

Free Software for A Free Africa

by

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Warning:

I have been going around the world talking about Free Software for over fifteen years....I am getting tired of telling people the truth only to have them not listen or understand.

Please pardon me if, in trying to convey the message, I offend thee.

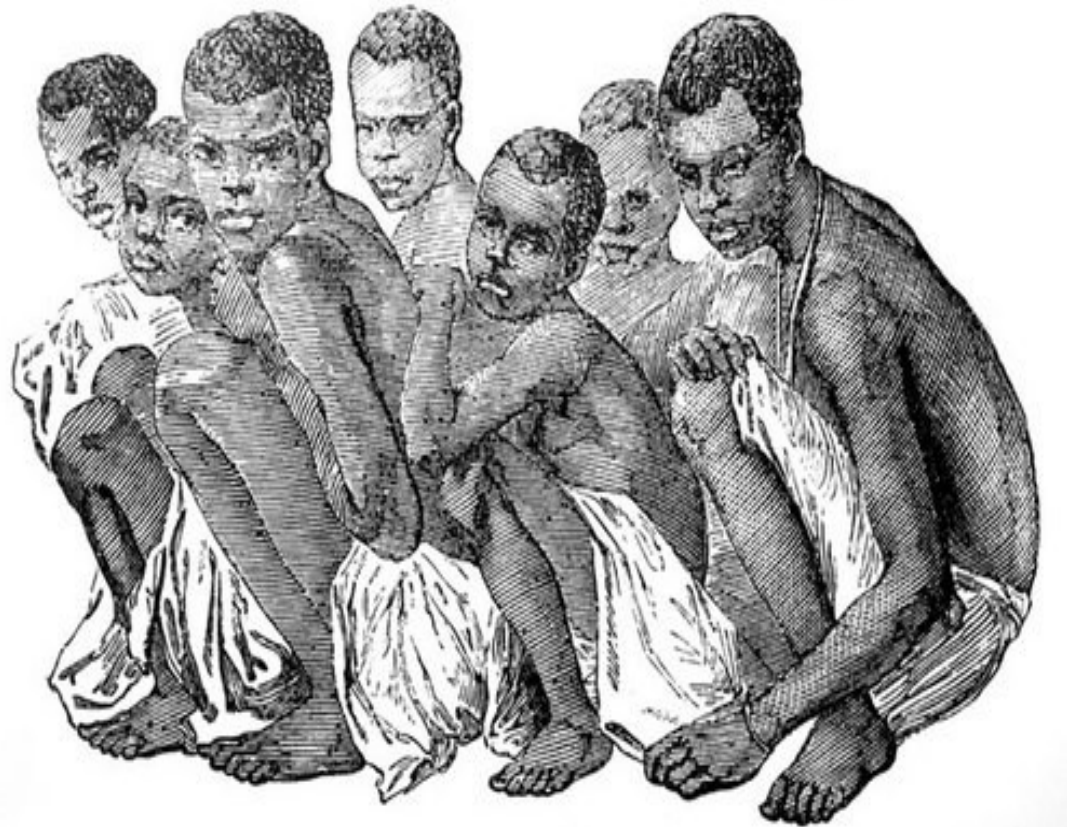
Software Li[**bv**]re!

- Free as in *freedom*, not free as in *beer*.
 - Free to read the source code
 - Free to make changes to the source code
 - Free to redistribute those changes
 - *Free to use the software for any purpose*
- You can not limit another's freedoms

Richard Stallman has *never* said you should not make money writing software.

Freedom Is A Difficult Concept: “Slavery” much easier to understand

- Where to go
- What to do
- Who to marry



What Is Software Slavery?



- How to use your software
- When to update
- When to migrate
- How many people will use it
- When to get bug fixes
- When to get enhancements

“Not in our best business interest”

Once “All” Software was “Free and Open Source”

- Software written to specification
 - Inputs, outputs and steps to be taken were specified
 - contract was written
- Criteria for acceptance
 - Bug rate
 - Documentation
 - On time
 - Other...



Software Owned By Customer

If changes needed, could select vendor

- Bugs fixed
- Extensions

The Enslavement of Software: 1980-1983

- Commercialization of Unix
 - Sun Microsystems – 1981
- PC happens
 - Low price hardware and software
 - Microsoft, Apple and others
 - Growth of the Computer Store

Sometimes I Speak To Hundreds Of Businesspeople....

- Who has ever had a problem with closed source programs?
- Who has turned in a problem report?
- Who has gotten a good answer back?
- Who has had to change their business?



Today There Are 950,000,000 General Purpose Computers

But there are 6.3 Billion people

Proprietary companies can not meet the needs of
everyone

Nor will they even try....it is not profitable!

Importance To Country



- Local jobs
 - High Tech
- Balance of Trade
- Eliminate piracy
- Security of country
 - Economic
 - Military
 - Longevity

Open Standards



- Standards that everyone works on:
 - even your customers
 - even your competitors
- Well documented
- No patents
- Sample source code (best)

OOXML has none of these

A New Old Model of Developing Software



When software is free....

- You pay for *service*
 - *Service* in copying and distributing
 - *Service* in getting features in your time frame
 - *Service* in integrating
 - *Service* in training
- Worst Case: You pay for the software one time
- Best Case: You never pay for the software again

Do Not Be Afraid Of The Word *Service*

- More than “just installing software”
- This is Brain Surgery
- This is like being a lawyer

Soweto



- “No Free Software in Soweto”
- “No Broadband Services in Soweto”

Soweto

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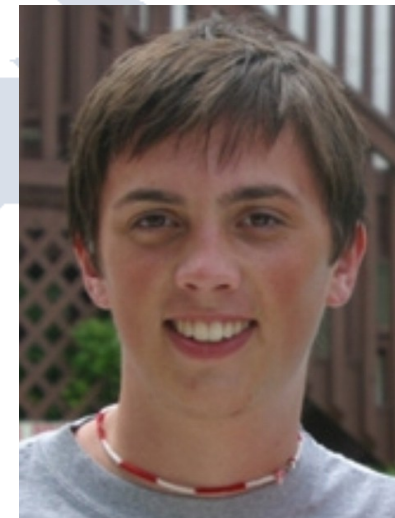


A Challenge for This Region

- Find your brightest students
- Get them to create a proposal for an embedded system products
- Choose best five proposals
- Get CS students to develop software on GNU/Linux systems
- Get EE students to develop controllers
- Get companies to manufacture products, create jobs

Would Closed Source Allow Them To Do This?

- Enterprise Creator – 22
- President - 21
- Kernel Developer – 15
- Distribution Developer - 14
- Soweto Entrepreneur - 22



They were not software slaves!

Today



- GNU/Linux is now shipping on:
 - 1/3rd of all new servers
 - Most supercomputers
 - 3rd most used OS in embedded system starts
- Moving onto the desktop

What About Other Disciplines?

- Department of Biological Science working with Department of Computer Science?
- Insurance companies using FOSS techniques?

Let's tear down the walls





Questions?

Only ***you*** can free ***yourself*** from
software slavery.