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The new GNU head logo made for the 30th anniversary.

GNU turns thirty

by Libby Reinish
Campaigns Manager

Thirty years ago, the founding of the GNU System sparked a conversation that has grown into the global free software movement. On September 27, 1983, Richard Stallman announced the plan to develop a free Unix-like operating system called GNU, short for "GNU's not Unix." GNU is the only operating system developed specifically for the sake of users' freedom. Today, the GNU System includes not only a fully free operating system, but a universe of software that serves a vast array of functions, from word processing to advanced scientific data manipulation, and everything in between.

The GNU System is more than a collection of software components; it's a philosophy, a social movement. The ideas Richard Stallman later articulated in the *GNU Manifesto* spawned some of the most important ideas of our time: copyleft and free culture.

In September, the FSF held a flagship celebration at MIT in Cambridge, MA, the original home of the GNU System before it became a worldwide phenomenon. The event featured a hackathon focused on federated publishing and communication software, and tools to protect privacy and anonymity. Hackathon participants accessed the Internet through an ad-

hoc mesh network set up by folks from Commotion Wireless. A cryptoparty helped participants protect their information online, and an F-Droid tutorial and skillshare introduced attendees to free software for mobile devices. Aleph Objects used their Respects Your Freedom-certified Lulzbot 3D printer to make GNU toppers for our birthday cupcakes, and an eager volunteer wore the FSF's gnu suit to pose for photos. MIT's Student Information Processing Board hosted the event for us, and helped us get an animated birthday message displayed on the side of a building.

MIT's building 54 lit up to celebrate GNU's 30th anniversary.

Ten free software projects joined the hackathon in Cambridge; Commotion, coreboot, Gnash, GNOME, GNU FM, GNU MediaGoblin, GNU Octave, GNU social, Tahoe-LAFS, and Tor, with Guix participating simultaneously online. One of the most exciting outcomes of the hackathon was the cross-pollination of skills that occured between projects. Tor hackers helped Tahoe-LAFS identify some security issues. Gnash tested a new release on different distributions brought in by hackathon attendees. Progress was also made on Debian packaging for GNU MediaGoblin. Other projects had people stop by to fix bugs, and everyone enjoyed the rare opportunity for in-person conversation between contributors who hail from all over the globe.

Cupcakes being served at the Cambridge anniversary celebration.

The weekend culminated with an address by GNU founder Richard Stallman, in which he announced that privacy and security—especially against government surveillance—are now one of GNU's primary priorities. Free software is one of the most effective tools we have to protect ourselves against surveillance, and the address reflected an ongoing mobilization in the community to meet these challenges. The talk was livestreamed using entirely free software and was viewed by hundreds of people, many of them outside the United States.

Though the Cambridge hackathon was a roaring success, we're not done celebrating yet. An accomplishment like turning thirty deserves a whole

year of festivities. For the latest on GNU 30th celebrations, or to make a donation to honor three decades of free software, visit `gnu.org/gnu30`. ☜

Personal fitness and free software

by Joshua Gay
Licensing and
Compliance Manager

The Center for Disease Control estimates that as of 2010, 79 million Americans aged twenty years or older have prediabetes, a dangerous condition that greatly increases a person's risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. As of 2010, the CDC estimates that 25.8 million people—8.3% of the population—currently have diabetes.[1]

The Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) was a federally funded study of more than three thousand people at high risk for diabetes. The DPP showed that a 5—7% reduction in body weight through diet and exercise can delay and sometimes prevent type 2 diabetes. Building on this study, the CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program recommends the development of community-based, group lifestyle intervention programs for overweight or obese people at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes.[2]

Today we live in a world where people seek solutions on their personal computers (big and small). Where we eat, where we go, who we collaborate with, and how we coordinate and communicate with each other, are strongly influenced by the hardware and software we use. Therefore, it is no great leap to speculate that many of the approaches and solutions people come up with when tackling this growing health epidemic will involve computers and Internet technologies.

This issue is not simply a theoretical one. Recently, wearable fitness devices have grown in popularity, offering the possibility of weight and exercise management to those at risk for diabetes. There are already rapidly growing companies, such as Jawbone and Fitbit, that sell hundreds of thousands of personal health and fitness devices each year. These devices monitor heart rate, temperature, sleep cycles, location, and more. Though this data could be valuable in addressing the issue of diabetes and prediabetes, none of these devices are designed to respect a user's freedom. In my research of the numerous applications that are designed to interact with these devices, I was unable to find a single one that was free software.

At this moment, free software advocates simply have no choices when it comes to wearable computing devices.

This is not cause for despair. As free software activists we are powerful agents for change. Join me in viewing this explosion of fitness devices and software as an opportunity to explain to people, with whole new examples,

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[1] `cdc.gov/diabetes/consumer/research.htm`

[2] *ibid.*

the issue of computer user freedom and why it matters not just to each individual, but to society at large.

Use this opportunity to find other activists that are coming at health care and fitness from other angles and are also seeking to make a more just and fair world. When you explain what free software is in relation to wearable fitness devices, explain that the freedom to share software is the freedom to give your neighbor a powerful tool that can help them monitor and improve their personal health. The freedom to study a program and to make improvements to it is the freedom for individuals to learn and adapt technologies to meet their unique health care needs. The freedom to share those improvements with their communities and over the global Internet is the freedom to use technology to diminish the suffering of hundreds of millions of people and to make the world a more hospitable and prosperous place for all.

Though the group of metabolic diseases we call diabetes is a serious and important global health issue, it is just one of many. This new generation of wearable personal fitness devices is just a tiny fraction of the myriad hardware products and their associated software designed for medical, personal health care, or personal fitness. Just ask the cyborg lawyer and GNOME Foundation executive director, Karen Sandler, about the proprietary software sitting on her heart.[3]

What this means is that it is all the more important that each of us, as free software activists, talk to health care and fitness professionals about the importance of computer-user freedom.

Whether you are in the doctor's office or just looking for a wearable device that can help you shed a few pounds, use this opportunity to discuss issues of computer user freedom and make the case that free software is essential to creating a free, healthy, and prosperous society.

GNU 30th anniversary items now available
by Chrissie Himes
Operations Assistant

In honor of GNU's 30th anniversary this past September, GNU Press is now carrying exclusive GNU 30 travel mugs and GNU logo polo shirts. These items feature the new GNU logo that was unveiled at the GNU System's 30th anniversary hackathon in Cambridge, MA. To be notified of the latest news about the shop, please join the GNU Press mailing list.[4] If you have any suggestions for GNU Press, don't hesitate to add them to our Ideas page.[5]

We welcome volunteers to help out with the GNU Press shop in our Boston office. The FSF also offers internships throughout the year in system administration, licensing, and campaigns. To learn more about interning and view deadlines for up-

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[3]`tuxradar.com/content/`
`karen-sandler-full-interview`

[4]`u.fsf.org/gnupresslist`
[5]`u.fsf.org/ideas`

Our new travel mug, featuring the new GNU head logo, available at `shop.fsf.org`.

coming internship periods visit `u.fsf.org/internships`.

Even if you are not able to commit to an internship, we are always looking for volunteers of all skill levels to help us out with small tasks and larger projects. Volunteer roles include passing out FSF materials at events, updating the Free Software Directory, stuffing envelopes, writing articles about important free software issues, and helping to answer questions about free software licensing. If you're interested in volunteering, check out the volunteer page at `fsf.org/volunteer`, send a message to `info@fsf.org`, or stop by our office if you can make it to Boston.

How can free software protect us from surveillance?
by Zak Rogoff
Campaigns Manager

We know that the NSA has been trying for years to compromise Tor, an Internet anonymity system that gives dissidents, whistleblowers, and other activists a fighting chance at evading government surveillance. Despite the agency's probing attacks, the core security of the system has held strong, time after time.[6] Stories like this have drawn public interest; most people are uncomfortable with excessive government surveillance and many draw hope from knowing that Tor stands between dissidents and the government. But do people know that Tor is robust to attacks largely because it is free software?

Free software is an important part of an effective resistance to today's runaway surveillance states, because free software users are fundamentally harder to surveil. The reasons for this are baked into the four essential freedoms that all free programs guarantee their users.

Freedom 1 is the ability to study how a program works, and to change it. This freedom denies surveillance agencies some of their key strategies for snooping. Without the ability to exploit hidden vulnerabilities in programs, they cannot maintain the kind of secret control that they can over proprietary software with unavailable source code. This is why free software programs like Tor are the gold standard in encryption and anonymity,

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[6]`theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/04/nsa-gchq-attack-tor-network-encryption`

even among those who are not otherwise concerned with software freedom.

Freedoms 2 and 3 grant the ability to distribute identical and modified copies of a program without limitation.[7] This defangs another tactic used by agencies like the NSA: strongarming software companies into writing backdoors in software. This is hardly worth doing to a company or group that develops free software, because the community can respond by forking their code and offering a safe version.

The four freedoms mean that a community using free software for everyday computing is much less vulnerable to surveillance than one using proprietary software. If we want to make full use of this advantage, we need to make using free software the norm. We need to focus on making free software replacements for widely used programs just as easy to use, as accessible, and as well known as their proprietary versions.

While advocating for software freedom, it's also important for us to remember that even if a program is free, we cannot actually modify its source code without access to the computer running it. That's why we need to avoid Service as a Software Substitute and instead do our computing on our own machines.[8]

We also need to use decentralized systems instead of concentrating many people's data, even for seemingly innocuous purposes. High concentrations of data create targets that are at-

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[7]Freedom 0 is the freedom to run the program for any purpose. Read more about the four freedoms at `gnu.org/philosophy/free-sw`

[8]`gnu.org/philosophy/who-does-that-server-really-serve`

tractive to surveillance agents looking for the fastest route to large amounts of information. This happened most recently with the PRISM program, in which the NSA tapped into giant data stores that tech companies were already maintaining about their users.

Runaway surveillance states are a complex problem and addressing them requires a multifaceted approach combining activism, policy, and technology. The free software movement offers some of the programs and design philosophies that will help people rise to meet the technical part of this challenge. But we have another thing that is at least as important to offer society: our culture of hacking. Taking a hands-on, inquisitive approach to the technology we use is the basis of technological freedom, even more than any particular program, license, or development model. As we develop and use free software, we must also foster this attitude amongst our friends and neighbors.

Why the FSF must oppose bulk surveillance
by John Sullivan
Executive Director

In a letter mailed out to our supporters around the world this past spring, I highlighted the need for the FSF to respond to the revelations about the U.S.'s National Security Agency (NSA) spying on the phones and electronic activity of people both inside and outside of the United States.

The FSF sees this bulk surveillance as a free software issue. These revelations are part of what inspired RMS to announce at the GNU 30th anniversary hackathon and celebration in

Cambridge, MA, that the GNU System would be taking on a new priority to help minimize the harm done to users as they interact over networks.

Our organization helped pioneer a worldwide free software movement and provides an umbrella of legal and technical infrastructure for collaborative software development internationally. We advocate for the freedom, privacy, and autonomy of computer users, primarily by making sure that the software running on their computers is fully under their control.

Free "as in freedom" software users choose their software on ethical grounds according to these concerns, similar to the way many vegetarians reject meat or labor activists reject sweatshop clothing. Because free software is developed collaboratively and often by grassroots communities, it is a force for social change. Its developers are very aware of what corporate and government interests are being challenged with their software.

The revelation of our phone records to the government will result in harassment, membership withdrawal, discouragement of new members, or other consequences that objectively suggest an impact on, or "chilling" of, our members' rights to associate freely.

Many of our supporters are software developers working on operating systems, such as GNU/Linux, to be used instead of operating systems developed by Microsoft or Apple. Unlike those proprietary operating systems, all of the code for GNU/Linux is publicly available for inspection and modification. A widespread motivation for developing software this way is to make it very difficult for "backdoors," such as those now known to be part of Microsoft Windows, to be introduced by the government or corporations.

Even though their work is legal, because these developers know that their work may complicate government surveillance efforts, they are concerned about being targeted. A key organizational function of the FSF is to serve as an important point of contact and coordination between developers. If we cannot promise the confidentiality of our communications, this category of our supporters will think twice before associating with us or with other members through us.

Other of our software developer members are working in areas that are legally controversial. They work on free software to protect anonymity online, or to circumvent technological protection measures in order to access copyrighted works to which they have a legal right, or on encryption software that, while legal, may be used by criminals as well. These members are even more concerned about the privacy of their communications, living in fear that their work may be misconstrued as illegal.

But, since one of the basic requirements of free software is that its source code be available to its users and since free software development so often happens in public in order to facilitate effective and efficient collaboration, why do we care if our communications are monitored? As one of our members has told us directly:

"While I do work very openly in my day to day life in free software, and I am quite clearly an outspoken advocate of free software, and the free software movement, the fact that private communications may be turned over to the government would result in a sort of chilling effect.

For instance, I would be reluctant

to ask the FSF questions about the legal status of code with federal regulation, such as the implications of distributing cryptographic software under the GNU GPL, or questions regarding privacy software, such as Tor, for fear it may implicate me later, when someone else misuses such software. It would place me in an awkward situation, one where I cannot ask a question about software without being lumped into a group which may misuse such software. If I have misgivings about such things, as an open and outspoken free software contributor, I fear what the pseudo-anonymous contributors to free software communities must think."

This chilling effect extends beyond our members who are software developers, to members who are also just free software users and advocates. Many of our members, when they joined, have cited our work to support software that respects their privacy and freedom as a primary reason for their association. Any revelation that their communication with us is being monitored discredits us as an organization and a movement capable of protecting the very interest that motivated them to associate with us. As a concrete example, some of our supporters are hesitant to attend the annual LibrePlanet conference we host in the United States, explicitly because of surveillance. We are exploring options to host it elsewhere and to encourage remote participation, but we also should work against the causes of this hesitation.

Finally, this chilling also affects our current staff and ability to hire new staff, who accept modest pay rates in order to do a job they feel can make a positive difference in the world. Knowing that doing this job puts them in the crosshairs of government surveillance is a powerful deterrent that threatens to make working for us just not worth it. Anything that complicates our ability to attract and retain quality staff directly undercuts our mission of building a strong association of free software supporters.

Since the disclosure of the various illegal NSA surveillance programs, we have lost the ability to assure our members and constituents, as well as all others who seek to communicate with us, that the fact of their communications to and with us will be kept confidential. We were able to make assurances of confidentiality prior to the disclosure, but they were illusory.

Moreover, the pattern of distortion and lawless conduct by the NSA, exacerbated by the intense secrecy of its activities, has left us unable to reassure our members and associates that additional forms of surveillance, as yet unconfirmed or actively denied by the government, are not also occurring, leaving us with no alternative forms of confidential communication. This is extremely damaging for us, because the success of our movement depends concretely on the ability for dispersed individuals to collaborate freely and openly.

Often there is a temptation for the FSF to get involved in social and political causes that are unrelated to free software. We avoid that, because we view free software as a necessary baseline for *any* kind of computer-using political advocacy to be effective and autonomous. We make sure to take only positions that are *necessary* for the free software movement.

Using both policy and technology to resist the kinds of surveillance that have been exposed is one of those fun-

damental positions. It is necessary to take this position in order to preserve the ability for free software developers and advocates to work safely and effectively, and for us to do our job on behalf of that movement as an organization. To that end, we have joined the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) in filing a lawsuit against the NSA, we have announced new development priorities within the GNU System, and we have stepped up our advocacy campaigns to show the computer-using public around the world how using free software is an important step toward protecting their privacy and freedom.

If you are a current or potential FSF member and are concerned about this issue, I would really like to hear firsthand about your concern. You can email me directly at johns@fsf.org.

A short recap of RMS's recent adventures

by Jeanne Rasata
Assistant to the President

RMS continued to crisscross the globe this past semester, visiting over a dozen countries to meet with free software activists, lobby for computer-user rights, and spread the word about ethical computing through the almost fifty speeches he gave to both the initiated and the general public alike. Starting off in Italy and Spain, RMS then made his way from Cancún, Mexico, in late May, to Porto Alegre, Brazil, in early July, and then on to Belgium and the United Kingdom, speaking at universities and free software conferences, and meeting with elected officials.

In August, he was inducted into the

RMS's Internet Hall of Fame medal.

Internet Hall of Fame in recognition for his work as an innovator, and during his brief acceptance speech, RMS appealed to the audience to "fight hard" for network neutrality and an Internet that is "something good for human freedom—instead of the final curtain call for human freedom." While he was in South Africa, he kickstarted Johannesburg's Software Freedom Day celebration, and spoke in four other cities. In September, he marked the 30th anniversary of the GNU System in both France, at an event organized by April, and at the FSF-sponsored celebration in Cambridge, MA. For the rest of the year, he has plans to be in California, the United Kingdom, and Spain.

Licensing & Compliance Lab update

by Donald Robertson, III
Copyright and Licensing Associate

It's that time of year again when we update everyone on the work that we've been doing at the FSF License and Compliance Lab.

Compliance investigations and backlog reduction

We've made great strides in reducing our backlog of reports, handling over two hundred reports of violations on GNU software. We resolved several open cases, helping to bring companies and individuals into compliance. We also opened many more cases, and currently have more than one hundred open investigations. With our backlog of reports almost entirely gone, we are better able to respond to new reports, as well as move open compliance cases through to completion.

Copyright assignment process updated

We were happy to announce a new way for U.S. contributors to make assignment on FSF-copyrighted packages: GPG signatures. Instead of having to send a form via the post, or track down a scanner, U.S. contributors can now sign their assignments using GPG. With growing concerns over privacy and security, encouraging the use of cryptographic tools is now more important than ever. Being able to sign assignments with GPG also makes the process much easier for contributors.

LibreWRT added as an endorsed distribution

In June we announced the latest addition to our list of fully free GNU/Linux Systems, LibreWRT. LibreWRT is for devices with limited capabilities, such as wireless routers, and is the first small system added to our endorsed distribution list.[9]

Team explosion!

We've added several new volunteers to our licensing volunteer squad, as well as taking on two new interns for the fall internship program. With the expanded team we're hoping to tackle some larger projects in the coming months, including a licensing guidebook, updated FAQs, and better tools for helping people select a free license.

Recognizing an inspiring woman for Ada Lovelace Day

by Kyra
Campaigns Organizer

October 15, 2013, was Ada Lovelace Day, a day for highlighting women making great contributions to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. This is a holiday of particular importance to the free software movement, to remind us that there are powerful social biases which permeate our movement, sexism and transmisogyny being just two of these.

Ada Lovelace Day gives us an opportunity to recognize contributors in our movement and show them the appreciation they deserve. A personal in-

[9]`gnu.org/distros/free-distros.html`

spiration I want to write about is Audrey Tang, an astonishingly impressive Taiwanese free software hacker.[10]

Tang most famously started and ran the Pugs project, a Haskell implementation of the Perl 6 language, which grew into a large joint effort between the Haskell and Perl communities. Tang also served on the Haskell' (pronounced "Haskell Prime") 2010 committee, working to shape the language standard.[11] Importantly, she has contributed to many localization efforts for both free software projects and led many Traditional Chinese translation efforts for various books.

At age twelve, she began learning Perl and has initiated an astounding number projects since then. She dropped out of high school at fifteen, and by nineteen she had held positions in multiple software companies. She is also a vocal proponent of anarchism, as well as an autodidact (self-directed learner).

In addition to the Pugs project, Tang started the popular Perl Archive Toolkit (PAR), a cross-platform packaging and deployment tool for Perl 5. PAR is just one of over a hundred Perl projects she initiated on CPAN, becoming one of the first to make that incredible achievement. More recently she created EtherCalc, the popular collaborative spreadsheet web application parallel to EtherPad.[12] She has also been involved in politics, working with g0v.tw on using free software to build accountable and transparent infrastructure for public participation.[13] On a more literary front, she worked to build a popular web and mobile dictionary application for Chinese education that combines Mandarin, Taiwanese Holok, and Hakka with English, French, and German.[14]

As such a brilliant hacker, it's no wonder that in 2006 she was described by *ETtoday* as one of the "ten greats of Taiwanese computing." Recognizing Tang and other women in our global community gives people who can identify with her the ability to see their own potential for contributing to free software.

It's important to consider the values, ideologies, and behaviors that contribute to the exclusion of marginalized groups in our community. The Libre-Planet Women's Caucus was started in September 2010 to address issues of gender in the free software movement.[15] Women of color may also join the Empowermentors Collective to address white racism and other intersectional forms of oppression in relation to free culture and free software.[16]

We are honored to have supporters like Audrey Tang and so many other women in the free software movement. We hope you'll take the time to recognize the women who inspire you as well.

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[14] moedict.tw
[15] libreplanet.org/wiki/WC
[16] empowermentors.org

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[10] pugs.blogs.com/about.html
[11] ghc.haskell.org/trac/haskell-prime
[12] ethercalc.net
[13] g0v.tw/manifesto.html#en

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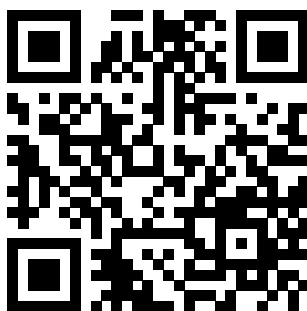
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