The Inevitability of Code Bloat in Commercial and Free Software

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ABSTRACT

This report examines the long-term growth of the code bases in two large, popular software packages; the free Emacs and the commercial Microsoft Word. While differences appear in the type or order of features added, due to the different methodologies used, the results are the same in the end.

The free software approach is shown to be superior in that while free software can become as bloated as commercial offerings, free software tends to have fewer serious bugs and the added features are in line with user demand.

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