

Free as in Freedom not Free as in Free Beer

You do not have to pay for most Free Software. A lot of proprietary software is also free of charge, but Free Software is not about price: it's about liberty.

When you don't control a program, the program controls you. Whoever controls the software therefore controls you.

For example, no one is allowed to study how a non-free program works and what it actually does on your computer or phone. Sometimes the shortcomings of non-free software simply consist of failing to meet your expectations. However, non-free software also leaks your data or hides other malicious features more often than not.

Running exclusively Free Software on your computer or device puts you in full control. Even though you may not have the skills to exercise each of the four freedoms yourself, you will benefit from the knowledge and expertise of vibrant communities.

Consider showing your appreciation by paying developers voluntarily. This also ensures that you are the customer, and not the product.

What is Free Software?

- 1 Use:** Software that everyone can run freely, for any purpose.
- 2 Study:** Software that everyone can inspect and adapt to individual needs or wishes.
- 3 Share:** Software that everyone can copy and share freely.
- 4 Improve:** Improved versions of the software can be redistributed: the whole community benefits from improvements.

In order for a piece of software to be truly Free Software, it must grant all four of these freedoms, to everyone.

About the FSFE

This flyer was made by the Free Software Foundation Europe (FSFE), a non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting Free Software and working to build a free digital society.

Access to software determines how we can take part in our society. The FSFE is therefore dedicated to ensure equal access and participation in the information age by fighting for digital freedom.



No one should ever be forced to use software that cannot be **used, studied, shared** and **improved**. We must have the right to adapt technology to fit our needs.

The FSFE's work results from the efforts of a community of people committed to these goals. If you would like to join us and help to achieve them, there are many ways to contribute, no matter what your background is:

<http://fsfe.org/contribute>

Support Our Work

Donations are critical for us to continue our work and ensure the Foundation stays independent. You can support our work by joining the Fellowship and enable us to continue fighting for software freedom wherever necessary:



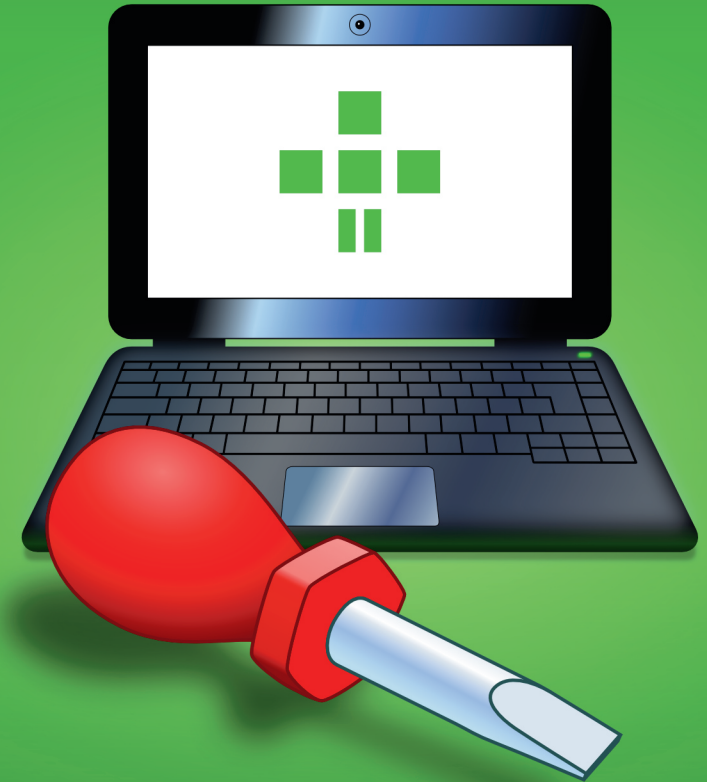
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Freedom



What do Free Software and tools have in common?

A comparison

Free Software gives us essential freedoms that other types of software deny us. Most of us have gotten used to serious digital restrictions, which is why an analogy with a very common physical tool is helpful.

Free Software can be used as a tool. Let us paint a picture of the absurd consequences it would have if screwdrivers could only be used with the same restrictions as non-free software:



1

Screwdrivers would no longer be standardized and would only work with screws made by the same company.

2

Screwdriver licenses would only allow the unscrewing of screws. To fasten one, we would need a more expensive screwdriver from the same manufacturer.

3

Only one company would be allowed to manufacture screwdrivers because the idea would have been patented. Only an expensive trial might result in the general right to use, for example, pliers to fasten or unscrew screws.

4

We would not be allowed to modify screwdrivers that we bought to adapt them to our needs. It would, for example, be forbidden to wrap textured tape around the grip to prevent the screwdriver from slipping out of our hands.

5

It would be illegal to repair a broken screwdriver without the permission of the manufacturer. Or even just to take it apart and study how it works.

6

New screwdrivers and screws would be put on the market constantly. They would not be compatible with older models. We would constantly need to buy new screwdrivers to service new appliances or devices.

7

It would be illegal to lend or resell screwdrivers.

8

Screwdrivers would secretly spy on us and send insidiously collected information to external persons (or companies or governments), without our knowledge.

No one would use screwdrivers whose use was restricted thusly. There are no reasonable grounds to accept such terms. Not for tools, not for software.

The freedoms we find self-evident with tools, are also possible with computers. Free programs can be installed anywhere without worry. Since Free Software relies on Open Standards, your files can still be opened with various programs years later.

On the other hand, software patents, Digital Restrictions Management (DRM), closed standards, proprietary software licences, and unfair Terms of Service are ways to restrict users' freedoms.

Where is Free Software used?

On desktop computers and laptops:

There is an incredible amount of Free Software available for all your tasks, projects and daily use. Here are some examples:

GNU/Linux is a Free Software operating system. It comes in many different flavours, called distributions. Some are very suitable for beginners, others were made to suit specific professional needs.

Mozilla Firefox, VLC, Audacity, and LibreOffice are examples of widely-used Free Software, and there are thousands of others.

On your other devices:

It has become common to carry around several computers, all the time. We call them 'smart phones', 'tablets', or 'e-readers'; but what they are is computers, often heavily restricted.

Android phones are an example of devices that can be liberated. For more information, check

<https://freeyourandroid.org>

On all computers, everywhere, all around us:

The list of basic electronic objects controlled by computers, themselves controlled by software, is almost endless. Proprietary software is still used in some of these devices. Fortunately however, Free Software accounts for a large proportion of embedded software.

ovens	televisions	heating systems
CD players	cars	trains
dishwashers	projectors	remote-controlled helicopters...

The infrastructure of the Internet also largely relies on Free Software, as does the 'web'.

modems	DNS servers	mail servers
routers	databases	e-commerce software...
VPN	web servers	