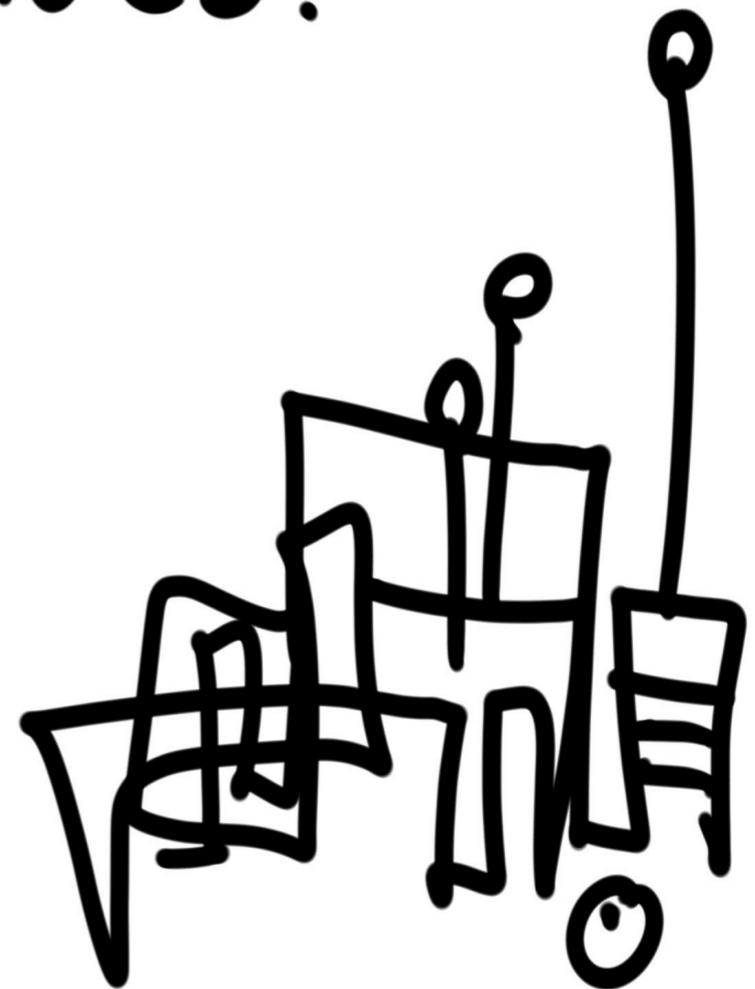# Vendor Free IT
`A Desired Goal?

Wilson D'Souza
Director - Information Services & Technology

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

it's not what
the software does.
it's what the
user does.

@hugh

How we innovate @ MIT?

Architectures and applications, _designed by the users,_ propagated throughout the community, developed in a tight loop with an eclectic mix of faculty, students, researchers, staff and sponsors, and engaging the whole community, from labs, to departments, to classes, to living groups.
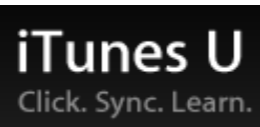
Building tools and services that serve not just MIT but academic institutions across the world. MIT's OpenCourseWare is an example of that

Key Software products used

- RHEL/Debian/Ubuntu

- SAP

- Oracle

- MS Windows/Office

- MySQL

- Alfresco

- AFS (Andrew File System)

- MIT software: Kerberos, DSpace, Athena, Thalia

The EcoSystem !

Content Services

DSPACE

Google Book Search BETA

iTunes U
Click. Sync. Learn.

Drupal

Alfresco™

Teaching & Learning

Stellar™

MITOPENCOURSEWARE
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

moodle

Tools & Services

iTunes

SECOND LIFE

Tagging

Podcasting

Semantic Web

Software & Services

MIT Kerberos
consortium

SOURCE LABS

The Apache Software Foundation
http://www.apache.org/

History of OSS @ MIT

- Developers & Researchers @ MIT are one of the most prolific contributers to the OSS community. Second in the academic world after the UC system.

- Kerberos was released as Free Software before there was an industry for "Open Source"

- Community likes to build and use technologies that are open in nature and at use outside of MIT.

- Our "Athena" project was a precursor at solving the elearning across the campus problem in the 80's. i.e. provide a distributed computing infrastructure and services anywhere in the campus

What has worked at MIT?

- We have carefully assessed where we make significant investments in OSS: Shibboleth, RHEL, Alfresco, MySQL are some examples

- OSS has been great at core infrastructure & plumbing. Also in the academic software arena: DSpace, Moodle, Sakai, Zotero

- Provide supported development frameworks for developers: SASH (Java), Zend (PHP) with internal integration of MIT infrastructure services. We call it MAP "MIT Application Platform"

- Central Technical Consulting services have assisted in helping the community navigate the OSS jungle.

Gaps in OSS

- Very little emphasis on end user tools and services. Some encouraging players: Zimbra, DimDim, Drupal

- SAAS providers trying to corner that market. That provides it's own set of risks.

- "web" as a platform emerging as the primary desktop. Mashups, the new end user development interface?

Risks/Challenges

- Being able to contribute/consume to/from OSS. Legal understanding strongly urged

- Role of committers in your organization needs to formally accepted if work is aligned to the university's goals.

- Understanding the various OSS licenses. These are extremely confusing

- Not all OSS providers act in the true spirit of OSS. Do not allow easy external commitment.

Is OSS really Vendor Free?

- Most of the time

- Increasing trend of OSS providers creating distinct distributions

  - free community version v/s enterprise version for paid customers.

  - Seems similar to Vendor lock ins

- Recent fracas around MySQL illustrative of the issue

- Be very careful of SAAS (Software as a Service): Data and Identity lock-in

Key OSS based initiatives

- ## Kerberos Consortium

  - be the "universal" authentication engine

- ## Kuali Student -

  - Community Source effort to build a SOA based Student Systems

- ## Leverage Alfresco's repository for a varietal of applications

  - LMS, OCW?, Media management, web content

- ## Identity Services

  - Take Kerberos/Shibboleth/Signet/Grouper into an integrated Identity Management suite.

An Example of OSS in use @ MIT

Thalia is MIT's enterprise "Flickr" being developed for managing images and media (e.g. print, web, lecture presentations, online exhibitions.)
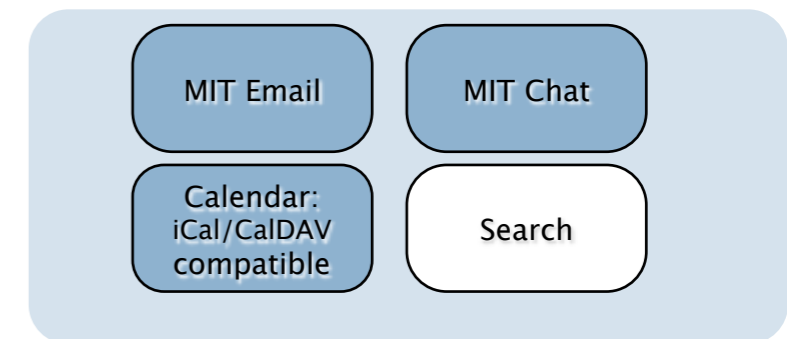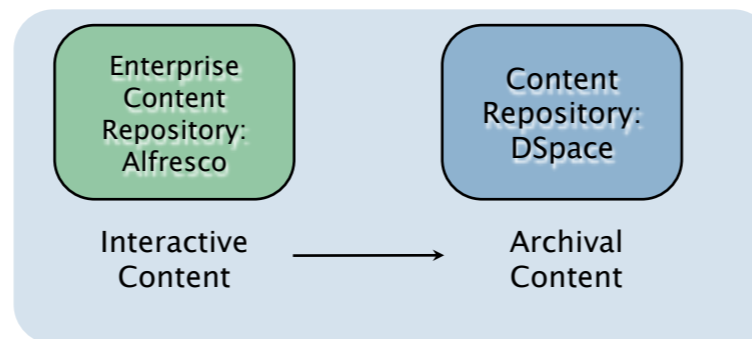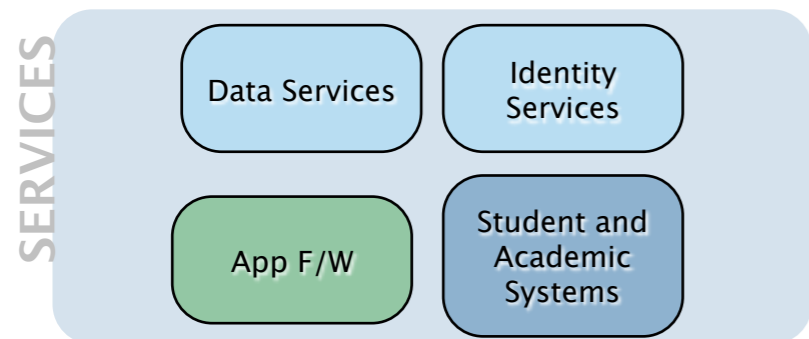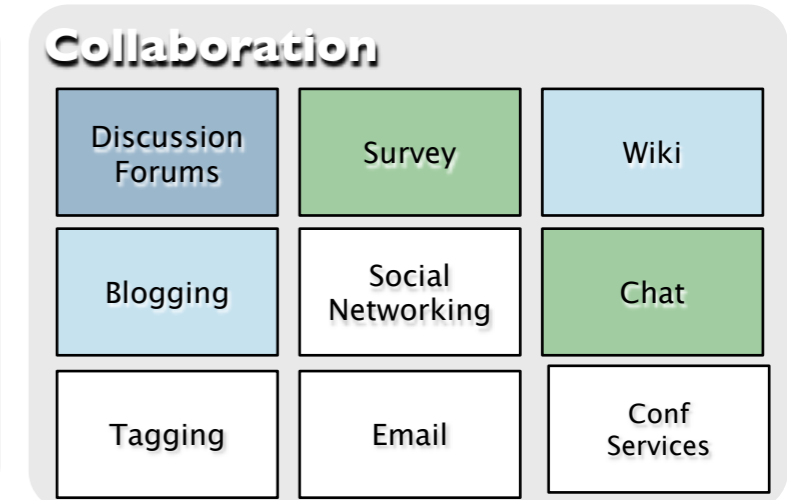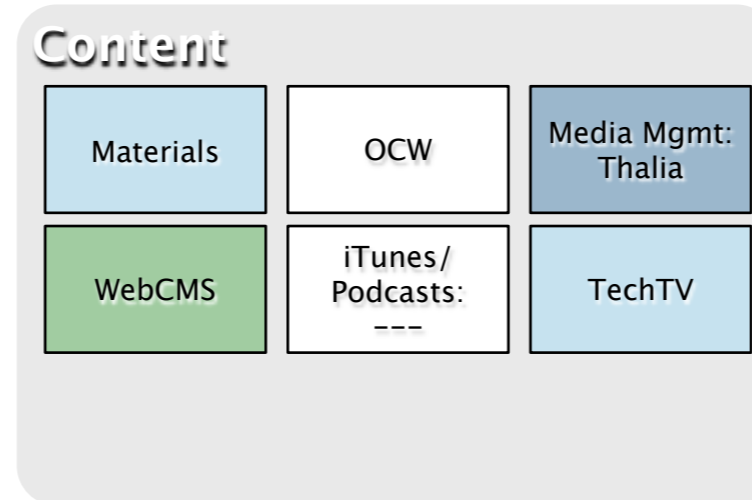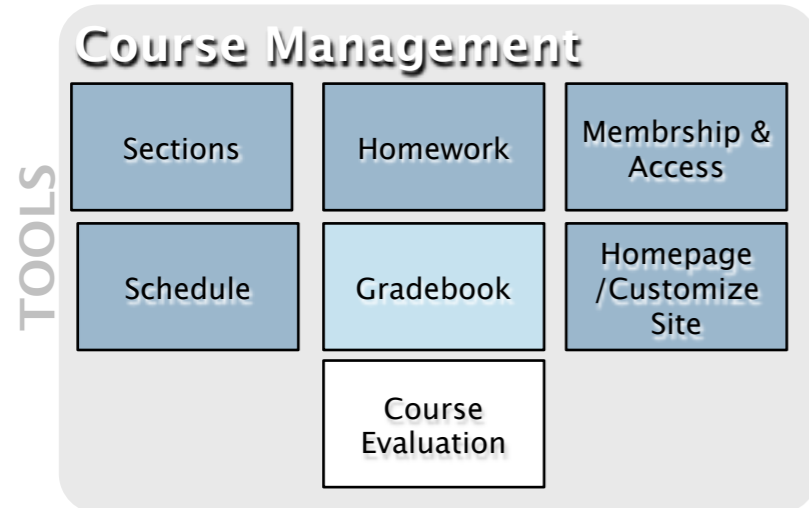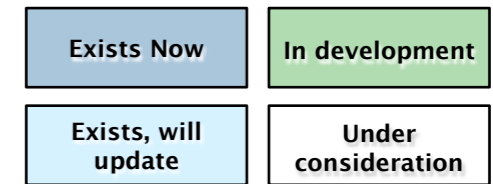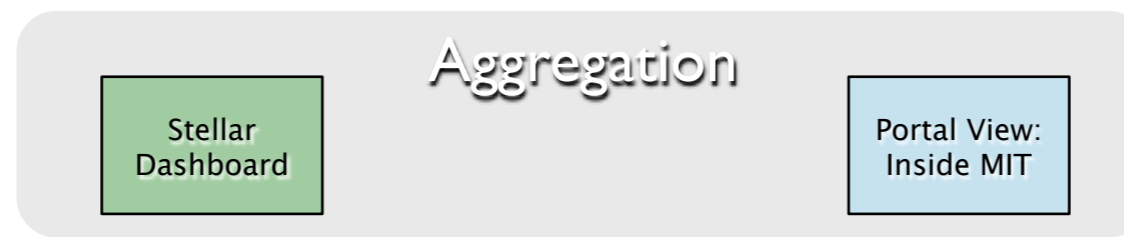
Key to Thalia's approach is tagging of media with customizable, user-defined metadata (tags, discussion comments etc).
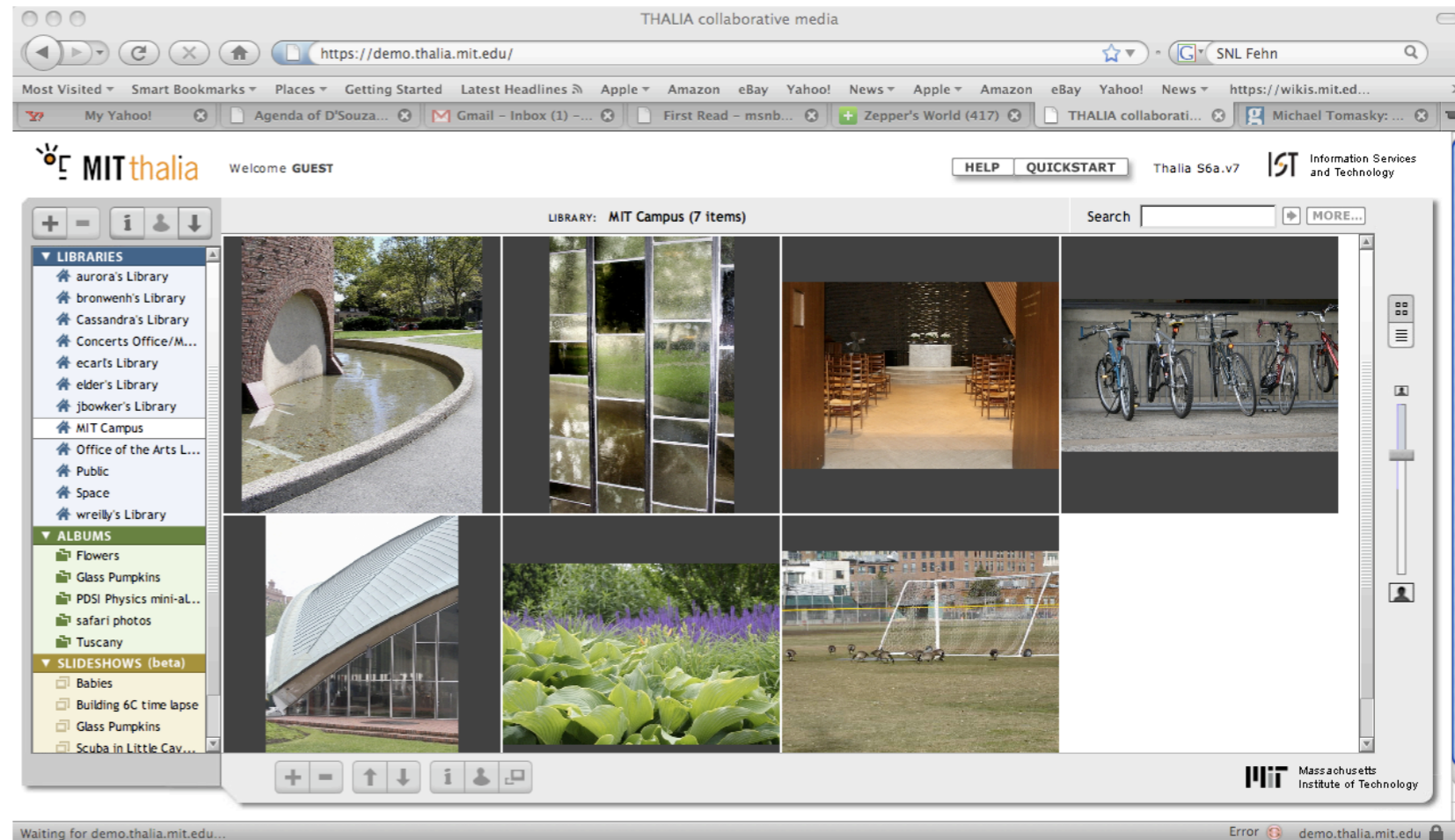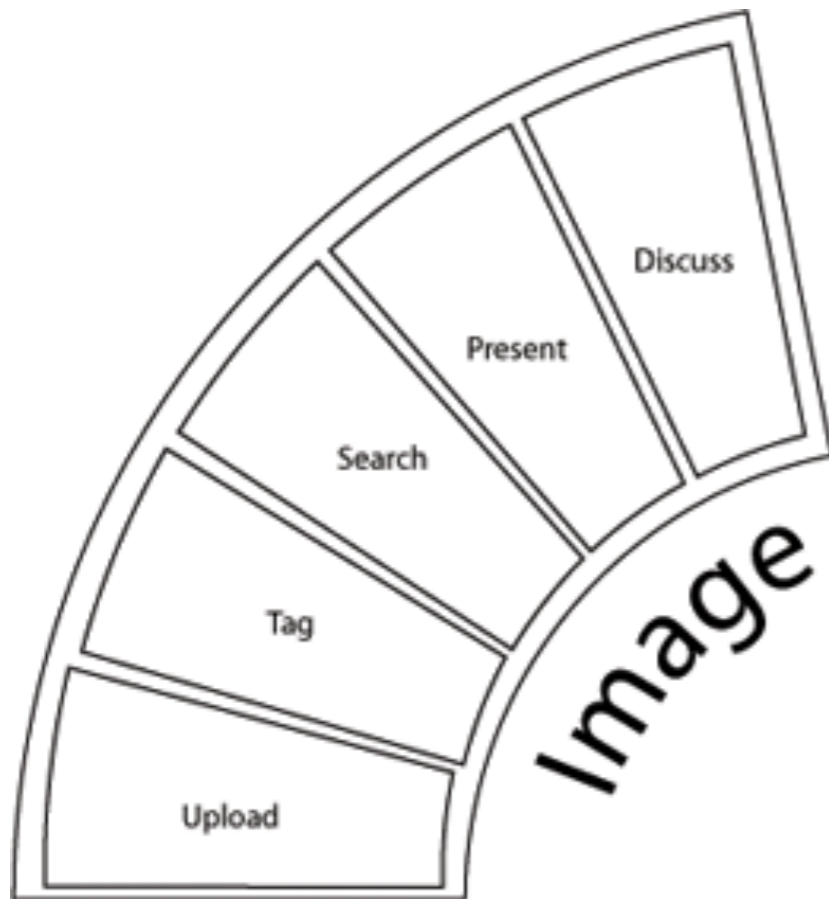
Thalia is built with Openlaszlo on top of the Alfresco Repository

Learning & Research Application Platform
Stellar Framework

Legend:
- Exists Now
- In development
- Exists, will update
- Under consideration

Aggregation
- Stellar Dashboard
- Portal View: Inside MIT

TOOLS

Course Management
- Sections
- Homework
- Membrship & Access
- Schedule
- Gradebook
- Homepage /Customize Site
- Course Evaluation

Content
- Materials
- OCW
- Media Mgmt: Thalia
- WebCMS
- iTunes/ Podcasts: –––
- TechTV

Collaboration
- Discussion Forums
- Survey
- Wiki
- Blogging
- Social Networking
- Chat
- Tagging
- Email
- Conf Services

SERVICES

- Data Services
- Identity Services
- App F/W
- Student and Academic Systems

- Enterprise Content Repository: Alfresco
- Content Repository: DSpace
- Interactive Content → Archival Content

- MIT Email
- MIT Chat
- Calendar: iCal/CalDAV compatible
- Search

Questions?

Wilson D'Souza

Director - ISDA/IS&T/MIT

email/jabber: wdsouza@mit.edu