despite long-standing efforts to facilitate interoperability through open standards, most notably the Industry Foundation Classes (IFC), it remains a challenge to ensure all stakeholders have access to accurate, up-to-date and consistent information. The Opensource BIMserver, an open source server software that enables users to store and manage building information in IFC format, can play a vital role in facilitating information exchange in construction projects. With BIMserver, IFC data is maintained in a database, allowing for efficient storage, versioning, merging, and the ability to query, merge, and filter the building data and generate different outputs.

However, maintaining software requires significant effort, as it not only involves creation of new features along a roadmap, but first of all the regular update of the codebase, continuous improvement of existing features, documentation, and user support. This is even more drastic for open source software with limited resources. In this paper, we address the challenges of maintaining BIMserver and describe the structured approach and strategies we employed to support a new contributor. We exemplify our approach with actions taken in four pivotal areas identified, namely documentation, issue tracking, dependency updates, and automated testing.

Keywords: BIM; open-source software; BIMserver

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