Free as in speech !

The "Free" in Free Software is a matter of liberty, not price. Think of free as in "free speech", not as in "free beer"!

Subverting copyright

The Free Software movement aims to ensure that people always have the right to run, study, share and improve the programs that run on their computer. The Open Source Initiative is similar in many ways, but doesn't always guarantee the same rights to users and programmers.

Programmers developing Free Software first copyright their program, and then grant people the right to use their program, provided that they pass on the same 4 freedoms to anyone else they share the program with. This subversion of copyright is known as copyleft.
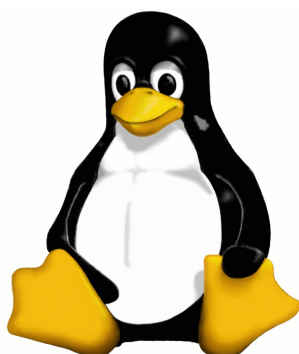
Why use it?

Reliability and security - everyone can fix bugs, so free software tends to be more reliable and secure.
Participation - nonfree software works well only with itself. Everyone should be able to participate in digital society.
Price - free software tends to be cheaper. Once you have one copy, you can make as many other copies as you like.

Because co-operation is more important than corporations !!!

What is Free Software ?

Free software guarantees 4 basic but important freedoms:

0. Freedom to **run** the program for any purpose.

1. Freedom to **study** how the program works, and adapt it to your needs.

2. Freedom to **share** the program to help your neighbour.

3. Freedom to **improve** the program and release your improvements so the whole community benefits.

Building alternatives

Free software has created a viable alternative to the corporate model of software development. Based around a gift economy, rather than a commodity economy, and relying on mutual aid rather than capitalist greed.

Activists can use free software to expand communities based around non-corporate culture. Environmentalists can adapt free software to run on otherwise obsolete computers. People in majority world countries can use free software to communicate with each other and the world. Civil libertarians can protect their privacy when they know exactly what their computer is doing.

Resources For Action

You don't have to be a techie to be part of the Free Software Movement! Even just by running a bit of free software and reporting the bugs you can make a contribution!

http://tinyurl.com/dqoj2 - Indymedia's jargon-free guide to how to get started using Free and Open Source software.
http://www.fsf.org - home page of the Free Software Foudation.
http://opensource.org/ - Home page of the Open Source Initiative.
http://aktivix.org, and **http://riseup.net** - Free Software based webmail, e-groups and more for activists.
http://tinyurl.com/8kalp - A development/appropriate technology perspective.

GNU/Linux is an operating system built with free software and used by millions of people around the world. Its logo is this penguin called Tux.

people & planet

student action on world poverty and the environment