

The Curse of Proprietary Software and Its Solution

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The Curse

In the early 1980, only -for-profit organizations groomed the trend of proprietary software development. Even the universities followed their way. More software was being distributed without source code than ever before.

In 1984, while at Massachusetts institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, visionist hacker (not a cracker; difference between a hacker and a cracker is beyond the scope of this document) Richard Mark Stallman saw his colleges gradually accepting and moving to this model. He didn't liked this kind of proprietism would offer : no sharing of your inventions with fellow human being, no freedom for anyone to take a look 'under the hood' of published work to see how it worked so that novice could understand it, geeks can build upon it; it would mean no freedom to improve your copy - including share it with others.

Instead of giving it to the world of non-free computing, Stallman decided to start a project to built and assemble a new Unix-like Operating System from scratch and make its source code free for anyone to copy and modify. (Why he choose to develop a Unix-like OS is beyond the scope of this document. It can be discussed later) This was the [GNU Project](#) ("GNU's Not Unix").

Today's closed-source software is presented to the world as a kind of magic trick; if you buy a copy of the program, you may use it, but you can never learn how the program actually works. This forces the programmers/general users to write programs that they already bought in the form of proprietary soft wares- so the progress of society as a whole is set back by countless man-hours of time and energy programmers must waste by inefficiently reinventing all the same software functions to perform the same task, over and over again.

The solution

Solution to this curse is open-source/free softwares. The term 'Open Source' was first introduced by some hackers in 1998 to be a marketing term for 'free software'. They felt some people unfamiliar with the free software movement might be scared or might get too much excited with the term 'FREE'. They might confuse free software with things like 'freeware', which is software provided free of charge, and in executable binary form only.

'FREE' in 'free software has always referred to 'freedom', not price.

The Open Source Initiative (OSI) was founded to promote software that conforms with their public "Open Source Definition", originally written by Bruce Perens as a set of software inclusion guidelines for Debian.

But some free software stalwarts and organizations, including the GNU Project, do not endorse the term "Open Source" at all, believing that it obscures the importance of "FREEDOM" in this movement.

Whether we call it free software, open source software or something else, there is one fundamental difference between this kind of software and proprietary, non-free-software and that is free software always ensures that everyone is granted certain fundamental freedom with respect to that software.

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