

CYBERSPACE LAWYERS

Given their practice, it is a common for hackers to find themselves in legally equivocal waters or on the fringes of legality. Therefore they inevitably reveal emerging dilemmas (Coleman 2013: 19) or the need for legislation where there has been none. It has hence become part of many hacker's daily repertoire to develop legal knowledge. For Debian developers, a community of F/OSS developers volunteering to work on a free and open source operating system, it has become even mandatory part of their practice, since such projects have come to require the legal knowledge in order to be able to operate (ibid. 164). Gabriela Coleman indicates the scope of this consequence: „F/OSS arena probably represents the largest single association of amateur intellectual property and free speech legal scholars ever to have existed. Given the right circumstances, many developers will marshal this expertise as part of broader, contentious battles over intellectual property law and the legality of software [...]“ (Coleman 2013: 168).

She then goes on to point out the significance and the capability of law to change cultural meaning and its power to shape and define social reality (ibid. 182). This is an aspect already encountered in the first chapter, which has shown how bureaucracy – and being its prerequisite, legislation – backed by the state's monopoly of coercive force holds and executes the privilege of the interpretation of reality (see Graeber 2015). The legal engagement of hackers, therefore, gives them the power to impact the interpretation of the legal regulation of cyberspace.