

Profile

Governance and business of open source geospatial software. Chair of QGIS.org since 2020, board member of the Open Source Geospatial Foundation, co-founder and CEO of OPENGIS.ch, a company whose revenue derives entirely from open source software and which funds upstream development from it. Fifteen years of work with public administrations and international institutions on open geospatial infrastructure.

Governance of digital commons

Chair, QGIS.org association — 2020 to present

Governance of one of the largest open source geospatial projects: budget, grant and bug-payment programmes, sustaining member relations, enhancement proposal process, management of conflicts of interest among competing contributing firms, staff hiring. Chair of the QGIS User Conference 2026 (Laax, 4-6 October, around 450 participants).

Vice chair, QGIS.org association — 2018 to 2020

Board member, Open Source Geospatial Foundation (OSGeo) — 2022 to present

Foundation-level policy for an umbrella organisation covering approximately 50 open source geospatial projects: incubation, legal stewardship, trademark, community programmes, FOSS4G.

Commercial experience with commons-based models

Founder and CEO, OPENGIS.ch — 2011 to present

Founded 2011 as a sole proprietorship, incorporated as OPENGIS.ch GmbH on 10 December 2014 with co-founder Matthias Kuhn. Around 45 employees. Open source geospatial development and services for public administrations and enterprises in Switzerland and the EU. Revenue models in use: paid feature development, long-term support agreements with SLAs, and QFieldCloud, a hosted synchronisation service built as a commercial layer over freely licensed software. A defined share of revenue funds upstream QGIS development. Direct experience of open source licensing decisions, including contributor licence agreements and the trade-offs between GPL, AGPL and dual licensing, and of GDPR compliance for an EU-facing SaaS product.

Founder and lead developer, bernawebdesign.ch — 2002 to 2013

Institutions, agencies and public administrations

QGIS consultant, GEM (Global Earthquake Model) Foundation — 2013 to 2020

QGIS and PostGIS work on the OpenQuake Integrated Risk Modelling Toolkit: risk indicators, composite indices, user-facing tools and database models.

Google Summer of Code, Google — 2011 and 2012

2011: contracted by Google to port QGIS to Android. 2012: mentor.

Consultant and open source advocate, World Bank (InaSAFE) — 2012 to 2017

Database architecture and development for a natural hazard impact modelling tool used by local governments for disaster preparedness. Data aggregation, post-processing and metadata modules.

Selected public-sector delivery. Full PostgreSQL/PostGIS database design for Schweizerische Südostbahn AG. National fish occurrence databases for the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, integrating Swedish and Finnish data using DarwinCore standards. QGIS server infrastructure for the Canton of Zug: containerised deployment, health checks, connection pooling and load balancing.

Projects

QField — co-initiator and project manager since 2011. Open source mobile field data collection built on QGIS, used by field crews without GIS training. Over 2 million downloads.

QGIS on Android — sole author of the port of QGIS (over one million lines) and its ten-plus C/C++ dependency libraries.

QFieldCloud — project manager and co-architect of the backend and container infrastructure.

InaSAFE — co-developer. Black Duck Open Source Rookies of the Year award.

Teaching

Spatial databases and web mapping, Bildungszentrum Geomatik Schweiz, 2017 to present.

Python, JavaScript, Ajax and databases, SAE Institute Zurich (BA/BSc Web Development, validated by Middlesex University), 2010 to 2015.

PHP and databases, Zürcher Lehrbetriebsverband ICT, 2015.

Education

MSc Geographic Information Science, Universität Zürich, 2008–2011. Minor in computer science: data structures and algorithms, spatial databases, spatial algorithms, network security, web engineering.

BSc Geography, Universität Zürich, 2003–2007. Minors in computer science and cartography.

Bachelor thesis in GIS, Uppsala Universitet, Sweden, 2006.

Technical

Python, PyQt, PostgreSQL/PostGIS, Docker and containerised deployment, C++, git-based distributed development. OGC and ISO geospatial standards, INSPIRE-compliant service delivery.

Languages

Italian: first language.

English, German, French, Spanish: fluent.

Romansh (Sursilvan): conversational.

Portuguese, Swedish: reading and comprehension.

Publications and talks

Graser, A., Sutton, T. & Bernasocchi, M. (2025). "The QGIS project: Spatial without compromise." *Patterns* 6(7), 101265. Cell Press, open access. doi:10.1016/j.patter.2025.101265. Peer-reviewed account of QGIS governance, release management, infrastructure and the financial model that sustains development, including what remains unsolved. Cited 38 times.

"Who Pays Your Bills? Sustainability, Community and Business: The Open Source Triangle" — FOSDEM 2026, Brussels, main track (Janson), 1 February 2026. On building a sustainable business around QField and QGIS, how the QGIS.org community works, and open source as a viable commercial model rather than only a philosophy. Recording: video.fosdem.org/2026/janson/AUFR8F-who-pays-your-bills.av1.webm

"The Importance of Seeding: from 3 ECTS to Shaping a Better World" — keynote, FOSS4G 2023, Prizren. On the path from a student project to a fieldwork application used by hundreds of thousands of people, and what community and industry involvement contributed at each stage.

Declared interests

Founder, CEO and shareholder of OPENGIS.ch GmbH, a commercial provider of services around QGIS and related open source software, holding contracts with public administrations in Switzerland and the EU.