

**OPEN SOURCE VOTING SYSTEM  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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**ELECTIONS COMMISSION  
*City and County of San Francisco***

Don Chan, Secretary

September 18, 2018

To: Elections Commission  
From: Open Source Voting System Technical Advisory Committee (OSVTAC)  
RE: Project Ownership and Project Management

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The Open Source Voting System Technical Advisory Committee (OSVTAC) voted unanimously at its August 27, 2018 meeting to adopt the following statement.

OSVTAC prepared this statement to inform the discussion of project ownership sparked by the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury's report "Open Source Voting in San Francisco."

**Statement on Project Ownership and Project Management**

The following paragraphs summarize well the key differences between a project owner and project manager:

What's the difference between these two roles? Here's the short version:

- The Project Owner looks at the big picture.
- The Project Manager looks at the daily details of the project.

Here's a slightly different way to look at it:

- The Project Owner is in charge of defining the scope of the project, the "What?" and the "Why?". [The Project Owner is] responsible for collecting all the requirements for a product.
- The Project Manager is in charge of getting things done, the "How?" and the "Who?". The Project Manager is responsible for completing the project within an established time and budget.

(from "What's the Difference Between a Project Owner and a Project Manager?"  
<https://upstreamplugin.com/difference-project-owner-project-manager/>)

The role of project owner shares some characteristics with the role of “product owner” in Scrum (one of several agile methodologies). In Scrum, the product owner is the “domain expert.” The following paragraph summarizes some more of these shared characteristics:

The Scrum product owner is typically a project's key stakeholder. ... The product owner is commonly a lead user of the system or someone from marketing, product management or anyone with a solid understanding of users, the market place, the competition and of future trends for the domain or type of system being developed.

(from “Product Owner”

<https://www.mountangoatsoftware.com/agile/scrum/roles/product-owner>)

The relationship between a project owner and project manager is very similar to the relationship between a home owner and general contractor when doing home repairs or building a home. The home owner is the customer who expresses what he or she wants, and the general contractor is the one responsible for coordinating the work and getting the job done (e.g. hiring subcontractors, meeting deadlines, etc).

In the context of San Francisco's open source voting project, the Department of Elections naturally fills the role of project owner as the domain expert, key stakeholder, customer, and eventual user of the system. If the Department of Technology is responsible for managing the project, it would fill the institutional role of project manager.