

Your freedom to use technology is under attack

CLUE represents the voice of the open source and free software community in Canada. Created in 1999, this federally-incorporated nonprofit aims to support and encourage the growing creation and use of open source by business, governments, organizations of all kinds, and individuals wanting to get the most out of their computing technology.

Our vision is to nurture a Canadian Information Technology environment which promotes collaborative innovation as well as open standards and the rights of consumers. Our mission is to promote the use and development of free, open source software, by providing a public voice to the community of its Canadian users, developers and supporters. CLUE will enhance this community's ability to share resources, define standards, and promote its values within Canadian society.

Originally started to support Linux user groups, CLUE has extended its support throughout the open source community. Within CLUE are people involved in Canada's BSD, Perl, OpenOffice and other development projects as well as Linux – this ensures that our views and activities are inclusive to the whole community.

In early 2006, CLUE changed direction to become a paid-member organization, designed to take a more active role in the promotion of our mission. While our traditional work supporting Canadian user groups will continue, CLUE has identified a number of situations in which the community needs to assert its voice clearly to governments and policy makers. Without this voice, the freedoms and flexibility available to creators and consumers in Canada are at risk.

The copyright threat

The Canadian government is looking to change its laws regarding copyright to deal with issues related to digital creative works. Others, such as the USA and European Union, have already brought in laws that hurt both creators of original works and the consumers of those works, to the benefit of distribution and publishing companies. Such a bill, C-60, was introduced by the last government but did not pass before the election. Now, the new Conservative government is under pressure from the content industry to introduce new copyright measures. That industry wants laws which would severely reduce the rights of anyone who legitimately purchases creative works, without enhancing the rights of creators. Such laws would diminish real property rights and stifle innovation, while turning legitimate users of technology into criminals.

The content industry wants to penalize the consumers of today and the creators of tomorrow because of its inability to grasp how people want to buy and create. Open source software would be especially impacted by these companies' desire to use the law

to “lock-in” the public to technology models that hurt consumer and creator alike. Compounding the problem, the industry wants to paint as “pirates” anyone who doesn't agree with its unfounded assertions.

The open source community supports the protections of copyright, while opposing both unauthorized copying and the abuse of copyright. Your support of CLUE enables us to articulate and advance policies designed to protect the legitimate rights of creators without harming the public's access to a healthy public domain. In addition to our efforts within Canada, we will work with the EFF and similar organizations in other countries to affect policy at the international level, to address the anti-consumer, anti-creator policies of bodies such as WIPO.

Canada, open source and open standards

We note that the various governments in Canada have different policies related to the use and procurement of open source within the public sector. This ranges from fair acceptance in some jurisdictions to outright hostility in others. Together with local user groups, CLUE will work at the federal, provincial and municipal levels to ensure that open source is understood as an effective application of public resources and an intelligent goal of public policy. At very least, we want to ensure that governments at all levels understand not just the value but the public necessity for open-unencumbered standards for both file formats and Internet services.

CLUE programs will highlight the value and professionalism of Canadians who provide training and services in support of open source. We will constantly consult with our membership to determine the best policies and benefits we can provide to advance the community.

The open source community has created some of the world's most stable, most used and least expensive information technology. It offers technology users the freedom to expand upon the work and contribution of others for both pleasure and profit. Some of the world's largest companies use or develop open source, as well as educational projects in some of the world's least developed countries. It powers some of the world's fastest computers as well as \$100 laptops. The community behind open source, whether multinationals, governments or hobbyists, benefits from the flexibility and power offered by this way of exchanging knowledge.

CLUE will work to ensure that open source is, and will continue to be, an active and growing component of the Canadian IT landscape.



Help CLUE protect the rights of creators and consumers