



Open Standards & Free software for an equal access to knowledge

Greek.LUG

Association of Greek friends
and users of FOSS



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Family quarrel in the 80's: VHS or Betamax?



- Does anyone remember family quarrels about which videotape recorder to go for?
- During the 80's, Betamax and VHS engaged in a fierce videotape format war...
- If you'd gone for Betamax: severe restriction in the family movies you could watch..
- This memory can help us make sense of the importance of support for open standards!



I like it when you switch things on and they just work!



CNET

I found it nerve racking when I got a new cell phone and had to swap one gaggle of perfectly good travel chargers, car adapters and cables, for another twisted pile of the same stuff...

Cell phone makers go really out of their way to make sure their plugs don't work with different phones!



Whether we are discussing cell phones, or software, **technology works best when it works well together and makes life easier!** Not when it creates chaos...



Open access to knowledge for all

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Scientific data: open access to research results will boost Europe's innovation capacity

(17/07/2012) The European Commission today outlined measures to improve access to scientific information produced in Europe. Broader and more rapid access to scientific papers and data will make it easier for researchers and businesses to build on the findings of public-funded research. This will boost Europe's innovation capacity and give citizens quicker access to the benefits of scientific discoveries. In this way, it will give Europe a better return on its €87 billion annual investment in R&D. The measures complement the Commission's Communication to achieve a European Research Area (ERA), also adopted today.

[Read the full press release](#)

Additional Information

Commission Press Room: [IP/12/790](#)



Open access to knowledge for all

AT: Increasing number of schools turn to open source | Joinup - Mozilla Firefox


https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/news/increasing-number-schc

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Submitted by [Gijs HILLENIOUS](#) on July 25, 2010
Rating: **0/5** (based on 1 votes) | 281 reads

AT: Increasing number of schools turn to open source

The number of schools in Austria that are considering to use or are using open source is increasing, according to school IT administrators and open source developers involved in education.

For instance, the number of schools using LinuxAdvanced, based on Debian Linux, is 'continuing to increase slowly', says Rene Schwarzinger, one of the developers of the Linux distribution tailored for use by schools.

He says that since the software can be downloaded freely, it is difficult to get accurate data on usage. However, the list of schools that are known to have selected the open source operating system, is growing: "We know of a school in the city of Wels using it for netbooks, and of schools in the cities of Amstetten and Tulln, that are using it in their computer science classes."



Open access to knowledge for all

Free Open Source Textbooks Growing in Popularity in College Classes | Business | TIME.com

business.time.com/2012/08/10/free-textbooks-shaking-up-higher-education

Free Open Source Textboo...

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PUBLISHING

Free Textbooks Shaking Up Higher Education

By **VICTOR LUCKERSON** | @VLuck | August 10, 2012 | 33

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Though paying for tuition and housing eat up more money, textbook costs are among the most groan-inducing expenses incurred by college students. With tools like Amazon and [chegg.com](#), only the least resourceful of freshmen are blowing \$200 for a brand new textbook these days. But a new type of textbook is threatening to disrupt

- Prof. Baraniuk thinks that cost should be reduced to zero.
- He's been part of the open-source educational movement since 1999.
- He learned more about the open-source operating system Gnu-Linux.
- *"I realized that we could take the same ideas- namely, modularity... and open-sourcedness, making it free and remixable-and apply that not just to software but to textbooks."*



Open access to knowledge for all

MIT OpenCourseWare tea...

massachusetts institute of technology

MITnews

engineering science management architecture + planning humanities, arts, and social sciences campus

MIT OpenCourseWare teams up with Flat World Knowledge to combine free texts and free course materials

Collaboration among open education innovators creates rich learning opportunities for independent learners.

Stephen Carson
MIT OpenCourseWare

today's news

February 29, 2012



Do you think that the European Universities can stay out of this ??



**WHO BOTHERS
ABOUT
TECHNICAL
"STANDARDS" ??**

Pieter Bruegel
(Brueghel) the
Elder, 1564



Elder



WHAT IS A "STANDARD"?

- It's a shared and commonly agreed *set of rules*
 - Private
 - Voluntary
 - Technical
- They have some common features which are essential



WHAT IS A "STANDARD"?

Consensus between the involved parties

Description of Specifications: "Must" / "May" / "Should"

Approved by a recognized Body (W3C, ISO, IEEE, OASIS, etc.)

or

Really accepted and widely used throughout, by
the industry.

Reuse of existing standards



WHY ARE STANDARDS SO IMPORTANT?

They ensure that products are of adequate quality and that they can interoperate and work together, even though they may come from different parties.

They raise the level of quality, safety, reliability, efficiency and interoperability, providing such benefits at an economical cost.

Ultimately, he who controls the Standard, can also control technology!



IMPORTANCE OF STANDARDS

- To govern complex systems
- To ensure Cooperation – Interoperability
- In an increasingly complex society
- Strategic importance
(NATO supports ODF open document format!)
- Remember: Not ALL standards are the same....
(Proprietary, Open, Mono-vendor, Multivendor, etc)



WHAT ARE "OPEN STANDARDS" ?

- There is no precise definition, too many definitions. For me:
 - **Independence** from a single product or Vendor: anyone can write a software that handles open standards!
 - **Sufficiently documented:** accessible to everyone
 - **Interoperability:** Allows data exchange between different programmes and systems
 - **Managed by a No-Profit Orgnaization**
 - **Neutrality:** Does not enforce the use of a sole SW, but allows a wide choice, based on the quality/price ratio.
 - It does not discriminate legittimate business models
 - **Data protection & guaranteed accessibility over time:** protects all information against obsolescence, as technology progresses.



Examples of some Open Standards

TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol),
from IETF

HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol), from W3C

Unicode coding standard (from Unicode Consortium and
ISO)

POSIX (Portable Operating System Interface for UNIX),
from IEEE

OpenDocument standard (from OASIS and ISO, for office
applications)



Why bother with Open Standards?

Why can you read your e-mail? Because of an Open Standard (originally called US-ASCII). Without that, each computer manufacturer did his own thing and everyone was different...

Open Standards ensure that there is less likelihood of information systems being locked in by any single technology or product.

It is also in the interests of national security that open standards are followed, to guard against the possibility of over-reliance on foreign technologies and products.

If we create technologies easily plugging into each other, more time can be spent spurring the innovation, yielding the greatest rewards for society and less time wasted dealing with compatibility issues and re-inventing the wheel.



Free Software? Why is it so important?

- Our society grows more dependent on computers. The software we run became of **critical importance** to securing **the future of a free society**.
- Free software is all about **having control** over the technology we use in our homes, schools and businesses.
- Computers must work for our individual and communal benefit, not in favour of proprietary software companies or authoritarian governments.

<https://www.fsf.org/working-together/>



The times they are a-changin' ...

- When computing began ('70-'80's) , software was freely shared among users (MIT & Berkley scientists).
- People were glad to create useful programmes and encouraged others to **modify** them **and share** them freely, like a kitchen recipe!
- With time, people started considering it something that must not be shared and can only be modified by the original developer.
- This paradigm shift has caused **great harm** to a technology that thrives on **community involvement and innovation.**



What is really Free Software?

- Free software is simply software that **respects our freedom**: our freedom and understand the software we are u
- Free software is designed to **free the user from restrictions** put in place by proprietary software.
- So, using free software lets you join a **global community** of people who are making the **ethical assertion of our rights to learn and to share** what we learn with others.





What is the main advantage of Free Software?

Free software is **a matter of liberty, not price!**

It reflects the **most basic human need**: to participate in a community

To **share and exchange things** with others

Much like the donuts or that apple-pie that granny used to do!

Free, as in “free speech”, not as in “free beer.”

**FREE SOFTWARE
GIVES YOU BACK
CONTROL OVER
YOUR COMPUTER**



Innocent questions of a PC user

I bought a programme for my PC.

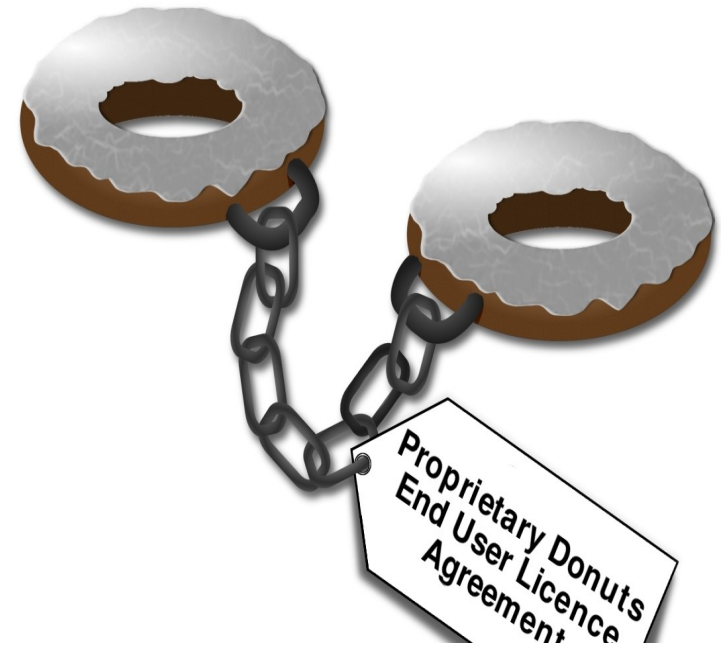
*It's really mine, isn't it? I "own" it,
don't I?*

*Well, I am afraid **NOT!***

- **The ONLY thing you purchased
is the simple right to use it!**

*(Ever read the EULA -End User License
Agreement?)*

- **So, we are NOT FREE**
 - *Any evidence for this?*





Proprietary Software: A long, sad list of restrictions

***Can you share it with a friend or with your mother?
NO!***

Can you install it to 1 more, or 10 more PC's? NO!

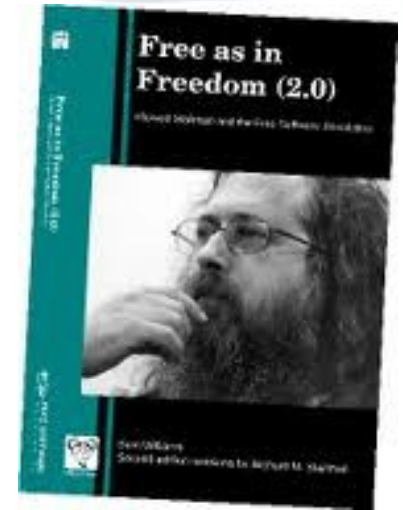
***Can you change the features that you do not like in
the software? NO WAY!***

Can you at least “run” it at your workplace? NOPE!

***So, we are “locked in” and the limitations to our
freedom do NOT stop here...***



Who's the maker of Free Software?



No single CENTRAL entity!

It's a worldwide network community of programmers, volunteers and companies!

Everything started back in 1983, from the College community (A.I. Lab) of M.I.T. (USA)

The goal: freedom to the user, by allowing unrestricted access to the source code!

Programmers are located in all countries

They develop the source code in a cooperative manner, through the Web.





What is Free Software ?

Definition (Free Software Foundation*):

In order for a software to be Free Software, it must enable the user to:

Run it for whatever purpose (Personal, Commercial use , Education, etc)

Have access to the Source Code of the programme and, therefore, be able to study it and change its features, at will!

Share it with others, distributing either the initial software or its modifications!

<https://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-sw.html>



What do we, as users, deserve?

you deserve to use software that is:-

free from restriction

free to share and copy

free to learn and adapt

free to work with others

you deserve free software.



Proprietary software? No, thanks!

- Proprietary software takes away control from the users.

It puts it in the hands of the developers, creating a dangerous situation ...

- The developers are able to exert control on the users, often in an unethical manner

- Example: the Amazon Kindle contains a "backdoor" allowing Amazon to remotely delete books from a Kindle. This was unknown until it was first used in 2009 to delete copies of George Orwell's "1984" without asking for a consent !





UNESCO's position on FOSS



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

- The FOSS model provides interesting tools and processes with which women and men can create, exchange, share and exploit software and knowledge, efficiently and effectively.

UNESCO recognizes that:

- Software plays a crucial role in access to information and knowledge
- FOSS can play an important role as a practical instrument for development, as its free and open aspirations make it a natural component of development efforts in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)



Charter

for Innovation, Creativity
and Access to Knowledge

Citizens' and artists human rights in the digital age

- Free/Libre Software allows people to interact while they are studying and learning.
- Educational entities should use FLOSS as a learning tool, as a subject of study in itself and as the base for their IT infrastructure.
- All publicly funded software developed in or for an educational institution, must be released under a Free/Libre license.
- The use of FLOSS should be promoted in textbooks, as an alternative to proprietary software, where applicable (numerical calculus, image editing, document composition, etc.).
- Educational institutions should develop, provide and promote free/libre editing tools to create and improve didactic materials.
- Technologies like DRM must be rejected, in order to guarantee the permanent access to educational resources and enable lifelong learning.



Examples of brilliant educational FOSS tools

Learning Management Systems (LMS): software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting and delivery of online education courses or training programs.





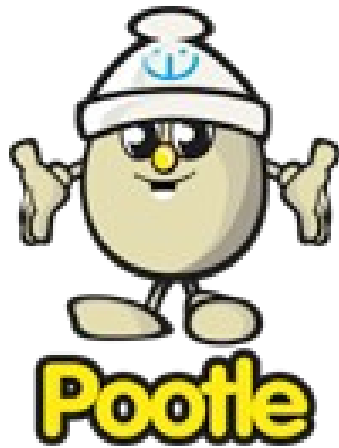
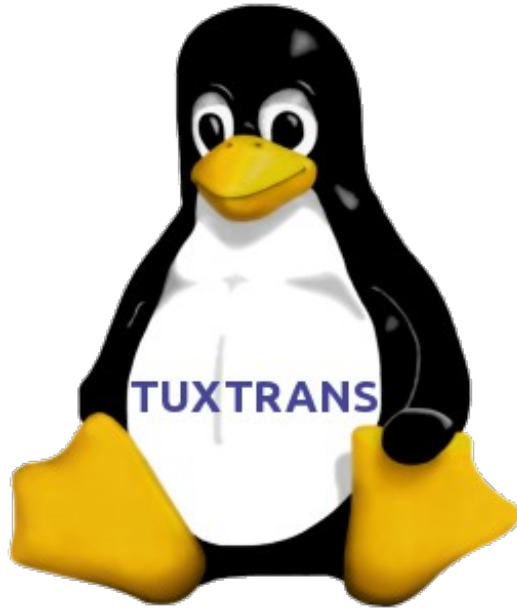
Superb FLOSS Translation tools (1/2)

- As a translator in the 21st century, you are inevitably going to need translation tools.
- Many individual translators and Educational institutions alike, still purchase proprietary systems at an astonishingly high price!
- They are simply unaware that there is a plethora of FOSS tools out there, available online, for public use!!



Superb FLOSS Translation tools

(2/2)





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Greek.LUG, GNU and Tux
both say "ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΟ" !



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GREEK.LUG What's this?



- Non-Governmental/ No-Profit volunteers Association, based in Pilea (96, Egnatia street) Its scopes are:
 - Promoting Open Standards, as well as Free Software and Open Source Software (FLOSS)
 - Promoting Free Software in the Public Administration and, in particular, in the Educational Sector.
 - Volunteering social work, by supporting various Institutions, schools, orphanages etc, in all matters related to Free Software.
 - Offering personal one-to-one assistance to every citizen or single user



Cooperation with Ionian University- Musical Studies Dept.

Tuesday, 01 March 2011 21:36



GREEK.L.U.G.
Α.Μ. 8751/30-7-09

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The **Association of Greek Users and friends of FLOSS** congratulates the administration and all Teaching/ Scientific Staff of the **Musical Studies Department of the Ionian University** for their initiative to be the **first ever Public Organization** which officially welcomes **Free Software and Open Formats** and decides to migrate entirely to it.

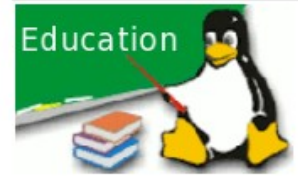
The Association, corresponding to the Department's call, accepted to help out along the process of this migration, by transferring over our knowledge and helping the Department in every aspect of Free Software applications. We also declared ourselves entirely at the **Musical Studies Department's** disposition, and at the **Ionian University's** disposition, for the subsequent necessary Adaptation Semminars and the release of Educational material.

The **Association of Greek Users and friends of FLOSS** is glad to have participated in the first official migration of a Hellenic Public Organization in Free Software and we wish to thank the **M.S.D. General Assembly** for having invited us to assist with this development.

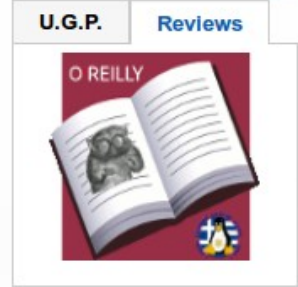
Please click [here](#), in order to read the **Press release that the M.S.D. has issued** relative to the above mentioned migration process in Free Software.



FS/OSS Education



O' Reilly



Joinup GNU/Linux





Support action to the Greek Childrens' Shelter of Filyro

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Submitted by [Gijs HILLENIOUS](#) on February 22, 2012
 Rating: **3/5** (based on 2 votes) | 744 reads

Open source computer lab donated to Greek child shelter

The Greek free software advocacy group Greeklug donated a computer lab based on free and open source software to a shelter for children in the village of Filyro, north of Thessaloniki. Apart from donating installation and hardware, the group is also organising training courses for the children.

"We contacted the orphanage, offering our expertise, our time and efforts", comments vice-president of Greeklug and paediatrician Kostas Mousafirris. The group members donated some of the hardware, including seven PCs, one server, a laptop, network cables and other peripherals

The computer class room for the child care centre, Elliniko Pediko Xorio, was refurbished in December and January. The group announced its work in a press statement published last month.

Most PCs and the server run the Ubuntu Linux distribution. One PC is fitted with a Ubuntu derivative,