

# Richard Stallman's blog

Selected entries from Richard's blog  
(<http://www.fsf.org/blogs/rms/>).

Richard Stallman

## Response to Fox News Article (January 31, 2005)

**J**im Prendergast's recent article mistakenly called me a "leader in the open source community". While I appreciate the praise that might be read into that expression, it is not the case: I do not advocate "open source" and never did. I founded the Free Software Movement in 1984. "Free", here refers to freedom, not price; specifically the freedom to redistribute and change the software you use. With free software, the users control the software; with non-free software, the developer has control of the software and its users.

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To win freedom, we developed the GNU/Linux operating system, now used on tens of millions of computers. While Microsoft calls GNU/Linux dirty names like "unamerican" and "communist", other presumably capitalist corporations such as IBM and Apple both use and contribute to GNU.

The article misstated my views when it said I am "against intellectual property". That term has no meaning except a confused mishmash of copyright law, patent law, and trade-

mark law, and using the term leads people to simplistic, extreme, confused views. To be either for or against "intellectual property" is equally foolish. We can encourage careful thinking by rejecting that simplistic slogan.

In US law, copyright is a deal between the public and authors: the public sold the freedom to republish, which only publishers could do anyway, and gained more progress. Progress is valuable, but freedoms that we want to use are even more valuable. Nowadays, that includes the freedom to share copies on the internet. To make copyright law a good deal for the public, we should scale it back. If this means some companies and a handful of superstars make less than their wildest dreams, Prendergast may be shocked, but Adam Smith would not have been.

Sincerely,  
Richard Stallman  
Free Software Foundation

## Bolivia (January, 19 2005 to January, 27 2005)

Visiting Bolivia provided an opportunity for me to spend a week with Tania. I had better explain that Tania isn't just my friend; she's my sweetheart. Since she lives in Colombia, it isn't easy for us to spend time together. I used frequent flier miles to get her a ticket to Bolivia while I was to be there. In arranging this trip, I agreed to go speak in Santa Cruz provided either I went there for a very short time or Tania could go with me. The day before going to Bolivia was

when I learned that the trip to Santa Cruz had been arranged for both of us together.

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Arriving after an early morning flight which required me to wake up around 4am Bolivia time, I found that people had arranged a speech for me that afternoon at the vice presidency. The vice president was not at this meeting, but some government officials interested in free software were there.

(...) (<http://www.fsf.org/blogs/rms/entry-20050201>)

The next morning we went to the radio station at a university, and I did my interview. Then it was Tania's turn—she founded and manages a free software support company. As she was making her first remarks, I went to plug in my computer. There was a short circuit! The socket exploded in sparks for a second, and then the breaker operated and the whole studio went dark. My whole hand was covered by black soot, and part of my index finger was burnt. But my main thought was that I had just cut off Tania's interview. I felt somewhat ashamed of that. At the same time, the unexpectedness of the situation made me want to laugh.

But Tania had her interview after all. By the time I was able to wash my hand and put some burn cream and a bandage on my finger, they had got the studio running again.

While putting on Saint IGNUcius' tunic at the end, a motion of my arm caused the bandage to fly off my index finger. I said, "Look, a miracle!"

My speech that afternoon was poorly attended. A lot of people had arranged to come to the conference the previous week, when my speech was supposed to be, but only a fraction of them could come at the new date. Nonetheless, it went well. While putting on Saint IGNUcius' tunic at the

Fig. 1: Valle de la Luna



end, a motion of my arm caused the bandage to fly off my index finger. I said, "Look, a miracle!"

We went back to La Paz the next day without great difficulty. On my last day in Bolivia, I went with Tania to see the Valle de la Luna. When it rains, the water goes down through sinkholes into a subterranean river. Some of my photos show a bridge; the bridge was built in a place where it is possible to see down into the subterranean river. The guide told us it received that name after Neil Armstrong visited and said it reminded him of the moon.

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## About the author

Richard Stallman is the founder of the GNU Project, launched in 1984 to develop the free software operating system GNU. The name "GNU" is a recursive acronym for "GNU's Not Unix"