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

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# Table of Contents

**Context**
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Definition
History

# Table of Contents

Context
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Definition
History

## What is free software?

- Distributed with its source code

**Context**
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

**Definition**
History

## What is free software?

- Distributed with its source code
- Modifiable

Context
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Definition
History

## What is free software?

- Distributed with its source code
- Modifiable
- Redistributable

**Context**
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Definition
History

## What is free software?

- Distributed with its source code
- Modifiable
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Free software $\neq$ open source

**Context**
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Definition
History

## What is free software?

- Distributed with its source code
- Modifiable
- Redistributable

Free software $\neq$ open source

Free software $\neq$ free of charge

Context
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Definition
History

Historically speaking...

### 1950s

Softwares are academic, sharing is the norm.

**Context**
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Definition
**History**

## Historically speaking...

### 1950s

Softwares are academic, sharing is the norm.

↓

### 1970s - Today

Softwares are commercial products.

Context
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Definition
History

## Historically speaking...

### 1950s

Softwares are academic, sharing is the norm.

↓

### 1970s - Today

Softwares are commercial products.

↓

### Near future

?

Context
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Advantages and disadvantages
Different business models

# Table of Contents

Context
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Advantages and disadvantages
Different business models

## Advantages

+

Context
Is free software viable?     Advantages and disadvantages
Present state     Different business models
Conclusion

# Advantages

- Reputation

+

Context
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Advantages and disadvantages
Different business models

## Advantages

- Reputation
- Trust

+

Context
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Advantages and disadvantages
Different business models

## Advantages

+

- Reputation
- Trust
- Less patenting fees

Context
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Advantages and disadvantages
Different business models

## Advantages

+

- Reputation
- Trust
- Less patenting fees
- Less legal fees

Context
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Advantages and disadvantages
Different business models

## Advantages

+
- Reputation
- Trust
- Less patenting fees
- Less legal fees
- User contribution

Context
Is free software viable?          Advantages and disadvantages
Present state          Different business models
Conclusion

# Disadvantages

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Context
Is free software viable?          Advantages and disadvantages
Present state          Different business models
Conclusion

# Disadvantages

- Intimidating to the user

Context
**Is free software viable?**     Advantages and disadvantages
Present state          Different business models
Conclusion

## Disadvantages

- Intimidating to the user
- "Potentially free = not as good"

Context
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Advantages and disadvantages
Different business models

## Disadvantages

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

Context
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Advantages and disadvantages
Different business models

# Free software seems to be a solid option

## Many advantages

- Less costs
- User contribution
- Good image

Context
**Is free software viable?**
Present state
Conclusion

Advantages and disadvantages
Different business models

# Free software seems to be a solid option

## Many advantages

- Less costs
- User contribution
- Good image

## But...

Is it economically viable?

Context
Is free software viable?          Advantages and disadvantages
Present state          Different business models
Conclusion

# Canonical - Ubuntu

## Their product

A Linux-based operating system

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

Context
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Advantages and disadvantages
Different business models

# Canonical - Ubuntu

## Their product

A Linux-based operating system

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

They sell support:

- Deployment
- Maintenance
- Training

Context
Is free software viable?
Present state
Conclusion

Advantages and disadvantages
Different business models

# Mozilla - Firefox

## Their product

An internet browser

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

Context
**Is free software viable?**
Present state
Conclusion

Advantages and disadvantages
**Different business models**

# Mozilla - Firefox

## Their product

An internet browser

- $\approx$ 300M users
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- Donations

Context
**Is free software viable?**          Advantages and disadvantages
Present state          **Different business models**
Conclusion

# Mozilla - Firefox

## Their product

An internet browser
- $\approx$ 300M users
- $\approx$ 600 employees



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

Context
**Is free software viable?** Advantages and disadvantages
Present state **Different business models**
Conclusion

# Google - Chromium

## Their product

An internet browser

- $\approx$ 200M users
- Reputed for its speed

Context
**Is free software viable?**
Present state
Conclusion

Advantages and disadvantages
**Different business models**

# Google - Chromium

## Their product

An internet browser

- $\approx$ 200M users
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- Zero revenue

Context
**Is free software viable?**
Present state
Conclusion

Advantages and disadvantages
**Different business models**

# Google - Chromium

## Their product

An internet browser

- $\approx$ 200M users
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- Zero revenue
- The real product is advertising

Context
**Is free software viable?**         Advantages and disadvantages
Present state                **Different business models**
Conclusion

# Google - Chromium

## Their product

An internet browser

- $\approx$ 200M users
- Reputed for its speed

<br>

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

## Table of Contents

## 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

# Table of Contents

## 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