

Philosophy of the GNU Project

See audio-video.gnu.org for recordings of Richard Stallman's speeches.

Free software means that the software's users have freedom. (The issue is not about price.) We developed the GNU operating system so that users can have freedom in their computing.

Specifically, free software means users have the four essential freedoms: (0) to run the program, (1) to study and change the program in source code form, (2) to redistribute exact copies, and (3) to distribute modified versions.

Software differs from material objects—such as chairs, sandwiches, and gasoline—in that it can be copied and changed much more easily. These facilities are why software is useful; we believe a program's users should be free to take advantage of them, not solely its developer.

For further reading, please select a section from the menu above.

We also maintain a list of most recently added articles.

Introduction

- What is Free Software?
- Why we must insist on free software
- Proprietary software is often malware
- History of GNU/Linux
- Copyleft: Pragmatic Idealism
- Why Free Software Needs Free Documentation
- Selling Free Software is OK!
- Motives For Writing Free Software
- The Right to Read: A Dystopian Short Story by Richard Stallman
- Why "Open Source" misses the point of Free Software
- When Free Software Isn't (Practically) Superior
- Measures governments can use to promote free software
- Free software in education

We also keep a list of Organizations that Work for Freedom in Computer Development and Electronic Communications.

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