

LIMS discussion thread highlights under-appreciation of how sophisticated and robust mature Open Source LIMS have become

Why don't more Labs use Professional Open-Source LIMS? Insights from a recent Reddit thread

CAPE TOWN, WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA, November 20, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A recent Reddit discussion on why more laboratories don't adopt professional open-source LIMS generated thoughtful and wide-ranging responses—from business analysts to everyday users in academic and commercial labs. Down votes were likely from the open-source opponents.

Recognition of Open-Source LIMS Quality

Some commenters recognised the quality and capability of OS LIMS, but an under-appreciation of how sophisticated and robust mature OS LIMS have become, persists. Sometimes they're still seen as poor quality - as was often the case with hobby projects. Today, several professional open-source LIMS are every bit as capable and more reliable than proprietary systems.



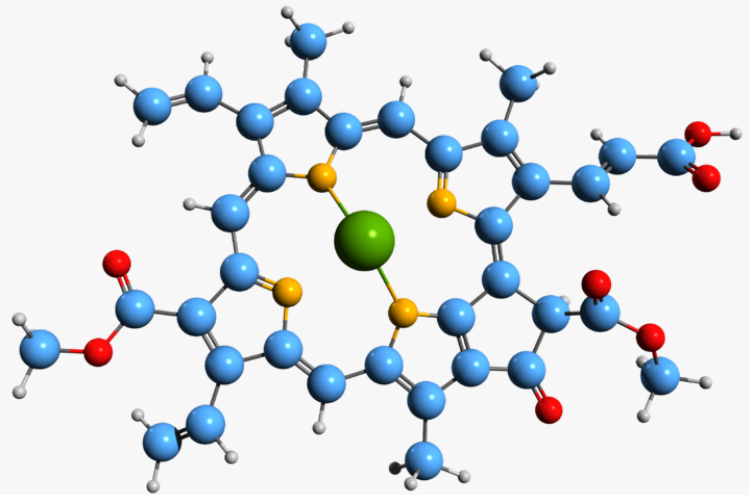
Better than any boxed product"

Independent LIMS Consultant

Not all OS projects are equal. For the purpose of this article, please consider only mature, professional projects supported by both fee-paying clients and active communities.

Regulatory Blockers

In heavily regulated disciplines like pharma, a poster pointed out that the lack of formal system validation and vendor qualification in OS LIMS is a blocker. Some have passed ISO 17025 audits for years and assisted new labs in achieving accreditation.



Chlorophyll molecule: symbol of Open Source LIMS holism. Every atom interconnected, every bond vital — like contributors and users uniting to sustain a thriving, adaptable lab system

Some FUD still persists

Alarming, some of the fear, uncertainty, and doubt, propagated by closed-source opponents in the early 2000s, still lingers, the worst being, "They say it's free, but actually it's not." No professional open-source supporter claims theirs are zero-cost projects. The code is free, yes, and anyone can install and configure their own LIMS using online resources. But if you want to make it happen in a reasonable time frame, professional services are the way to go.

"Affordable" LIMS

Small academic labs typically consider a LIMS "affordable" only if the total cost stays under \$5,000. They often have LIMS acquisition funds only as a once-off item in a grant budget and need clear pricing. They get big discounts from proprietary, sometimes unpopular, LIMS vendors.

Clarity re Pricing

Commenters criticised the perceived vagueness of open-source LIMS pricing. Publishing fixed price lists is genuinely difficult because cost items vary dramatically. E.g. Configuration - a small wine lab's LIMS might be configured in 20 hours, while a commercial food-safety lab testing hundreds of different sample types - each with its own specification - could take 100+ hours. The same applies to large-scale storage configurations. The number and skill levels of users determine how much training and support are required.

Clear itemised quotes were favoured:

Licensing \$0 :)

Installation

Configuration

Customisations

Training

Start-up support

Post-implementation maintenance and support

"LIMS sucks"

There's a general negativity around LIMS implementations. Acceptance is hard to come by - users expect easy-to-learn systems, not something comparable to finance or HR systems.

Paper and Spreadsheets still rule in many Labs

Office suites, lab notebooks and verbal instructions remain the default in research settings. One highly upvoted comment summed it up: "Most of the field is managed by paper notebooks and boss-spoken orders xd".

Conclusion

For a fair comparison, professional open-source LIMS should be evaluated side-by-side with closed-source alternatives using identical criteria during any procurement process.

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