

Free Software Foundation - Media Giraffe Profile

Free Software Foundation

Richard Stallman - President & Founder



"The easy choice was to join the proprietary software world, signing nondisclosure agreements and promising not to help my fellow hacker. Most likely I would also be developing software that was released under nondisclosure agreements, thus adding to the pressure on other people to betray their fellows too. I could have made money this way, and perhaps amused myself writing code. But I knew that at the end of my career, I would look back on years of building walls to divide people, and feel I had spent my life making the world a worse place.

-- *Excerpted from: <http://www.gnu.org/gnu/thegnuproject.html> "*

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About

EXCERPTS FROM:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_M._Stallman

<http://www.stallman.org/#serious>

Richard Stallman is the president and founder of the Free Software Foundation, and of its GNU Project, launched in 1984 in part to develop the free software operating system GNU/Linux. The name "GNU" is a recursive acronym for "GNU's Not Unix!". GNU/Linux is free software: everyone is free to copy it and redistribute it, as well as to make changes either large or small. Non-free software keeps users divided and helpless, forbidden to share it and unable to change it. Stallman believes a free operating system is essential for people to be able to use computers in freedom. Today, Linux-based variants of the GNU system, based on the kernel Linux developed by Linus Torvalds, are in widespread use. There are estimated to be some 20 million users of GNU/Linux systems today. Stallman, born in Manhattan, graduated from Harvard in 1974 with a BA in physics and worked at the Artificial Intelligence Lab at MIT. Stallman argues that software users should have freedom . in particular, the freedom to "share with their neighbor" and to be able to study and make changes to the software that they use. He has repeatedly said that attempts by proprietary software vendors to prohibit these acts are "antisocial" and "unethical" [2]. The phrase "software wants to be free" is commonly attributed to him, but he did not say it. He argues that freedom is vital in and of itself and not merely because it may lead to improved software. Consequently, in January 1984, he quit his job at MIT to work full time on the GNU project, which he had announced in September 1983.

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