

# Linus Torvalds

## Linux GPLv3



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Linus Torvalds DebConf

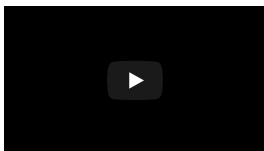
14 Q&A:

[https://youtu.be/1Mg5\\_gxNXTo?  
t=47m20s](https://youtu.be/1Mg5_gxNXTo?t=47m20s)

GPLv3 47:2057:00

Linus u2b

DebConf 14: Q&A with Linus Torvalds



Q: Do you agree that you  
undermine GPLv3? and ...

GPLv3 ? .....

L: Yes

L:

Q: How can we get you to stop?

L: What?

L:

Q: How can we get you to stop?

L: Oh I hate GPLv3. I undermined  
it on purpose. I actually thought  
the GPLv3 extensions were  
horrible. I understand why  
people would want to do them

but I think it should have been a completely new license.

L: GPLv3 GPLv3

Emm my argument for liking version 2, and I still think version 2 is a great license, was that, "I give you source code, you give me your changes back, we are even." Right? That's my take on GPL version 2, right, it's that simple.

2 2 GPL 2

And version 3 extended that in ways that I personally am really uncomfortable with, namely "I give you source code, that means that if you use that source code, you can't use it on your device unless you follow my rules." And to me that's, that's a violation of everything version 2 stood for. And I understand why the FSF did it because I know what the FSF wants. But to me it's not the same license at all.

3 2 FSF  
FSF

So I was very upset and made it very clear, and this was months before version 3 was actually published. There was a discussion about this long before... There was an earlier version of version 3, years before actually, where I said "No, this is not gonna fly." And during that earlier discussion I had already added to the kernel that, "Hey, I don't have the version 2 or later". And there was no... And I was really happy then when version 3 came out, that I have done that something like 5 years before, because there was ever never any question about what the license for the kernel was.

3 ..... 3  
2 ..... 3 5

But I actually thought that version 3 is ... Uh, no ... I actually think version 3 is a **FINE** license, right. I'm a firm believer in, "If you write your code, it is your choice to pick a license." And version 3 is a fine license. Version 3 was not a good ... "Here we give you version 2, and then we tried to sneak in these new rules, and tried to force

everybody to upgrade." That was the part I disliked. And the FSF did some really sneaky stuff, downright immoral in my opinion.

3 ..... 3 3  
3 ..... 2 3 FSF

Q: So you are talking about Tivoization?

Tivoization  
Tivoization FSF TiVo TiVo  
Linux GPLv2 FSF  
GPLv2 FSF GPLv3

Tivoization  
L: Ehmm, yeah the Tivoization is always my main, eh dislike of version 3. And, the FSF was being very dishonest thing. "Hey, we actually allow you to invalidate the Tivoization clause" and they tried to, they literally lied to people, and say "Hey, so that means that you can use GPLv3 without the Tivoization part", right. This is ... How many people heard this particular statement from the FSF? (Please raise your hands)

L: Tivoization 3 FSF  
Tivoization Tivoization  
GPLv3 ..... FSF

Ok, maybe they only tried to convince me with that one. But they did try. And it was like, "I'm not stupid", right. Yes, you can ... The GPLv3 allows you to say "Ok, Tivoization is not an issue for us". But it allows somebody else to take the project, and say "Hey, I ... The GPLv3 without Tivoization is compatible with the full GPLv3, so I will now make my own fork of this, and I will start doing drivers that use the full version of version 3" And where am I stuck then? I am stuck saying "Hey I give you the source code. and now I can't

take it back your changes".  
That's completely against the  
whole point of the license in the  
first place.

..... GPLv3  
Tivoization ..... Tivoization  
GPLv3 GPLv3 fork fork GPLv3

So the FSF was, I mean the kind  
of stuff that was going on behind  
the scenes, ah, made me once  
and for all to decide to never had  
any thing to do with the FSF  
again. So if you wanted to give  
money to an organization that  
does good? Give it to the EFF.  
The FSF is full of crazy bittered  
people. That's just mine opinion.  
Uh, actually I have ... Ah ... I  
overstated that a bit, right. The  
FSF has a lot of nice people in it,  
but some of them are bit too  
extreme.

FSF FSF EFF FSF  
.....FSF

Q: Well I wish the EFF care more  
about software freedom. But, uh,  
can you ... Do you think that  
Tivoization benefits me as a user  
somehow?

: EFF ..... Tivoization

L: No, no I don't. I mean that ...  
But that was never my  
argument. That was not why I  
selected the GPLv2. This is my  
whole point. It's not that I think  
Tivoization is necessarily  
something that you should strive  
for. But it is something that in  
my world view, it's your decision.  
If you make hardware that locks  
down the software, that's your  
decision as a hardware maker.  
That has no impact on my  
decision as a software maker to  
give you the software. Do you  
see where I am coming from? I  
don't like the locked down  
hardware, but at the same time  
that was never the social  
contract I intended with Linux.

L: ..... GPLv2   Tivoization  
Linux

To me, umm, I mean, people may or may not realize GPLv2 wasn't even the first license for Linux. To me the important part was always "I give you software, you can do whatever you want with it. If you making improvements, you have to give them back." That was the first version of the license. It also had a completely broken clause which was completely insane and I was stupid. Hey it happened. My origin license says that you can't make money change hands. And that was a mistake. That was clearly just wrong and bad because it really didn't have anything to do with what I wanted. But I was young, I was

poor, I didn't realize that the whole money thing wasn't the important part. And I have saw the errors in my ways, I saw the GPLv2 and said "Hey, that's the perfect license". And I saw the GPLv3 and I said "No, that's overreaching a lot, that's not what I wanted". And so I made Linux GPLv2 only, right.

GPLv2   Linux  
GPLv2  
GPLv3   Linux   GPLv2

Q: So do you think getting the patches back is as useful even if you can't modify the device that it is used on?

:

L: Yeah, absolutely. And I mean TiVo itself is actually an example of this. Their patches were kind of crafty but I mean they were basically running on a, originally a fairly standard MIPS thing. And their patches were working around bugs in the chipsets they used. And they were valid patches. The fact that they then felt that their hardware had to be locked down somehow. I didn't like it. But as I have mentioned, I felt that that was their decision.

L:   TiVo   MIPS

And they had real reasons for that. That's something people sometimes missed. There are sometimes reasons to do what

TiVo did. Sometimes it's imposed on you by, wireless carriers. Sometimes it's imposed on you by Disney. Uh sometimes it's imposed on you by laws. The GPLv3 actually accepts the fact

Or, I've actually accepted the last one when it comes to things like medical equipment I think. But the point is that the whole Tivoization thing is, sometimes it's, there is a reason for it. And if you make ... I mean I am not a hardware designer. I think FPGA and stuff like that is really cool. But I always ... I mean I really don't want to impose my world view on anybody else. You don't have to use Linux. If you do use Linux, the only thing I asked for is source code back. And there is all these other verbiages in the GPLv2 about exact details, those aren't important. And that was always my standpoint.

Tivo GPLv3  
Tivoization ..... FPGA .....  
Linux Linux GPLv2

Q: Ok, well I will stop my non-point of making noise now.

ISC  
.....

ISC BSD OpenBSD ISC

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L: I mean don't get me ... I mean I like other licenses too. I have used like the four, emmm... Which BSD license is the acceptable one? One of the BSD license is actually really nice. And it's actually the... What?

L: ..... BSD BSD .....

A: ISC

ISC

L: ISC? And I actually encourage people who don't care about the giving code back but care about the "Hey, I did something cool, please use it". I encourage people to use the BSD license for that. And I mean the BSD license is wonderful for that. It so happens that I thought that for my project the giving back is equally important so I, for me

BSD is bad. But the point is **for me**. The GPLv3 maybe the perfect license for what you guys want to do. And that's fine. And then it's the license you should use. It's just that when somebody else wrote the code you don't get that choice.

L: ISC   BSD   BSD  
BSD            GPLv3   GPLv3