

# Are Large Software Companies Bound to Adopt the Free Software Model?

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# Table of Contents

- 1 Context
  - Definition
  - History
- 2 Is free software viable?
  - Advantages and disadvantages
  - Different business models
- 3 Present state
- 4 Conclusion

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# What is free software?

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Free software  $\neq$  open source

Free software  $\neq$  free of charge



# Historically speaking...

1950s

Softwares are academic, sharing is the norm.

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1970s - Today

Softwares are commercial products.

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Near future

?

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# Advantages



# Advantages

- Reputation



# Advantages



- Reputation
- Trust

# Advantages



- Reputation
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- Less patenting fees



# Advantages



- Reputation
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- Less legal fees

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- Reputation
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- User contribution

# Disadvantages

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- Intimidating to the user

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- “Potentially free = not as good”

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# Disadvantages

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- Intimidating to the user
- “Potentially free = not as good”
- No secret

# Free software seems to be a solid option

## Many advantages

- Less costs
- User contribution
- Good image

# Free software seems to be a solid option

## Many advantages

- Less costs
- User contribution
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But...

Is it economically viable?



# Canonical - Ubuntu

## Their product

A Linux-based operating system

- $\approx$  20M users
- $\approx$  400 employees



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They sell support:

- Deployment
- Maintenance
- Training

# Mozilla - Firefox

## Their product

An internet browser

- $\approx$  300M users
- $\approx$  600 employees



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- Donations

# Mozilla - Firefox

## Their product

### An internet browser

- $\approx 300\text{M}$  users
- $\approx 600$  employees



- Donations
- Google partnership ( $\approx 84\%$ )

# Google - Chromium

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- Zero revenue
- The real product is advertising
- Chromium lets people access Google more easily

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# Present state

## In theory

- Many advantages
- Economically viable

## In practice

## Present state

### In theory

- Many advantages
- Economically viable

### In practice

- Every company publicly endorses FS

## Present state

### In theory

- Many advantages
- Economically viable

### In practice

- Every company publicly endorses FS
- But definitions differ...

# The reluctant ones

Who?

Microsoft

- Proprietary with closed licences
- At best, partial openness for interoperability
- Do not share the innovation

## The conflicted ones

Who?

Apple, Oracle

- Mostly based on FSs
- Actively participate to FS projects
- Aggressively protect their core products

# The adopters

Who?

Red Hat, Canonical, Google, Intel

- Sell or offer free software
- Sell support
- Offer free tools related to their main products



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# Conclusion

Are large software companies bound to adopt the free software model?

- FS will never totally overthrow PS
- More and more open-source initiatives, some free
- Globally, growing user implication