

## GCSE Bitesize Computer Science

### Twitter's James Harlow on open source

My name's James Harlow, I'm a back-end software engineer on Tweetdeck at Twitter. So the open source products that Twitter uses are – we use the Linux kernel, we use the MySQL database, we use the JVM.

We've written several libraries on top of the JVM, the Java Virtual Machine, that we've made open source. Probably the most prominent one is something we call Finagle, which is a framework for building extremely high-performance servers.

We really like using open source because, when you have the access to the source, you can modify it. If someone hasn't thought that a particular feature is important but you do, you have the ability to change that and you can contribute back to the original author or to the community, who will help you maintain it.

I could only speak for myself rather than for Twitter. I would use proprietary software if and when there was no open source software available to do the same task and the cost of re-engineering it was prohibitive. It's a business decision effectively. If you can spend less money by buying some software than it would take [for you] to write it for yourself, then maybe it makes sense, but the purchase cost of open source software is zero.