

Access to software determines participation in a digital society. To ensure equal access, participation and competition in the information age, Free Software Foundation Europe (FSFE) is dedicated to digital freedom in the form of Free Software. No person should ever be in a position to use software that does not offer the freedoms to be used, studied, modified and distributed.

FSFE was founded in 2001 as a non-profit and non-governmental organisation to strengthen the social, political, legal and technical foundation of Free Software in Europe. It is active in a strong global network of like-minded organisations and has teams in many European countries.

<http://www.fsfeurope.org/>

Contribute

Your support allows FSFE to continue working for Free Software. It helps to increase our profile and allows us to launch new projects that benefit the entire community.

Get involved!

The most direct way to support FSFE is by getting involved in what we do. We are a collaborative community and our work is the result of contributions by hundreds of people. You can be one of them by joining one of our teams. Perhaps you can help with the translation team, the booth teams, or one of many others.

<http://www.fsfeurope.org/contribute/>

Join the Fellowship of FSFE!

This is the easiest way to become involved in our activities. As a Fellow, you add your visible support and contribution to all activities of FSFE. You will also meet many like-minded people online and in the many Fellowship meetings across Europe.

<http://fellowship.fsfe.org/>

Donate money and convince your employer to become a Patron of FSFE!

The effectiveness of FSFE depends to a large degree on the financial resources that we can use to work for Free Software. By donating, you and your company can contribute directly to this. Our bank details:

<http://www.fsfeurope.org/donate/>



What is Free Software?

Free in Free Software refers to freedom, not price. Free Software provides four essential freedoms:

- **The freedom to run the program, for any purpose.** Placing restrictions on the use of Free Software, such as time ("30 days trial period", "license expires January 1st, 2004") or purpose ("permission granted for research and non-commercial use") makes a program non-free.
- **The freedom to study how the program works, and adapt it to your needs.** Placing legal or practical restrictions on the comprehension or modification of a program, such as mandatory purchase of special licenses, signing of a Non-Disclosure-Agreement (NDA) or - for programming languages that have multiple forms or representations - making the preferred human way of comprehending and editing a program ("source code") inaccessible also makes it proprietary (non-free). Without the freedom to modify a program, people will remain at the mercy of a single vendor.
- **The freedom to redistribute copies so you can help others.** Software can be copied/distributed at virtually no cost. If you are not allowed to give a program to another person, that makes a program non-free. This can be done for a charge, if you so choose.
- **The freedom to improve the program, and release your improvements to the public, so that the whole community benefits.** Not everyone is a good programmer. Some people do not know how to program at all. This freedom allows those who do not have the time or skills to solve a problem to gain access to improved software. This can be done for a charge.

These freedoms are rights, not obligations. Respecting these freedoms for society may at times oblige the individual. Any person can choose not to make use of them, but may also choose to make use of all of them. In particular, it should be understood that Free Software does not prevent commercial use. If a program fails to allow commercial use and commercial distribution, it is not Free Software. A growing number of companies base their business model on Free Software, including some of the largest software vendors. Free Software makes it legal to provide help and assistance, it does not make it mandatory.

