Open Source Software: an expression of freedom

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European Output of Printed Books ca. 1450–1800

*without Southeast Europe (Ottoman realm) and Russia

Source: Global spread of the printing press. (2023, February 20). In Wikipedia
What happened here?

The Printing Press!
Some tried to control the press...

Source: The Index Librorum Prohibitorum ("List of Prohibited Books"). Venice, 1564
Source: Contemporary illustration of the Auto-da-fé held at Valladolid Spain 21-05-1559
But the genie was out of the bottle...
Fast forward to the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century
The Internet: the new printing press

Amount of available information
What to do with all this information?

→ Knowledge

Source: Wikimedia commons
Software: tools for information
Open software: freeing information

• Open software allows for total sovereignty over information;

• From information, we build knowledge;

• From knowledge we build impact.

Societal impact is facilitated if the software used to process the data is Open!
What are those freedoms?

1. The freedom to run the program as you wish, for any purpose.

2. The freedom to study how the program works, and change it so it does your computing as you wish. Access to the source code is a precondition for this.

3. The freedom to redistribute copies so you can help others.

4. The freedom to distribute copies of your modified versions to others. By doing this you can give the whole community a chance to benefit from your changes. Access to the source code is a precondition for this.

Source: the free software foundation³
Empowering example: IdeaMaps Sudan
Empowering example: IDeAMap Sudan

Training of trainers at ITC, The Netherlands, May 2022
Empowering example: IDeAMap Sudan

Community training, Khartoum, November 2022
Empowering example: IdeaMaps Sudan
Empowering example: IDeAMap Sudan

9 trainers

- Community Workshop (22)
- GIS Workshop (20)
- Community Workshop (27)

Continuous impact
How to contribute to Open Source Software?

• Support the development of the source code:
  ➢ Implement the new functionality yourself
  ➢ Not a programmer? Hire one for the job (especially valid for institutions!)

• Contribute for developing and maintaining the documentation

• Contribute to the translation of the interface and documentation

• Experienced user? Share your knowledge:

• Are you/your business making good money by using an open source software? Consider a monetary contribution (you are actually protecting your interests!)

It is NOT about price
How to interact with Open Source Software?

• Understand the developers owe you nothing!
  ➢ Constructive criticism is welcome, nagging not so much!

• Need help?
  ➢ Use dedicated mailing lists and forums; be clear when describing your problem/difficulty

• Found a bug/problem? Report it!

• Have an idea for a new functionality? Make a feature request!

• You still don’t have the functionality or problem fixed? Consider hiring a professional (again, especially valid for institutions!)

• Respect the license and share any developments you make

• Collaborate and share experiences and knowledge.
OSGeo
قسم السودان
SUDAN CHAPTER

QGIS
UDAN
Common misconceptions

• Open Software is ‘against’ proprietary software

• Open Software is more difficult/complicated than proprietary software

• Open Software has no professional support

• Open Software can not be used for ‘serious’ projects (that is why it is free!)

• Open Software has no costs

• Data produced with open source has to be open
When humans are free to create and collaborate, they thrive. Let software be the embodiment of that idea.
Thank you

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REFERENCES

