

General FAQs

What has OPEN@RIT done to help improve open work on campus so far?

OPEN@RIT has worked primarily on promoting open work in the academic areas of campus. This includes:

- Creating [resources and guides](#) to help departments and students learn how to work in open communities
- Connecting students with Co-Op and career opportunities in places like the UNICEF Innovation Fund, Sugar Labs, and others through the [LibreCorps program](#). Many of these students went on to work for Red Hat and build open source programs at companies like Spotify and Amazon.
- Creating [openworkdefinition.com](#), a definition of open work that is more inclusive of other fields, such as open science, open data, design, humanities, and many other fields that may feel left out by the term “Open Source” (this is also why OPEN@RIT calls itself an Open Programs Office)
- Giving talks and presentations, such as a virtual town hall presentation given in October 2023 to teach students and faculty about Intellectual Property and what their rights are at RIT
- [Writing papers](#) to advocate for more open access research and more inclusive funding opportunities in academia, so that everyone can participate on a level playing field
 - These have since been [published](#)
- OPEN@RIT is also home to [award-winning professors](#) with deep knowledge of the local community

What is the history of open work at RIT in a nutshell?

RIT's open source story [began 15 years ago](#), when an honors class led by Professor [Stephen Jacobs](#) developed educational games for the [OLPC program](#) using 25 laptops donated by the [Fedora Project](#). This soon evolved into FOSSBox, an informal student group program that grew to receive yearly funding from [Red Hat](#), to promote student innovation.

[With Red Hat's support](#), RIT became the [nation's first institution](#) to offer [minor and immersion programs in free and open source software](#). It later received [one of many](#) grants from the Sloan Foundation to start [OPEN@RIT](#), an academic open programs office to support all aspects of [open work](#) at the university.

Since those early days, [hundreds of clubs, research groups, professors, and students](#) have shared their innovations with the world. Open, student-built services ([PawPrints](#) and [ScheduleMaker](#)) make students' lives easier on campus. Efforts have been made to advocate for [more equitable grant funding](#) for researchers with disabilities, as well as support [cultural preservation](#) efforts. RIT alumni have [started the first Open Source Programs Office within the federal government](#) and RIT professors are [authoritative public voices on open software](#).

What are some recent open projects that are happening on campus?

- [TunnelVision](#) is a student-built catalog of RIT's Tunnel Murals built by CSH members
- The [PawPrints](#) petition website built by Student Government and [CSH ScheduleMaker](#) (both Open Source) are getting a refresh
- The [CampusPulse](#) project aims to gather many projects to improve RIT in one convenient place and empower more open source work
- There are [several](#) student [projects](#) aimed at [helping improve](#) the bus situation on campus
- [Raiha](#) is a student-built discord bot to make the campus discord server more accessible by automating and gamifying the inclusion of alt text for uploaded images
- The new RIT Makerspace in the SHED has been building access control and other equipment management infrastructure on [their GitHub page](#)
- RIT's Rowing team has a [River Status Board](#) to help the team determine if it is safe to practice
- The RIT Linux Users Group has a [Wiki](#) to help students use university services on their Linux devices
- [Students use AI to aid United Nations in Ukrainian refugee response | RIT](#)
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You can also [view the full list of open projects related to RIT over the years](#) (which includes even older projects, as well as some that are no longer in use)

How do I get involved with open work on campus or add my own projects to this list?

Join the [FOSSRIT Community](#)! We have a discord server (accessible from the RIT Student Hub) as well as Matrix, Telegram, and IRC rooms that are all linked together.

You can also register for Humanitarian Free and Open Source Software (IGME-582) which is offered in Spring 2025, or consider a Minor or Immersion in Free and Open Source Software

What are some recent research projects happening in the open on campus?

- <https://vulnerabilityhistory.org> is run by [Dr. Meneely](#)
- <https://deafworldaroundyou.org/About> is supported by [Stephen Jacobs](#) and [Dr Chris Kurz](#) from NTID
- <https://www.arkheproject.org/> from [Travis Sodter](#)
- <https://fossda.org/> is supported by OPEN@RIT
- <https://defake.app/about> is backed by a team from RIT's [Global Cybersecurity Institute](#) along with other universities
- <https://openworkdefinition.com/> was created by OPEN@RIT

What open software does RIT currently provide?

- The [Drupal](#) CMS powers nearly every official university webpage, including <https://rit.edu>
- [Sympla](#) is used to help RIT community members manage their mailing list subscriptions
- [WebWork](#) is used by students in math courses for completing homework problems online

What have RIT alumni done in the world of Open Work as a result of RIT's Programs?

- [Remy DeCausemaker](#) founded and now leads the first Open Source programs Office within the United States Federal Government. He was [previously](#) a Fedora Community Architect
- [Justin](#) is the current [Fedora](#) Community Architect
- Marie Nordin also [previously](#) held the Fedora Community Architect role

How can open work benefit every aspect of RIT?

- The **Cybersecurity** College could research open source supply chains and security, developing tools to make our software more secure and helping make it easier for maintainers to identify vulnerabilities by tracking their origins and history
- **Anthropology/humanities** type of departments could study the culture and communities that pop up around open projects and what leads them to success or failure, or the evolution of language in these communities

- **Saunders College of Business** majors could study the business models surrounding these communities and work on developing new ones that could better solve the Tragedy of the Commons and many other problems underlying the world of open source
- Students interested in **Law** can study copyright licenses, trademark, and other intellectual property issues that are at the core of many forms of open work
- Allowing students to contribute to software in use around them makes them feel like their voice matters on campus and **helps them feel more connected** to campus while also making it better. Students feel empowered to build tools that solve problems for others
- Students can more effectively **help RIT communicate events and other news** by filtering and curating information that is directly relevant to their sub-groups
- **Research** across many fields can benefit by reusing tools and methods where appropriate potentially making limited grant funds go further and giving back to these tools and communities to make them better for the next research team
- Students in **Data Science** can learn about and develop new ways to measure the success and/or health of open projects, potentially flagging major security incidents before they happen, or showing where companies need to financially support their tech stack
- Using open, standardized formats and technologies makes **data and hardware** more portable, **allowing RIT to more easily migrate to new vendors for key services if necessary**. This could help alleviate issues such as:
 - Student complaints about the poor accessibility and inaccurate data in the **dining menus**
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How is the world in general becoming more open?

- The US government just [issued its strongest stance yet](#) to encourage contractors to use memory-safe languages over unsafe ones since alternatives now exist
- The White house put out a paper stressing the [importance of securing open source supply chains](#)
- Switzerland now [requires all government-created software to be open source](#)
- The motion Picture industry [relies heavily on open source software](#)

About the Campaign

This document was part of the 2024 ROAR Day campaign for OPEN@RIT

~~If you would like to support this campaign during ROAR day you can do so using [this link](#)~~

~~This campaign isn't about money -- it's about turnout and showing RIT that open work is worth funding and can help students, researchers, and the university itself achieve their goals.~~

The campaign ultimately had support from around 16 unique donors and ranked 64th Place (out of 157 campaigns) as a result! Thanks to everyone who contributed and helped tell RIT that openness matters!

I'm hoping to try and get more data to compare these numbers to other first-time campaigns and/or see if OPEN@RIT helped drive a significantly higher portion of first-time donors than other campaigns (or any other metrics that may still raise RIT's attention besides straight-up turnout).

View the email that went with this campaign at [Campaign email for OPEN@RIT](#)

What was the goal of this campaign in a sentence?

This campaign aimed to send a message to RIT that its 15 year history of supporting open work is meaningful to many current and future alumni and, if properly supported by the university, this experience can put the university in a position to lead future generations of students as they navigate an increasingly open access world.

What are some non-monetary ways to support Open Work at RIT?

- Share your stories, and the campaign, online
 - Tagging RIT can help boost your content this ROAR day
- Reshare other's stories that resonate with you
- Contribute to any of the open projects that are happening on campus
 - Many of these projects can use the support of enthusiastic contributors
 - You do not need to know how to code! Documentation fixes, typo corrections, and issue reports are all helpful too!
- Send an email to someone you know within RIT (such as the board of trustees, a department head, or the president of a club) to express your interest in and support for adopting Open Work in their area of interest

What can I repost if I want to help?

Here are some posts that you can reshare to help promote this campaign:

- Adrian Edwards on LinkedIn:
<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7257727358135103488/>

- Reddit:
https://www.reddit.com/r/rit/comments/1gg0gz3/help_support_open_source_at_rit_to_make_campus/
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How can I make my support go even further?

Employer Matching: ALL charitable giving to RIT is also eligible to be employer matched. You should see information about matching after making your gift. If not you can also reach out to impact@rit.edu for information

RIT also has a tool to check if your employer supports matching gifts to RIT:
<https://www.rit.edu/giving/matching-gifts>

Gift Matching: Another way to make your gift go further is to [set up your gift as a match](#) (either per dollar or per donor) to encourage others to join the cause.

Gift Challenges: The same form used to [set up a matching gift](#) can also be used to set up challenges. Challenges allow you to set your gift to kick in once a certain threshold (either by dollar amount or number of donors) is met. This is very important for the later stages of the campaign