

Easy Software Ltd. for CIOReview

Below you can find the original Q&A between COO of Easy Software, Andrew Stovicek and CIOReview magazine.

1. *Easy Software leverages open source software to offer solutions that address complex project management. Can you explain some of the biggest pain points that exist in Open Source landscape? How is Easy Software addressing these pain points?*

We operate on the field of Redmine, which is Open Source Project Management Software. Main advantage of Redmine compared to other project management solutions is its flexibility. It means that Redmine conforms to the company, not the opposite. That is exactly why Redmine is so popular. As for the pains, I believe the main pain of Redmine is in user experience that comes from user interface. In other words, Redmine is incredibly flexible and modular project management; however, it has so-called “geek design”. Here comes Easy Software with Easy Redmine. Easy Redmine focuses on improving of Redmine user experience and enhancing of advantages of basic Redmine i.e. flexibility, modularity and data mobility. Our goal is to make Redmine the Best Open Source Management software.

2. *What are some of the trends you see in the Open Source landscape and how does Easy Software inject them into its solution offerings?*

I have to mention 2 trends. First is Big Data, second is Marketing Automation. These two used to be domain of big companies and corporations, however both are becoming more and more important for small and middle businesses now. And this is my point – bringing these 2 into the landscape of Redmine. As for the Big Data, Redmine that is intensively used actually works as Big Data collector. There is simply everything in Redmine: chat messages, updates, comments, tasks, files, time entries, attendance logs, finance entries etc. Therefore, we work on something that can be called “Redmine Analytics” now. The goal of this Redmine solution is to analyze all the data in context, visualize them and provide meaningful business insights. As for the Marketing Automation, we integrate Redmine with Open Source Marketing Automation software Mautic now. So the whole Redmine community can implement Marketing Automation easily soon.

3. *Easy Software with its easy user interface provides graphs and charts for reporting, project templates, quick project planner, and Smart Gantt Chart for project managers. Could you elaborate on company's widened product and service offerings catering to Open Source landscape?*

As mentioned before, our goal is to make Redmine the Best Open Source Management tool. I deliberately do not use word “project” since Easy Redmine goes beyond the projects. Yes, projects are still the core of Easy Redmine, however there are also other integrated solutions. For example: there is

complex Help Desk plugin, Invoicing, CRM with integrated Marketing Automation, GitLab integration, Open Shift plugin for deployment etc.

Generally taken, our work can be divided into 3 areas. First is improvement of Redmine user experience in order to open Redmine for the masses. Second is development of Redmine plugins and solutions that broaden Redmine capabilities. Third are services and education for Redmine community – we have certified project managers within our team, so we try to apply their knowledge on Redmine and share it with the community.

- 4. Easy Software is a well-known for its innovation quotient residing in your company's string of solutions. Could you shed some light on the innovations done in your labs?*

I believe that the biggest innovation that we bring into the realm of Redmine is an Integration. We integrate other powerful Open Sources to work with Redmine. There is already mentioned Mautic, further there is Gitlab for code management or Open Shift for deployment. Small and middle businesses that use Easy Redmine do not need to have dozen of separate applications since there are plugins for most of areas of business operation. I can give you short example of this innovation: imagine that project manager who work with Redmine can also easily check what help desk tickets are opened for the customer, what is the status of new sales offerings for the customer, what is the status of the invoices etc. This is a reality with Easy Redmine. In plain words, our innovation is that we make Redmine complex management tool.

- 5. Easy Software is a unique name. Could you tell us if there is any interesting story behind the company's brand name?*

We aim to deliver easy solution for complex – integrated business issues. That is why Easy Software!

- 6. Easy Software fosters project efficiency, through agile, knowledge management, time management and others. Could you mention one or two case studies on how Easy Software, have enabled its clients to overcome problems in Open Source landscape and attain desired outcomes with its innovative array of solutions?*

I can recall 2 Redmine case studies right now. First is from Lear Corporation (leading global supplier of automotive seating). One plant of Lear implemented Easy Redmine for general project management. Their big pain were often relocations of production from one plant to another. Such a relocation of an assembly line is pretty demanding project. The big win of Easy Redmine were project templates, which are not included in basic Redmine. We helped them to create various project templates for all the relocation projects. Initialization of Relocation project that used to take hours and often was buggy, now can be in a few minutes and with no errors. Such a simple thing as project templates can save a fortune! Second case study is from Netstal-Maschinen AG (Swiss Machinery Company). They were using basic Redmine within their IT department while IT got assignment for implementation of internal company Help Desk solution that should serve thousands of employees worldwide. The question was which Help

Desk solution should it be – huge implementation was expected. Fortunately, their IT leader decided for Easy Redmine Help Desk. They had Redmine up and running on their own infrastructure, all IT people were familiar with Redmine. Thus no need for more servers, more licenses or another software and complicated integration with current processes. They simply upgraded Redmine to Easy Redmine and purchased Easy Redmine Help Desk plugin. Afterwards they utilized Easy Redmine LDAP extension to load all users' data into the Help Desk. Implementation that would normally take hundreds of hours, was done within 30 hours with minimal investments into software or infrastructure.

7. *Even the most competent of organizations tend to face market competition. What are the strategies employed by Easy Software to thwart this competition and what according to you, are the company's key differentiating factors that help it stay ahead of the competition?*

We are inspired by 37Signals who say “scratch your own itch” and we have developed simple product strategy from it. We say that our product should be equal to our company and that the company processes should be based on our product. In other words “product = company”. We develop Redmine mainly for ourselves in order to scratch our own itches and we always use what we sell. We use our Easy Redmine CRM in order to drive sales. We use our Easy Redmine Help Desk in order to support customers. We use GitLab integration in order to manage the code and we manage our projects in Easy Redmine. If we tune our processes we tune our product as well and vice versa. I believe this is our biggest competitive advantage. Further, I have to mention Open Source philosophy itself. Open Source is a big wave that grows bigger and bigger and we know how to surf this wave better and better.

8. *What is Easy Software 's next big step to advance forward in the industry in terms of technology? Please elaborate on any upcoming product/plan or geographic expansion.*

We are about to launch new version of Easy Redmine – Easy Redmine 2016. I believe it is a question of a few weeks now. There will be great improvement in user experience again. We also want to make Easy Redmine compliant with 2 major project management methodologies which are IPMA and PMI. Further, we expand our cloud from Europe to other continents in order to be closer to our customers. As for the markets, we will newly focus on Brazil and China. We perceive that Redmine community is growing rapidly there. Simply put, we have turbulent times ahead.

9. *Is there anything more you would like to add or highlight? Any other interesting insight you want to delineate that we have missed to point at in the above questions.*

I want to thank to Jean-Philippe Lang who is the author of Redmine – in my opinion the most flexible project management software ever. Thank you Jean for releasing this great software under GNU GPL Open Source license!