

Public Money
Public Code

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What it is all about and why it just makes sense.

The world we are living in

- Is getting more digital every day
- Software is **everywhere**
- Governments and public institutions use mostly proprietary software or manual processes
- Effort is duplicated all over the world
- We pay all of those with our taxes

What is Open Source?

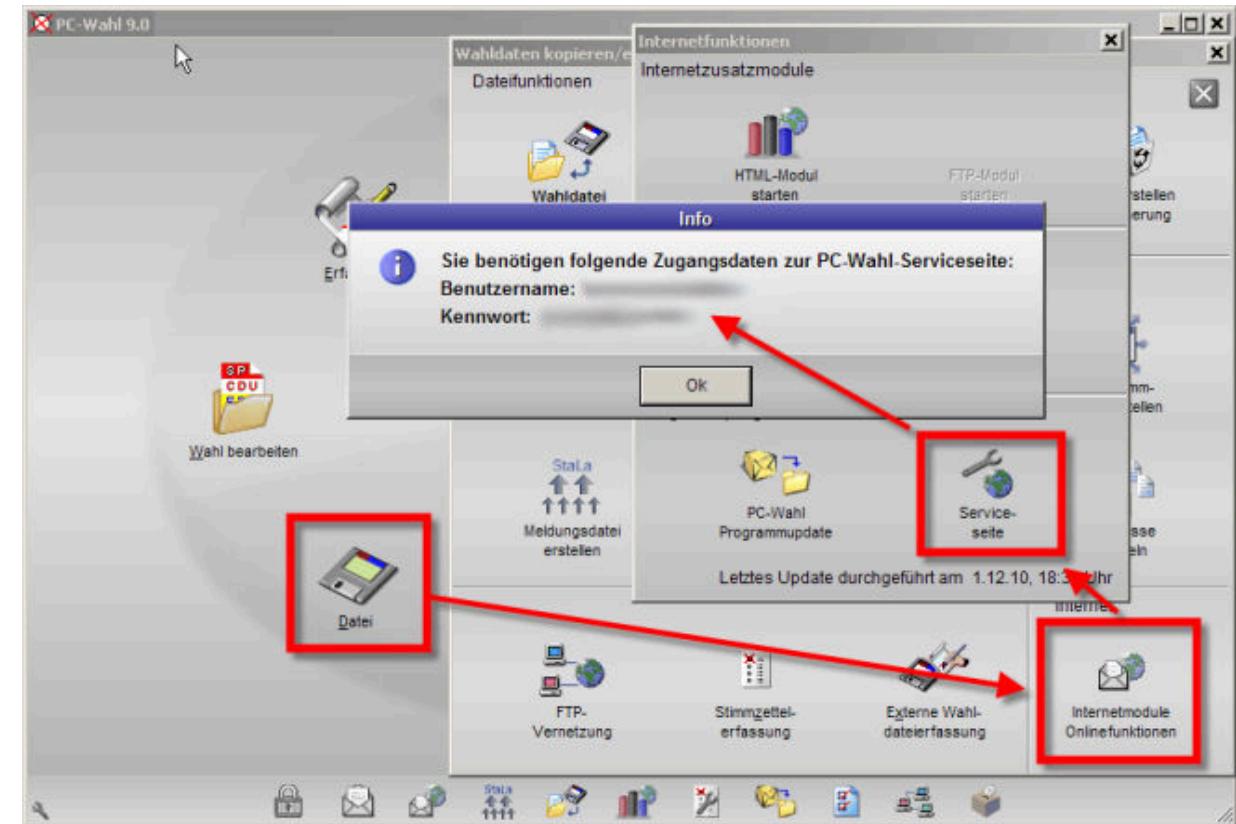
- Software whose source code is publicly available
- Anyone can view, use, modify, and distribute the software
- Licensed to ensure freedom and collaboration
- Examples: Linux, Firefox, LibreOffice, Corona Warn App

Why does it matter?

- It's not always transparent what money is spent on (e.g. licenses)
- Much of the used software used is neither secure nor reliable
- Every institution has to solve the same problems over and over again
- Security by obscurity is not a good idea
- **Geopolitical pressure through dependencies** on foreign vendors
- **Vendor lock-in** leads to unpredictable cost changes and loss of control

Real world examples

PC-Wahl



PC-Wahl - German election software

- Used in many german states
- Proprietary software
- Security issues until this day
- No transparency

PC-Wahl - German election software

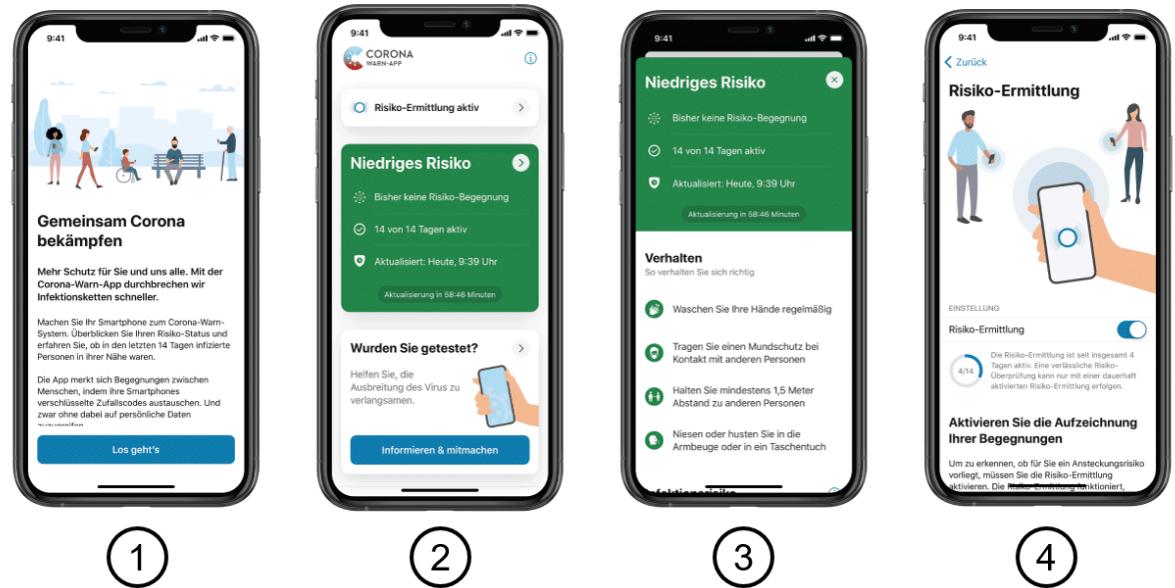
Timeline

- 2017
 - CCC finds security issues that allow tampering with election results
 - Updates are provided, but don't fix the issues
 - CCC provides an open source version of the software which is secure, but will never be used
- 2024
 - Is used for election in Saxony
 - Calculates wrong results
 - Only corrected due to manual recount by independent experts

PC-Wahl - German election software

- Still used in many states
- No transparency about the software and its security
- Patches have been provided - payed, with our taxes
- Still not secure

Corona Warn App



Real world examples | Corona Warn App

- Started in April 2020, during the pandemic
- Development led by SAP and Deutsche Telekom
- Widely used in Germany (over 45 million downloads)
- Open source from the beginning
- Privacy by default
- 50 days until the first release

Real world examples | Corona Warn App

Timeline

- April 2020
 - Planning starts
- May 2020
 - Development starts, fully on GitHub
- June 2020
 - First release

Real world examples | Corona Warn App

Timeline

- 2021
 - Features are added, bugs are fixed - lot of community contributions
 - Used as blueprint for other countries
- 2023
 - Still in use, still maintained
 - Possibly used for other purposes in the future

Comparison

PC-Wahl	Corona Warn App
proprietary	open source
security issues	privacy by default, secure and audited by thousands
no transparency	full transparency
slow updates	fast updates
unknown price	~ 214 million € (development and maintenance)
exclusive for germany	used as blueprint for other countries

Press Samples

- **Microsoft blocks ICC Chief Prosecutor's email (2025)**
Due to US sanctions, Microsoft locked the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor and staff out of their email
- **Broadcom/VMware acquisition (2023)**
License costs for public institutions skyrocketed overnight
- **Microsoft Office price hikes (2022)**
Sudden changes in licensing models led to unexpected expenses for municipalities.

Success Stories

- **France:** Migrated public administration to Linux and open-source tools, saving millions annually.
- **Estonia:** X-Road platform enables secure data exchange across government agencies, fully open source.
- **Italy:** IO app for digital citizen services, open source and widely adopted.
- **EU:** FIWARE platform for smart cities, used by over 400 cities worldwide.

Conclusion

- Public code works
- Open source is more secure, not less
- Cost and effort is reduced
- Fosters collaboration and engagement with the people

We are not alone

Public Money - Public Code is a initiative by the Free Software Foundation

We want legislation requiring that publicly financed software developed for the public sector be made publicly available under a Free and Open Source Software licence. If it is public money, it should be public code as well.



publiccode.eu

What can you do?

- Check programs for political parties
- Ask your local government about the software they use
- Ask for transparency
- Support the initiative
- Spread the word

The End

Digitalization, also for public institutions is a chance, not a threat. Let us use it wisely and most importantly, let us do it together and transparent.

