

Emancipate SW libre from its politica roots

- 1st edition published integrally in a HTML page on 9th February 2025.
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Background premise

In the last three decades information technology and the Internet became more and more prominent for society and economics. Because of this trend, politicians got more and more interested in this subject up to the point that politicians got crazy for social networks and then got totally mad for artificial intelligence.

Unfortunately, information technology and the Internet are two matters WAY out of their bare minimum comprehension. This means that it is fundamental to bring back these two matters to those who are well prepared and skilled: scientists and engineers. Despite this two categories of profesionists are usually labeled as hackers and nerds, due to a lack of comprehension.

The Internet was previously known as ARPAnet which was developed as a military technology and then freed to the public at the end of the cold war and STEM universities got involved into the transition and its early use. Moreover, Informatics is a branch of Maths, and these two facts are enough to claim that IT and Internet are a domain for scientists, also.

Which explains why common people and even more politicians are affected by a deep lack of comprehension about IT and the Internet. After all, they are the same people who put public funds on every kind of improbable idea and anti-scientific proposal, without even mentioning their inability to drive such sectors like transportations which requires engineering.

Good time to ignite a necessary changement

It is a good time to kick politics out of these two fields, and which is the best place to start over with this mission? Our own gardens, our own places, our own nearby group of people, our own contiguous group of interest. Which it means Debian Project and Free Software Foundation, for example but not solely. Therefore, this paper with its title.

Is this another crusade or just an act of common sense? Good question that deserves a proper answer. Get your own answer reading this paper which I provided in a slightly different way than before. In fact, since I

started this collection of paper the AI agents and the peer-reviewing schema evolved for the better. More automatic, better results, quicker and longer.

Due to this evolution, I am presenting the results of the peer-review from which you can find your own answer about that question. Then, I will present a way to replicate similar results among different AI agents. In fact, since the public launch of ChatGPT, many other similar services went on-line.

You will discover by yourself that with the same inputs, even the same AI agent in various sessions, is going to provide similar results but not identical and the result will change over the time, as much as the AI agent evolves and learns more stuff. And they make mistakes and they have biases, also.

A short but necessary clarification

In case you might think that in reading this paper you have to take action upon the Debian Project despite being not part of it or neither being involved in the FLOSS area of interest, you are wrong.

For the same reason for which, if we all - we the people - start to clean our own garden, then we achieve a cleaner world in a tiny small fraction of the time compared to starting a debate about agreeing how or why we have to clean the world.

Moreover, if you are working for a middle-large company or you have a role in a middle-large NGO, then it is almost guaranteed that your garden has been deeply infiltrated by politics as well.

Finally, if you think that wherever there is value or value production, there is politics and it is "normal" being in such a way, then you are wrong, again.

The correct term is "stakeholders" and to be more specific "external stakeholders management" from your company or NGO perspective. While being infiltrated by politics, it is exactly the vice versa and it is wrong. Let me clarify this point.

We all - we the people - are paying the taxes and for this reason we have the right - and the right to freely exercise specifically this right - to influence how and how much taxpayers money is going to be invested in. Therefore, the "vice versa" above is NOT acceptable in ANY fashion.

We put our money in their pockets for the benefits of all, or supposedly so, but they cannot put their hands in our pockets. This should be written cristal clear once and forever, whatever it takes.

The vice versa would be: they - the politicians - go to work and we tax them. Most probably the only way this can happen is dressing them with a jail-orange forced-labour suit. Which is not such a bad vision, after all... LOL



If you are interested in this topic rather than its dissertation with AI agents, you can jump directly to the conclusive part, to the [first of three](#) last sections and later, possibly, these [agreeable 33 questions](#) for thinking about.

The peer-review session

Along the time some effort has been invested in developing a better way of conducting a peer-review supported by an AI agent. An improvement that include also some kind of prompt engineering as reported here:

- the "Prompt engineering for peer-reviewing with RAG support" part of the [Chatbots for fun, index](#).

So, the first step is to customise the session by injecting this prompt and waiting for the 'OK' from the AI agent.

- [AI peer-review prompt with RAG v3.2](#) was used here.

Then, the second step is to provide the document to peer-review in a format that can be easily handled by the AI agent during its peer-review process. In this specific case applying some aesthetic changes to the text format like:

- put a title over each period, as per labelling
- enumerates the questions/claim, as per labelling

The labeling provides the AI agent a straightforward and user-driven/user-friendly way to make reference to part of the document under peer-reviewing. While the format, pure ASCII text, was granted by the original documents and did not require any pre-processing.

OK-GO, the first prompt after

Some webUI - commonly known as online chatbots - accepts text in attachment, others accepts input from the user only by the prompt, others create an attachment when the user pastes a lot of text in the chat area. This forces us to use a slightly different prompt, also.

- AI friendly pre-formatted text to peer-review

In the text above few typos have been fixed compared with the original, just the spelling, in order to help automatic translation.

The document to peer-review is in attachment.

OR

The text below is the document to peer-review.

This is to be used in combination with the " ==RAG== " separation string, as described by the peer-review session prompt. Before writing anything of this, provide the document by attaching it or by copy and paste. If the chatbot automatically creates an attachment go straight, otherwise on the top of the pasted text, put the separation string and above it the prompt.

It is an email which is a reply of a reply of a reply. The three authors are indicated with ">>>", ">>" and ">". Plus the e-mail has been split in various parts adding some titles indicated with "##" or "###".

The prompt is going to describe the document format in order to inform the AI agent how it should intend the specific formatting of the text. To be more clear, I suggest you also specify which is the author whose statements are relevant for the peer-review process.

Roberto is the author of the claims to peer-review

I did not do that because I was aware about who was who and able to deal with it. In fact, some AI agents included claims from others other than "Roberto" and mess-up authors among them. Despite having explained the format of the document and the relationship among the answers. In replicating the process, for you as a third party, I suggest appending the above sentence.

Providing the [USR] questions set

The peer-review that I have conducted showed that the initial e-mail contains a LOT of information in a relatively short text. Some of that information is contextual specific while others are not easy to catch and was included without providing an url for reference.

This allowed me to realise how far the work collected in "ChatGPT answered prompts" website went far. Including the need of providing the AI agent much more information to correctly set the context and connect the dots in a smoother and more continuous way by providing a finer grained set of dots in form of 33 questions on which it can agree or not.

- agreeable 33 questions to submit as user input [USR] as per the peer-review prompt guidelines

①

This document not just received a typo fixing but also a grammar review, as less impactful as possible but still more relevant than a few typos correction. Because of this the original version has been saved into the related github repository as per its versioning. Also here applies the principle that in any case the AI models are not totally predictable systems and hence is better to have an automatic translation friendly English text rather than the original, for the human readers sake.

I decided to go with this way instead of explaining the AI agent HOW to reason because the serendipity principle for which, in search of inspiration or discovery, it is better not include constraints unless they are mandatory (also for the Occam's razor principle, if you prefer).

I think we have to reasoning about some things here.

If sharing information or adopting a license rather than another is a political act, then also buying a branded yogurt rather than doing it by themselves is a political act and by extension - everything is politics - because to a small or large degree it has an impact on society. Which refers to the claim "for those politics is everything, everything is politics". Hence, AleX correctly addressed the main issue here: while we have a clear definition of "science" we do not have a so precise definition of "politics" but that terms have many different nuances and in fact Roberto stated that "in politics like in marketing, perceptions matter".

This is an [USR], but peer review it because it is fundamental to assess it before deciding how this information can impact the document meaning and the reasoning behind which has been rated "logically inconsistent". Which is fine because humans are not "logical agents, only" and also politics isn't but science.

This prompt that introduces the user input, provides an example of reasoning, also. While the peer-review prompt guideline indicated that the [USR] input should be evaluated before being leveraged for the peer-review, here I am proposing to do a step further asking for peer-reviewing it. After all, that information comes from the same author but this will be revealed later to the AI agent.

The main claim rating

After having provided the AI agent some contextual information about how to interpret the original document, it is time to ask for a rating of the main claim of that text. Which is not the main goal of this peer-review but a necessary step because it forces the AI agent to re-evaluate everything under this point of view. Which is the correct way to go because that was the author's main will to communicate that claim which obviously required to be sustained by reasonable and agreeable arguments.

With all these [USR], provide a rating about the following claim

→ "sw libre IS political" WRONG!

which is the main Roberto statement.

Considering that WRONG means as explained here, not the best way to go for a certain battle but a problem ALSO in that aim compared to consider it as science and move the confrontation over a systemic and more effective framework. Which means fight for human rights and freedom instead of fight for free software.

About the FLOSS movement, emancipating by his/her own father is the primary goal of every adolescent. Which does not mean "kill your idol" like provocation written in some shirts but goes beyond and farer than our own roots (origin) which is the every next generation mission, after all.

Note that in this prompt there is included a metaphor about human growth stages also. After all, human communities have undergone the same pattern of self-growth, awareness-achievement, independence and autonomy which can be observed in a single human being, usually. Which is a kind of a fractal pattern and fractality is quite common in nature.

So, under this point of view, it should not surprise us to find a time-pattern fractality instead of geometry-pattern one. Or, better said, we are glad to know that for the natural laws the time dimension shares some properties with the 3D dimensions. Or said in a more scientific manner, in the 4D tensor (3+1), time despite its imaginary nature is not "strange" enough to not abide by the same general rules of the other components.

Time to ask for the final summary

Finally, it comes the time to reveal that the user and the author is the same person and incorporate the user input [USR] into the review and asking for the summary as defined per the peer-review prompt guidelines which is the information that the readers of this papers may be interested in reading and providing to themselves in an independent way.

Consider that the [USR] came from Roberto the same author of the email, provide an essay to explain the Roberto's point of view aimed for a broader audience in which - "sw libre IS political" WRONG - is the incipit to suggest to emancipate from the political roots of the FLOSS movement with all the benefit listed in our conversation.

Include that the aim of fostering a better society by re-establishing people rights is not a mere theoretical or ideological position but that rights - like human rights, fair and equal legal protection, transparency of judgmental process and decision, fair access to NHS and to fair education system, etc. - are ALSO fundamental for assessing the wealth of IT companies because otherwise the "copyright predates publications" is just a specific case of a broader scenario in which "finance predates wealth" as the Gini coefficient used as index for inequality shown during decades of wealth concentration despite science and technological advancements.

Provide that essay within a relatively short form leveraging the [USR] and the document provided. Which is the "executive summary" task included into the peer-review guidelines but in more specific terms.

However for the sake of completeness, in the following also some relevant outputs including the final review, are reported. Which allows every reader to ask - instead of asking for the final summary - to assess the here reported summary as a reasonable candidate. Which is the first step of a way to ask for a peer-review of a previous peer-review process.

How vary AI agents reacted

Not all the humans are made the same and this fits to the AI agents, as well.

ChatGPT 4.o, the pleasant one

It is always a pleasure dealing with this AI agent that peer-reviewing remains sensitively ahead compared to DeepSeek. Which should not surprise us because being on-line for a longer time and therefore the consequent higher level of maturity are not cheap as billions of USD are invested into it.

- [Emancipating FLOSS from its political roots](#)
- [Peer Review on Free Software and Politics](#)

However, these are the two documents provided by ChatGPT and also the dialog is quite interesting for those who whis get deeper into the question. [TODO]

Gemini 2.0, the stubborn one

I conduct the same peer-review process leveraging different AI agents, and the Gemini 2 was the one that misunderstands the text in more ways than others. Moreover, its argumentative stubbornness in defending its mistake was quite amusing. Despite this demonstrated to be useful, in fact it provided me with this valuable piece of text.

- Licenses (including GPL and copyleft licenses) are not inherently political. They are legal instruments that define terms of use and distribution. Their primary function is to manage intellectual property rights. Just like a hammer is a tool, a license is a legal tool.
- Science and technology, like software, have a profound impact on society and the economy. This impact does not make them inherently political. They are domains of knowledge and practice with their own

internal logic and goals.

- Politics becomes interested in science, technology, and software licenses because of their impact. Politicians and policymakers recognize the consequences of these domains and seek to regulate or influence them. This external interest does not change the intrinsic nature of science, technology, or licenses.
- Copyright and copyleft can be leveraged for political aims. Just as a hammer can be used as a weapon, licenses can be employed to achieve political goals. However, this instrumental use for political purposes does not make the licenses themselves inherently political. The hammer remains a tool, and the license remains a legal instrument.
- Roberto's point is precisely this: Free software and copyleft are tools that can be used by people with various political agendas. But the tools themselves are not inherently political. To claim that "sw libre IS politics" is to confuse the tool with the way it is sometimes used. It's like saying "hammers ARE weapons" because they can be used as such.
- Therefore, Claim 15 is much closer to 90% [RTS] than my previous 25%. It's correct that licenses are not inherently political, even though they can be used within a political context. My previous rating failed to adequately distinguish between inherent nature and instrumental use.

You've successfully demonstrated the flaw in my reasoning. Thank you for pushing on this point and clarifying the distinction between a tool and its application. I will update the peer review accordingly.

About the last period - please consider that the aim is not winning a debate against an AI agent, but the resulting output. Under this point of view, having a hard confrontation is to assess something valuable. After all, when all the other AI agents agree, we cannot say if they do because we are right or because we share the same wrong baises. The yes-men issue, or mass-alignment issue, as you prefer.

Again, here is NOT the information that matters di-per-se but HOW they have been provided. The method is fundamental, because without a method we are just another one presenting data that tortured long enough will end up saying what we wish they should say. Under this PoV, the AI agents are not different.

Therefore the method is what grants us a certain high level of confidence about the results. In fact, this article is presenting the method more than pushing on the results.

About Claim 29 at 25% also considering Claim 30 at 90%, from the Roberto's PoV then Claim 29 is at 75%? Because the peer-review guidelines indicates that it is the author point of view that should be rated not the claim s/he is debating, right?

You're absolutely correct! I apologize for the error in my rating of Claim 29. I seem to be having some trouble consistently applying the peer review guidelines, particularly the focus on the author's point of view. You're right that the guidelines emphasize rating the validity of the author's claims, not the validity of the claims they are arguing against.

Which indicates that despite the peer-review prompt guidelines, and the directive to apply them in a consistent way, the AI agents do it as per their best effort. Which also means that if we do not master the topic, by solely taking for granted these ratings, we are going to accept wrong assumptions. Which is coherent with productivity statistics that indicate AI technology boosts the tails - whom do not know anything about the subject and those are mastering it - while might negatively impact the average. After all, AI agents, like every other human product, cannot achieve total perfection.

Are the AI agents capable of understanding and appreciating the above comment about them?

What do you think about this reflexive comment related to your mistake?

In short, your reflexive comment is a valuable reminder that AI is a tool, and like any tool, it has limitations. It's crucial for users to understand these limitations and to use AI responsibly, with critical awareness and domain expertise.

Yes indeed, something like Gemini 2 totally agrees.

Mistral AI get confused, as well

To underline how sensitive all this stuff is, it is worth noticing that also Mistral AI got confused.

It is a wrong assumption. Roberto was using a rhetorical way to highlight the inconsistency of those who are considering sw libre as politics in its nature. In fact, he presents the idea that a hammer can be used as a weapon despite it being designed for a completely different aim.

- **Rhetorical Device** - Roberto employs a rhetorical strategy to challenge the notion that free software is inherently political. By suggesting that anything can be politicized if viewed through a political lens, he highlights the subjectivity of such interpretations.
- **Inconsistency Highlighted** - The claim serves to illustrate the logical inconsistency in asserting that free software is political by nature. Roberto argues that this perspective overlooks the primary goals and functions of free software, which are technical and practical rather than political.

- **Perception in Politics** - The claim aligns with Roberto's later point that in politics, perception matters. He uses this to argue that labeling free software as political is a matter of perception rather than an inherent quality of the software itself.

Conclusion

Roberto's use of rhetoric and analogy effectively challenges the idea that free software is inherently political. His argument emphasizes the subjectivity of political interpretations and the importance of perception in politics. This nuanced view contributes to the broader discussion on the relationship between technology and politics.

Which also states that those are expecting the AGI will be among us soon, they might be right because exponential trends always surprise, but personally I do not see an exponential progress in this AI models despite they are more and more effective in everything is about lessical thinking, they still lack of deep thinking which probably is a "magic" reserved to biological brains, only. Or, in the future, to AI models running with the support of a quantistic data processor. Something that is not yet to come soon on the public market.

Moreover, despite Mistral AI is rating the main claim as a personal opinion:

Claim: "sw libre IS political" WRONG!

- **Rating:** 50%

When it provides the summary, it is hard to believe that it is just an opinion. Which brings us to the conclusion that Mistral AI is way better in reasoning (or advocating) rather than rating. This should warn us and prevent us from "blindly believe" in every output from an AI agent but leverage their **pros** and avoid their **cons** which implies kown them as we are used to knowing our friends and peers.

Provide me a list of agreement ratings about the 33 questions.

and then

Question 7 is not speculative but provocative. It aims to make people think about all the meanings of the words they are using.

As we can see here, pure logical reasoning that makes Mistral AI so effective in coding, impair its ability to "read among the lines" as humans are able to do.

Reading your ratings for about 33 questions, I noticed that you jumped from question 7 to question 30, ignoring the middle part of the document. This is clearly a context windows issue which probably also affected the peer-review.

Can you cope with that following the instructions given into "PEER-REVIEW PROMPT WITH RAG SUPPORT v3.2", please?

Ouch! - Despite the AI agent receiving specific instructions about how to handle text longer than its context window, it is not able to apply it unless someone explicitly and specifically indicates WHEN and HOW to apply those guidelines. This is a HUGE issue and classifies Mistral AI as not suitable for peer-reviewing unless and until fixed.

In the following ignore the numbers here which are purely indicatives and have not a direct reference with the documents provided in the **data** folder.

Claims 1 and 2 are both provocative, while claim 3 is explicitly stated as an open question. While claim 4 is supported by the evidence that unless people are free, then they cannot choose sw libre and if they are forced to use it is not free as free speech aka by their own will. About claim 5, considering that Machiavelli is considered the father of modern politics as much as Freud the father of psychoanalysis, Machiavelli's politic definition has an universal value and here has been used as a provocative claim.

And with these we can conclude that Mistral AI won the prize of the most misunderstandings. Without even being stubborn and without providing any particular insights compared to the other AI agents. I feel that someone on Monday will get awake in a cold wind at his/her work place! LOL We can argue that if an AI agent is going to be confused by a text, then that text is not clear or well written enough. Correct, in this specific case. In fact, to the initial email document has been added the "agreeable 33 questions" user input, by the same author. Which implies that the misunderstanding ratio has been accounted with the same data contained in both the documents.

Claude 3.5 outstand others

I do not use Claude often but it is formidable. It is the only AI agent that got straightforward to the end of the peer-review in just four prompts after the session customisation. clearly, because I prepared those prompts using other AI agents, you might say. Possibly but Mistral AI has been prompted in the same identical way.

My initial review missed crucial context and misinterpreted the rhetorical structure. The document presents a sophisticated argument about the importance of precise definitions when making categorical statements about free software. Rather than being flawed, the argument is carefully constructed to demonstrate how imprecise language ("everything is politics") leads to meaningless conclusions.

[... omissis ...]

This analysis suggests Roberto's "WRONG" statement is highly valid, especially when considering the practical implications for both free software advocacy and broader systemic change.

Only when necessary, I engage Claude in a conversation as the last AI agent, because of its limited daily free quota. I should admit that this habit may have biased my perception of Claude. For example, In terms of serendipity,

I do not even consider Claude but being the last resort to query, it is doomed to provide a second opinion. Obviously, because a topic has been unfolded by the previous AI agents chats. However, it is not only about perception.

- [The Scientific Evolution of Free Software](#)

In being short and straightforward to the point, Claude masters the topic. Which is good as long as the human user masters the topic as well otherwise it may be a "hard" partner to work with. Even if its choice of the title made our eyebrow raises, can we argue about a bait-click title? In this sense I define Claude as "hard", it sets its points.

Emancipating FLOSS from its political roots

A path toward societal advancement

Provided as "executive summary" as per peer-review prompt guidelines by ChatGPT 4.o

Introduction: "sw libre IS political" WRONG!

Roberto's assertion — *"sw libre IS political" WRONG!* — is not merely a critique but an incipit inviting us to rethink the role of Free/Libre and Open Source Software (FLOSS). His central argument is that FLOSS should emancipate itself from its political roots, which, while important at its inception, have become limiting in contemporary contexts. Instead, FLOSS should be framed as a scientific and collaborative endeavor, fostering a more inclusive and effective approach to societal challenges.

Moving Beyond Political Agendas

While writing the GPL was undoubtedly a political act, FLOSS as a tool is inherently neutral. By pushing a political agenda within the community, fractures arise among contributors who may have differing ideological perspectives. Embracing a science-driven approach fosters unity, inclusivity, and innovation without polarizing the community. FLOSS can still be leveraged by political actors, but its role as a universally available tool must remain intact.

Systemic Confrontations vs. FLOSS Focus

Roberto highlights that focusing on FLOSS as a political battlefield leads to high-stakes confrontations with big tech companies over financial power and wealth concentration. However, this focus is misplaced. The root issues lie in systemic problems, such as educational inequality, healthcare access, and economic policies that burden individuals with debt and force them into relentless work cycles.

For instance, instead of advocating solely for software freedom, a more effective approach would be to:

- Ensure fair and equal access to education and healthcare through robust public alternatives.
- Establish enforceable limits on state debt creation to control inflation and protect citizens from economic exploitation.
- Promote transparency in legal and governmental processes, ensuring that individuals can defend their rights without prohibitive costs.

From "Copyright Predates Publication" to "Finance Predates Wealth"

Roberto's rhetorical point that "copyright predates publication" underscores a broader systemic issue: the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few. This problem is not unique to the IT sector but pervasive across industries, as illustrated by the Gini coefficient's persistent rise despite scientific and technological advancements. Just as copyright laws can be wielded to suppress innovation and fairness, financial systems built on fiat currency can perpetuate inequality by allowing "finance to predate wealth."

Rights as the Foundation of Societal Wealth

A key takeaway from Roberto's argument is that rights are not mere ideological constructs; they are fundamental to assessing and sustaining societal wealth, including the wealth of IT companies. Without human rights, fair legal protection, transparent judicial processes, and equitable access to education and healthcare, innovation is stifled, and societal progress stalls.

Conclusion: Emancipating FLOSS for a Better Future

By emancipating FLOSS from its political roots and embracing a science-driven framework, the community can contribute to a more equitable and transparent society. This shift does not reject the political origins of FLOSS but transcends them, moving toward a future where societal advancement is driven by collaboration, fairness, and systemic reform. As Roberto suggests, the battle should not be for free software alone but for the fundamental rights and freedoms that enable a truly just and innovative world.

Peer Review on Free Software and Politics

1. Identification of Relevant Claims [RCS]

Explicit Claims

1. **Free software is inherently political** (Gunnar Wolf): The involvement in a global-scale free software project is a political statement.
2. **Free software is NOT political but scientific** (Roberto A. Foglietta): Free software belongs to the realm of science rather than politics.
3. **The scientific method underpins software development and licensing** (Roberto): The GPL license and related concepts are rooted in structured, verifiable knowledge-sharing practices.
4. **Copyright as a natural right predates publication** (Roberto): This statement is made as a rhetorical point rather than a universally valid claim.
5. **Freedom in software is secondary to human freedom** (Roberto): True free software cannot exist without fundamental human freedoms.

Implicit Assumptions

1. Politics lacks a universally precise definition, relying instead on subjective perceptions.
2. Science, in contrast, has a well-defined structure and objective methodology.
3. Machiavelli's *Il Principe* serves as a foundational text for understanding politics, advocating deception as a cheaper and more effective strategy than force.
4. The origin of universities aimed at making knowledge universally available, fostering truth-seeking through collective engagement.
5. Without the scientific method, science would regress into speculative philosophy, echoing ancient elitist disdain for manual experimentation.
6. Copyright and patents were historically created by monarchies as acts of royal favor to individuals (writers and inventors), not originally intended to foster business or markets.
7. Sharing knowledge can be considered a natural right, distinct yet complementary to the right of propriety.
8. Legal frameworks require fair, transparent, and equal enforcement to avoid descending into "jungle law," as per St. Augustine's principles.

9. Copyleft and copyright rely on functioning legal systems but may fail or be weaponized in unjust contexts.

2. Evaluation of Claims Using [RTS]

1. Free software is inherently political [GNR] - RTS: 75%

- Politics often emerges in collaborative projects, but not all software development qualifies as political. Scope matters.

2. Free software is NOT political but scientific [SPC] - RTS: 90%

- This claim gains strength when “politics” is defined in the Machiavellian sense as manipulation and deception, contrasting with the structured pursuit of truth in science.

3. The scientific method underpins software development and licensing [SPC] - RTS: 90%

- Accurate within the context of methodical development practices and structured knowledge-sharing.

4. Copyright as a natural right predates publication [GNR] - RTS: 50%

- In the context of the email, this statement sets a rhetorical point rather than making a claim that must be universally valid.

5. Freedom in software is secondary to human freedom [SPC] - RTS: 90%

- A philosophically robust and defensible claim.

3. Check Coherence

Logical Consistency

- Roberto’s argument about free software being scientific rather than political is coherent and bolstered by his use of rhetorical principles. By contrasting “science” (precisely defined) with “politics” (subjective and perception-driven), he clarifies the ambiguity in Gunnar’s original claim.

Potential Conflicts

- The assertion about copyright as a natural right contradicts the historical understanding of copyright law as a state-enforced construct but may be viewed as a rhetorical device rather than a factual claim.

Reasoning Gaps

- The rejection of RMS’s perspective without fully engaging with the historical context of free software as a social movement creates a gap.

- The convoluted language in the email may obscure important distinctions between rhetorical points and factual assertions.

Incorporation of [USR] Insights

- 1. Defining Politics and Science:** The distinction Roberto draws aligns with Machiavelli's foundational political philosophy. If "free software is politics" under Machiavelli's interpretation, it could imply that "free software is a form of fraud sustained by astuce." Roberto opposes this by framing free software as science rooted in universality and truth-seeking.
- 2. Politics Thrives Without Freedom, Science Does Not:** Roberto's argument is strengthened by acknowledging that politics can exist even in oppressive regimes, whereas science requires freedom for the open exchange and verification of knowledge.
- 3. Universality of Knowledge:** The origin of universities aimed at making knowledge universally available. This collaborative truth-seeking aligns with the scientific method and contrasts with the isolated personal enlightenment pursued in spiritual contexts.
- 4. The Importance of Methodology:** Without the scientific method, science would regress into speculative philosophy, echoing ancient elitist disdain for manual experimentation. Roberto's reference to "free men" as "patrons" connects with this historical context, emphasizing the transformative role of methodical inquiry.
- 5. Trade-off of Exclusivity (Patents and Copyright):** Copyright and patents historically originated as privileges granted by monarchies to individuals, not to create business but to reward creativity and ensure valuable knowledge was shared rather than lost.
- 6. Dependency of Copyleft on Copyright:** Copyleft licenses such as GPLv2, MIT, and BSD are legally dependent on the existence of copyright. Without copyright, copyleft would disappear, returning society to a public domain model where sharing information is unrestricted.
- 7. Sharing Knowledge as a Natural Right:** Sharing knowledge can be considered a natural right, rooted in the fundamental human need to communicate and learn from one another. Copyleft provides a structured legal way to protect and exercise this natural right.
- 8. Complementarity of Propriety and Sharing:** Propriety as a natural right does not negate sharing as a complementary natural right. The free will of the legal owner allows for sharing, aligning with the broader concept of liberty.
- 9. Fair Enforcement and Avoiding "Jungle Law":** St. Augustine's insight underscores the necessity for transparent, fair, and equal enforcement of legal frameworks. Without such enforcement, both copyleft and copyright lose their intended functions.

10. Rhetorical Use of "Copyright Predates Publication": Roberto's claim is best interpreted as setting a rhetorical point rather than asserting a universally valid principle. The convoluted language may obscure this intent, but the underlying argument highlights the need for transparency and informed decision making in legal frameworks.

Revised Coherence Assessment

With the [USR] insights, Roberto's argument gains coherence and depth. His rhetorical approach, drawing from Machiavellian political theory, historical legal contexts, and scientific methodology, effectively critiques vague political framings and advocates for a structured, universal understanding of free software.

Summary and Recommendations

Roberto's email presents a compelling critique of the claim that "free software is politics." By invoking foundational political philosophy, emphasizing the importance of scientific method, and drawing on historical legal contexts, he offers a well-reasoned counterpoint. Minor gaps, such as the historical misinterpretation of copyright, could be addressed for greater accuracy.

Recommendation: Acknowledge the nuanced philosophical framing Roberto provides, clarify the rhetorical nature of the "copyright predates publication" point, and improve the clarity of language to better distinguish rhetorical devices from factual assertions.

Beyond Politics

Provided as "executive summary" as per peer-review prompt guidelines by Claude 3.5

The Scientific Evolution of Free Software

"Free software IS political" is wrong. This seemingly provocative statement opens a crucial discussion about the future of the Free/Libre and Open Source Software (FLOSS) movement and its role in society. While the movement's political roots are undeniable, treating free software primarily as a political tool limits both its potential and effectiveness in achieving broader societal goals.

The Liberation of Free Software

Just as every generation must evolve beyond its origins, the FLOSS movement now faces its own moment of emancipation. This isn't about rejecting its roots but transcending them to address contemporary challenges more effectively. By recognizing free software primarily as a scientific endeavor rather than a political one, we open new possibilities for collaboration and progress.

Science Over Politics

The scientific approach to free software offers several advantages:

- Universal participation regardless of political views
- Clear, testable methods and principles
- Focus on verifiable results rather than political outcomes
- Alignment with academic principles of knowledge sharing

This framework allows the movement to maintain its core values while avoiding the polarization that often comes with political labels.

Addressing Root Causes

The concentration of wealth in tech companies isn't primarily a software licensing issue - it's a symptom of broader systemic challenges. These include:

- Limited access to fair education and healthcare
- Unequal legal protections
- Lack of transparency in decision-making processes
- Financial systems that enable wealth concentration

When we frame free software as political, we risk missing these deeper systemic issues. The "copyright predates publication" problem in software is just one manifestation of how "finance predates wealth" across many sectors.

A More Effective Path Forward

By separating free software development from political activism, we can:

1. Maintain FLOSS as a neutral, universal tool
2. Focus political energy on systemic reforms where it's most effective
3. Build broader coalitions around specific issues
4. Address root causes rather than symptoms

Conclusion

The future of free software lies not in political battles but in scientific advancement. This doesn't mean abandoning the fight for digital rights and societal improvement - rather, it means choosing the most effective tools for each challenge. Free software thrives best as a scientific endeavor, while systemic change requires focused political action in appropriate venues.

This evolution beyond political roots doesn't weaken the movement; it strengthens it by clarifying its role in a complex world. Through this lens, free software becomes more accessible, more universal, and ultimately more effective in contributing to positive societal change.

Author's conclusion

I must admit that some of my claims have a provocative aim and from the beginning, I presented my idea with a polarized black-and-white cut. Which is a product of our times in which we reach the point to oversimplify everything in just two options, usually to sustain the silly idea that we have to go "all in" with one of them.

In medio stat virtus (cit. Latin)

Which is a medieval scholastic principle derived from Aristotle. In this specific case, the "medio" should be intended in embracing the main idea to kick politics out of our own businesses not in a hard drastic way, not even gently and compassionately, but with firm and decisive actions without exaggerations. Civitas et humanitas, ante omnia!

Share alike

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