

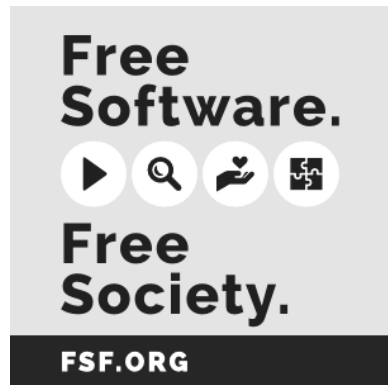


Bulletin

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For our thirtieth anniversary, thirty things we do at the FSF

by *John Sullivan*
Executive Director

The Free Software Foundation (FSF) turned thirty years old on October 4th, 2015. We celebrated the occasion — not just what it means for the organization, but what it means for the success and longevity of the free software movement — with a day-

time User Freedom Summit, followed by an evening party featuring toasts by longtime friends and associates of the FSF, and an address by our president Richard M. Stallman (RMS). Friends around the world also celebrated, putting on over 22 events in 8 countries. Individuals who couldn't attend events watched our free-software-powered video stream.¹

At the FSF and in the GNU Project, we want **all** computer users to be able to do **everything** they need to do on **any** computer, using **only** free software. The FSF has been working toward this goal for thirty years.

In order to make steady progress toward our goal, the FSF divides its re-

¹fsf.org/fsf30

sources (over 80 percent of which come from individuals) between three major areas of work — advocating and spreading free software ideals; promoting and facilitating use of free software licenses, especially the copyleft GNU General Public License; and driving actual development of free programs.

In honor of the thirtieth anniversary, here are thirty concrete things we do at the FSF to transform our global society into one which respects computer user freedom.

1. Provide general infrastructure support for GNU developers, including software hosting, Web space, mailing lists, copyright assignment, and more
2. Support fundraising and promotion for Replicant, as part of our initiative to create fully free mobile devices
3. Support fundraising and promotion for GNU MediaGoblin, as part of our initiative to advance free, decentralized replacements for network services that threaten user freedom
4. Maintain the High Priority Projects List to inspire and organize free software development in key areas
5. Speak at events all over the world advocating free software and copyleft
6. Organize the annual International Day Against DRM (Digital Restrictions Management)
7. Run the annual LibrePlanet conference
8. Submit briefs to key Supreme Court cases, such as those on software patents and copyright issues, and file other official comments to agencies like the FCC and Library of Congress
9. Fight against plans to have an official DRM extension to HTML5
10. Certify and promote hardware that requires only free software, under our Respects Your Freedom program
11. Produce an annual Giving Guide encouraging freedom-friendly gifts, and organize events around the world to distribute it in key shopping areas
12. Help people get started using specific free programs, such as our Email Self-Defense Guide, which teaches people how to encrypt their email
13. Speak to journalists at all kinds of publications about the necessity of free software and fundamental flaws with proprietary software
14. Host the monthly Boston Civil-CRM meetup at our office
15. Receive frequent visitors from around the world who want to see the home of GNU and the FSF
16. Encourage and help other nonprofits use free software for their operations like we do, whether their mission focuses on technology or not

17. Celebrate achievements by others in the free software movement, such as through our annual Free Software Awards
18. Answer thousands of questions emailed (and snail mailed!) to us by people wanting to know more about free software
19. Build the Free Software Directory and the community of contributors around it so that people can find free software to do everything they need to do
20. Build a database of hardware that works with free operating systems, at h-node.org, so people know what to buy
21. Enforce the GPL family of licenses, following up on reports of companies not following their terms
22. Answer hundreds of questions each year from developers about how to properly use free software licenses for their work
23. Fund Outreachy, as part of our support for initiatives to improve diversity in the free software movement
24. Make attractive materials explaining the basics of free software to newcomers, like our “Usr Lib” video, and organize translations of our materials into many different languages
25. Campaign for the *abolition* of software patents (not just fighting “bad” patents or “trolls”)
26. Campaign against Restricted Boot and other attempts to lock down our devices
27. Run a Tor relay node, and participate in efforts to expand the Tor network
28. Produce and sell printed freely licensed documentation, both technical and philosophical
29. Contribute code to free software that we use
30. Host GPL compliance seminars and help steward copyleft.org

This list does not cover everything that we do. Nor does it cover all of the things we need to be doing. But we have to consider whether it’s too many things for our staff of twelve, our nine volunteer board members, and our core team of community contributors, to tackle at once. We take on so many things because we don’t want to ignore any threats to user freedom, or miss any opportunities to expand this movement.

During his address at the anniversary event in Boston, RMS said, “If you want to finish something taking decades, nothing’s more important than remembering where you’re trying to get to.” I’d also add, you’d better know where you are.

We’re taking the occasion of this significant anniversary to start a year-long intensive process of reviewing where we are — taking stock of our current initiatives, making sure we have appropriate metrics and desired outcomes associated with each one, and assessing how we use our resources in light of that information. With a clearer sense of where we are, we can improve our efficiency, and do a better job at prioritizing what’s most important. Being able to clearly demonstrate our successes will in turn lead to

more resources, enabling us to expand and take on more projects.

You can help with this effort — you can always send your thoughts to info@fsf.org, but we'll also be offering more structured opportunities to provide feedback. I hope you'll participate. Make sure you are on our main mailing list at fsf.org/fss to receive the announcements.

I look forward to sharing the results of this reflection with you. We greatly appreciate all the contributions you make in the form of time, money, and ideas. We couldn't do any of this work without you, and all of us at the FSF are determined to be the most effective organization we can be for you.

Here's to the next thirty years! 🍷

FSF is seen as a guiding light: help us shine brighter

by *Georgia Young*
Program Manager

Autumn has arrived here in Boston, and as the leaves change, the FSF has, too. There are several new faces on staff, and a few people have shifted roles. We celebrated our thirtieth anniversary, but there's no time to rest on our laurels — we're looking ahead to the free software community's future actions and achievements.

What keeps us going, you might wonder. Of course, our vision of a world where all software is free is paramount to the work we do. But the twelve of us who make up the FSF staff rely on you. You give your time: translating FSF materials into multiple languages, coming to the FSF office to help with our semi-annual *Bulletin* mailing, contributing to the Free



Software Directory, assisting with every aspect of the annual LibrePlanet conference, representing us at the FSF booth at conferences around the world, even pointing out bugs on our Web sites. Your passion and dedication to the cause extends our reach and helps our small staff make the most of the work we do.

And yes, your financial support is crucial to our work, too. We have about 3,400 members, each of whom has agreed to put their money where their mouth is, on a monthly or annual basis. Memberships account for nearly half of our funds each year, and in the last year, more than 80 percent of our funding came from individuals, both members and non-member donors. That's a staggering amount of support from people like you, and clear proof that the FSF simply could not exist without you.

Raising money takes work. At present, the FSF does not have a staff position dedicated exclusively to fundraising. The campaigns team — Zak, Georgia, and Stephen — oversee much of our fundraising work, but ev-

erybody on staff helps out, by encouraging free software enthusiasts to become members, helping with the *Bulletin* mailing, and most of all, by simply working hard to fulfill the mission of the FSF, which is why you give in the first place.

We at the FSF have been thinking about our strengths and identifying places where we can be more effective. We know that the FSF is seen as a guiding light for the free software community, and that we achieve that by listening to your ideas and your needs, and gratefully accepting the time you give and your participation in opportunities for activism, along with your generous financial contributions. Perhaps our biggest strength is that when it comes to free software, we don't just talk the talk, we walk the walk: all of our work is done using free software. It's important to us to show that it can be done: a nonprofit with an international scope can do its work without proprietary software. One way we can expand the reach of free software is by inspiring other nonprofits to follow our example. Do you know a nonprofit that would benefit from using free software for their work?

For me, the next big thing on the horizon is our LibrePlanet conference on March 19-20, 2016, in the Boston area.² By the time you read this, we will be reviewing responses to our call for sessions. The theme of this year's conference is "Fork the System." We'll look at how free software creates the opportunity of a new path for its users and their communities, allows developers to fight the restrictions of a system dominated by proprietary software by creating free replacements, and is the

foundation of the philosophy of freedom, sharing, and change that we all love so well. Most likely, if you received this newsletter in the mail, you're an FSF member already — and members get gratis admission to LibrePlanet. Registration is open now.³ If you're not yet a member, consider joining now — you'll get to take advantage of this great benefit, and you'll help make the FSF's light burn brighter.⁴ 🍷

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The time to fight back against TPP is now
by Donald Robertson, III
Copyright and Licensing Associate

At the start of October 2015, it was announced that negotiators of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) had reached an accord, meaning that the agreement would now go back to the member countries for ratification. The FSF has long been arguing against these secret negotiations, which have been going on for years. Shortly after the accord was reached, the final text was apparently leaked as well, and unfortunately all the issues that we de-

²u.fsf.org/1hb

³u.fsf.org/lp16reg

⁴fsf.org/join

cried as further restricting user freedom were still included in the final document. From the point that the agreement was reached until it is ratified, the process is now on a set schedule that could see TPP come to pass by the start of 2016.

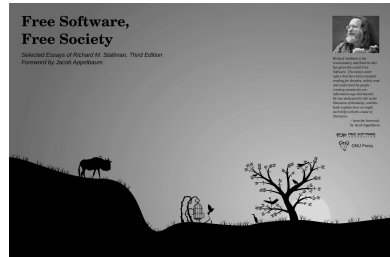
On October 23rd, I had the chance to speak at the Seattle GNU/Linux Conference about the threat of TPP and other international “trade” agreements. The talk was on the facts of these agreements, which have little to do with trade, and a lot to do with control. After the talk, there were still a lot of questions and it was great to see so many come by the FSF booth to discuss the issues further. Many found it frustrating that the threat of TPP is something that they hadn’t heard much about previously. But one comment in particular stuck in my mind, from an audience member who found it strange that our talk about TPP was in such a calm tone. Hearing how TPP and other trade agreements like it could lock countries all around the world into potentially perpetual copyright, spreading the worst aspects of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) everywhere, and muddying the waters around other issues like software patents or net neutrality, they were getting angrier and angrier.

Anger is a natural response, and if you’re just learning about TPP now, we hope you are angry about our freedom being traded away. Getting the word out hasn’t always been easy; international trade agreements aren’t the type of simple-to-digest stories that make the nightly news. It’s generally seemed like the voices from those of us speaking up about the issue were not being heard, and that often leaves one in a state of frustration. But in many

ways anger is something you feel when you don’t have the power to change things. Anger is born out of helplessness at a situation that seems insurmountable. But the truth of the matter is, we’re not powerless. If you’ve only heard of TPP recently, then get angry, but then get active!

If you’re hearing us now for the first time, help spread our voice, as the clock is ticking. Contact your representatives, organize local actions, and keep up-to-date on what you can do. Join us in this fight and don’t let freedom be traded away. Don’t let the anger you feel now turn into the resentment of what could have been done.

To keep up to date on the latest actions and news join us at u.fsf.org/trading-freedom. 🍷



The new edition of *Free Software, Free Society* has a redesigned cover.

Winter Book Club with GNU Press!

by *Chrissie Himes*

Operations Assistant

This fall, GNU Press launched new editions of two old favorites, the *Emacs Reference Manual* and *Free Software, Free Society*. Proceeds from the book sales will go to fund our ef-

forts to protect and promote computer users' freedom.

Learn GNU Emacs via the *Emacs Reference Manual (version 24.5)*. Each manual comes with an Emacs Reference Card, which can also be purchased separately at shop.fsf.org. By embracing GNU Emacs, programmers can revel in having an extensible Lisp playground to automate their workflow environment. There is now a channel on Freenode called #emacs-beginners that is dedicated to assisting people through the learning process.

Free Software, Free Society: Selected Essays of Richard M. Stallman is now in its third edition. The book showcases the relevancy of free software and addresses the evolving list of threats to both our freedom and our privacy. The book is available in paperback and in hardcover.

Fans of both books or many of the others listed on GNU Press should share their thoughts in #fsf on Freenode. Free software advocates here in Boston have even created their own free software reading group, similar to a book club. We also welcome discussion on the LibrePlanet mailing list.⁵

As always, please add your GNU Press suggestions to our Ideas page.⁶ Associate members of the Free Software Foundation get a 20% discount on all purchases made through the GNU Press store, so if you are not a member already, join today! For announcements about new products available in the GNU Press store, subscribe to the mailing list.⁷ 🍷

⁵u.fsf.org/1ho

⁶u.fsf.org/1hm

⁷u.fsf.org/1hn

Popular education, movements and free software

by *Stephen Mahood*

Outreach and Communication Coordinator

One of the great challenges in life and movement work is connecting ideas and philosophies from one group to another. Oftentimes, while unintended, the discussions may trail away from each other and parts of the community can be left out or disconnected from the rest. This occurs in both tech and non-tech communities, as well as among experienced and inexperienced activists in different communities.

In attempting to address disparities between different communities, one can look at popular education. Some may be familiar with books like *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* or *We Make the Road by Walking*. The methodology is to connect to people where they are, which may require learning about the participants' backgrounds and understanding. The education model works in both directions from the student to the instructor. It is a common thread in the work of various social movements, such as labor unions.

In October, I participated in a popular education experience that tackled the topic of free/libre software in social movement work. Software Libre Izquierda (“leftist free software”), is a conference, or what some may call an “unconference” with no predetermined agenda.⁸ A theme is agreed ahead of time, but the structure of sessions is left open. It brought together a number of people from various organizations stemming from groups in-

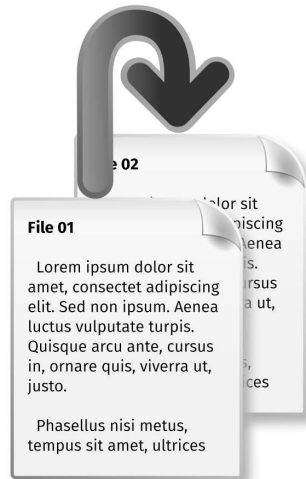
⁸sl-izq.net

volved in struggles across the world, with a focus on Mexico and Latin America. Attendees had diverse backgrounds and many were not technical at all, so some did not understand concepts like “software libre.” To address this, we tackled different parts of the overall theme, including licensing, free software, free culture, digital security, and cooperative hardware. We visited each theme to discuss and submit questions. Questions were then shared with interested participants to develop a session to try to answer them.

Our group on the theme of free software and free culture had activists with backgrounds in radio and education. Together, we created a scenario to connect with the larger group. In our scenario, we developed a radio show featuring a very popular dish in Mexico and Latin America called mole, which has many different recipes. One of the disc jockeys (DJ) shared their grandmother’s recipe. When we opened up the telephone lines, the first caller asked if she could make it without chicken, as she is vegan. After discussion, another person asked if they could use it in any form that they wish. Another caller inquired whether they could modify it and then distribute their modifications. These discussions brought up the four freedoms of free software. For a juxtaposition, I called in posing as a representative from a multinational company offering to buy the recipe and make the DJ millions of dollars, but my company would copyright the recipe and never allow it to be shared without permission.

Through these popular education methods, we included the experiences of the facilitating group and connected to the local cultural norms. We focused on the four freedoms to express

the importance of them without focusing on the technical end, which not only kept interest but brought understanding to the concepts and the base of the movement. We should celebrate these methods, while sharing with everyone how to connect the groups to that struggle. Come to libreplanet.org and share your ideas with us on ways you have connected. 🍷



Administrate files, not systems

by *Lisa Marie Maginnis*
Senior SysAdmin

For as long as computer science has allowed us to build large complex networks out of various individual nodes, the problem of how to administrate the systems has always been trouble. There are many theories, approaches, and practices people use to try to overcome this simple problem, but sometimes there are strings attached to managing a large group of machines with minimal time and effort.

At the FSF, we have a very small (but talented!) technical team. To cope with this resource shortage, we subscribe to the paradigm of meta-system-administration. The concept is simple: instead of trying to administer all the machines individually, with the potential of creating unique snowflake issues, we manage a set of configuration files that define all the hosts on the network, actually limiting the amount of snowflakes to make a more maintainable network. This way, we spend our time managing a central store of configuration files and not each machine. In addition, it allows us to rebuild hosts on short notice since each host is fully reproducible.

To achieve this we use Fully Automatic Installer (FAI), and routine maintenance of our network.⁹ The FAI project has the added bonus of being written completely in GNU Bash, from the configuration files themselves, to the FAI client and server software itself. This makes debugging simple, since you can debug it as you would any other shell script. In addition, this means that any feature you think FAI is missing can be added by adding functionality to the configuration files, or even the Bash scripts.

We share our FAI configuration files with the entire world, at vcs.fsf.org/fai-configs.git so others can use and modify the same configurations the FSF uses. By the same token, other organizations and individuals who also share their configuration files allow us to simply pick and choose the parts we want or need to add to our network. 🍷

⁹[fai-project.org](https://vcs.fsf.org/fai-configs.git)



Current and former FSF Board, staff and interns at FSF30

On the road with RMS

by *Jeanne Rasata*

Assistant to the President

For over thirty years, Richard Stallman has been campaigning for software freedom, reaching out to audiences large and small, advocating, seemingly indefatigably, for computer users' rights, in a broad range of venues across the globe. While these past six months were no exception, since he gave almost forty speeches in over thirty cities in eleven countries, they did provide a formal opportunity to pause and take stock, to reflect on all that's been accomplished, and to plan for and look forward to what lies ahead: on October 3rd, RMS and the rest of the free software community came together to celebrate thirty years of the Free Software Foundation.

RMS was in Boston for the festivities, and helped mark the anniversary with an address and the launch of the third edition of his selected essays, *Free Software, Free Society*. The book remains an excellent introduction to the fundamentals of free software and makes an even stronger case for software freedom. It raises the issue of freedom as it relates to hardware designs and holds updates on the traps and challenges we face, including the

dangers of digital surveillance. It’s a book that RMS “hope[s] can show you how you might lose your freedom, teach you how to protect it, and inspire you to value it.”

RMS’s new book is available from the FSF’s shop, at u.fsf.org/zi. Please write to rms-assist@gnu.org with any photographs you would like us to share on RMS’s blog, at fsf.org/blogs/rms, with recordings of his speeches for audio-video.gnu.org, or to extend a speaking invitation to RMS. See u.fsf.org/129 for a list of his confirmed engagements. 🍷

Privacy – who needs it?

by Zak Rogoff

Campaigns Manager

Though not everyone agrees on the exact extent to which surveillance should be limited, there are many facing a kind of surveillance that is definitely unethical, and educating your network is a good way to build a movement against this. Teaching people about privacy is also a perfect opportunity to explain computer user freedom, because real privacy solutions must start with free software.



This essay provides two resources for someone seeking to educate or learn about free privacy tech: a list of archetypal characters that can benefit from the software, to help personalize the issue, and an explanation of why free privacy tech is worth using, even

for those that don’t identify with the archetypes.

This is only an introduction — anyone in real danger must work to understand these tools and verify for themselves that they are using them appropriately. A Web search will reveal myriad resources for each of the tools mentioned, and the Electronic Frontier Foundation’s Surveillance Self-Defense Guide provides a good starting place for further research.¹⁰

Archetypes of people that need free privacy tech

- A teenager in an oppressive family who wants to read queer literature
- A young woman that is secretly pregnant, looking for health information
- A domestic violence victim searching for a hotline to get help

The threat: abusive family members with traffic-sniffing tools

Some privacy tools that would help:

- HTTPS Web encryption with the HTTPS Everywhere browser extension
- strong passwords created with a random password generator
- a VPN (virtual private network)
- GnuPG email encryption (see emailselfdefense.fsf.org for a beginner-friendly guide)

This is probably the most common type of threat. However, people who

¹⁰ssd.eff.org

have a visible presence on the Internet often face more technologically sophisticated snoopers. For example:

- A journalist challenging sexism in online communities
- Activists from an oppressed cultural minority fighting for their human rights

The threat: harassment or threats by political opponents

Some privacy tools that would help:

- all of the above, plus
- anonymous browsing with Tor

As people are increasingly aware, speaking about controversial subjects on the Internet can provoke some mean and violent harassment. Sometimes technologically skilled online harassers can identify their victim's phone numbers, address or employer and share the information publicly, to provoke even worse harassment. This is called doxxing.

Last but not least, there is the best-known category of people that need privacy tools — those that are being spied on by large organizations with lots of technological resources:

- An employee that has witnessed a corporate crime and wants to tell a journalist about it
- A government employee that needs to expose illegal bulk surveillance

The threat: communication and tech companies, potentially cooperating with government cyber military

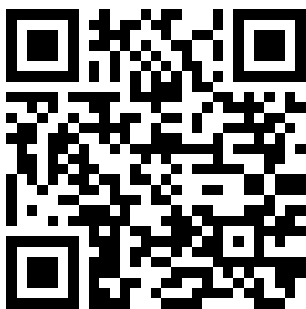
organizations like the NSA (USA), GCHQ (UK), Golden Shield (China)

Some privacy tools that would help:

- all of the above, plus
- full-disk hard drive encryption,

Even if you can't relate to these archetypes, there are good reasons to use free software privacy and security tools. It helps you practice in case you need them later or want to teach someone. It encourages other people you communicate with to learn how to use them, and it makes it more socially mainstream to use the tools. Right now, many of the people that need them most have no idea they even exist. It's also a great opportunity to promote free software in general. It increases the total amount of protected traffic moving through the Internet, which means that it's harder for some kinds of bulk surveillance techniques to operate. Finally, it gives you a chance to find problems with the tools and report them to the developers, potentially improving the situation for everyone.

We live in a time of rapid technological change and our culture and government do not always keep pace with the new threats that these technological changes bring against our freedom and privacy. Innocent people are threatened by surveillance every day, and spreading free software privacy tools can help them. Let's resist unethical surveillance together! 🍷



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