

Welcome to the first Free Software Magazine

Tony Mobily

I would have liked to start this editorial defining what free software is, but I found myself writing – and deleting – my sentences time and again. The problem is that free software means different things to different people. To some, free software is a way to save money in licensing fees and technical support. To some, it's a way of sharing their skills (which they do for different reasons: research, personal development, money, etc). And to others free software is a movement, a way of life.

Whatever the case, due to its many merits, free software's popularity is growing daily. Even non-geeks are discovering that most of the web sites that they visit run on free software (Apache); there is a valid alternative to Internet Explorer (Firefox); and their internet provider's network is secured by free software (Nexus, free firewall, etc).

And yet, until today there hasn't been a single magazine dedicated entirely to free software.

As the Editor in Chief, I'm very excited because I've always wanted to be involved in a project like this. I've always considered myself a "free software consultant and advocate", but I have never felt that I was giving enough back to the community. In a way, I consider Free Software Magazine to be my big opportunity – and I believe that it's a big opportunity for free software, its users and its programmers. All of the articles are released under a free license six weeks after publication. This means that we'll steadily build up a library of valuable material, which can then be used both in technical and non-technical discussions by the public at large.

Now, this project is not risk-free. In the publishing industry you need *numbers* to make everything work. The more you print, the less you pay. The more readers you have, the more likely you are to get paying advertisers and so it goes on. At

the moment, nobody really knows what these numbers will be for a magazine on free software, simply because there's never been one.

I believe that we (myself, the staff, and the contributors) did a fantastic job, and it shows.

If you don't think we did, and you believe that Free Software Magazine isn't up to standard, please let *us* know - we welcome any criticism.

If you believe in this project, please let the whole world know about it, use all those means that made great free software projects successful: talk about Free Software Magazine in your blog, user group mailing lists, social networks, professional web sites, IRC, etc. This way, you will help the magazine gain momentum and obtain the exposure it – and free software – deserve.

I'll see you here next month!

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About the author

Tony Mobily is Editor In Chief of Free Software Magazine