

RE: Where Fedora Went Wrong (nice conclusion)

Source: <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/Fedora/2007-05/msg01609.html>

- *From:* "Ada Ho" <ada_ho2003@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Tue, 15 May 2007 14:44:36 -0700
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Ok. In response to Dave's request for different points of view: here's one:

From the economic point of view, the free software community has managed to

do something incredible: it has created a truly "public" good without government intervention. Not only that, it has shown the world that the market model of exchanging ideas as services (software) directly works better than either socialist intervention model or the free-market-as-monetary-exchange model. Why? Because people are exchanging software with each other directly without having to go through the monetary middleman of vendors or the government middleman of bureaucracy. In essence, technology has made possible a return to direct barter (I'll give you an emacs for a virtual machine...). But to make this possible on a global scale, so that maximum benefit is achieved, the "market" model of free software has to be truly open – so that it can be accessed by anyone who has a potential "exchange" of services or ideas – and the cost of doing this is what economists call the "Free Rider" problem – people who gain benefits from the open exchange without giving anything in return.

Lynn Margulis, the biologist, likes to point out that bacteria freely exchange their genes in a global network. One could hardly say that bacteria do this "altruistically" (could a bacterium be altruistic?) Rather, they do it because it offers a survival advantage – in economic terms, it's a good/service.

It's good to know that the human species is catching up to bacteria by means of the internet and the free software movement.

So don't despair when "Free Riders" gripe about what they're getting from the free software "marketplace". They only do it because they've long since adapted to being passive, helpless consumers or wards of the state. The value to the world gained by free software is far greater than that taken away by "Free Riders". If things don't work perfectly sometimes, it's because the open "marketplace" is fostering progress – and change.

John Aberdeen

RE: Where Fedora Went Wrong (nice conclusion)

-----Original Message-----

From: fedora-list-bounces@xxxxxxxxxx [mailto:fedora-list-bounces@xxxxxxxxxx]

On Behalf Of David Fletcher

Sent: Tuesday, May 15, 2007 1:45 PM

To: fedora-list@xxxxxxxxxx

Subject: Re: Where Fedora Went Wrong (nice conclusion)

On Tuesday 15 May 2007 20:28, Rahul Sundaram wrote:

Yep. If half of the people who are willing to discuss the nature of Fedora in length step further to actually contribute that would make a pretty big difference but alas folks are more interested in calling it unstable or wanting the distribution to including proprietary software by default.

Next time you want to complain ask yourself how much you have contributed in anyway at all to a every growing collection of Free software included in a distribution that you can get for free. That includes a lot of work many of which is volunteer driven in maintaining around 8000 packages, documentation, artwork, QA, release engineering, infrastructure, marketing etc.

You can choose to help.

<http://fedoraproject.org/wiki/Join>

Rahul

Yes I've been making complaints earlier today, but I have also made a (small) contribution to documentation and will be happy to contribute again when I see something I think needs to be addressed.

The way I see it, Free and Open Source Software is a massive act of altruism performed by many people for the good of the worldwide community. Users of FOSS should recognise this fact and be sure to give at least something back to the community in return, even if it isn't a contribution to the operating system they use for free. Many computer users don't have the skills to write code or the time available due to family commitments etc to write documentation, but everybody can find time to go along to, say, a blood donation session or spend a few hours sometimes helping a charity, thus putting something back into the community.

Is this a reasonable opinion? I don't mind if the list disagrees, but I would

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be interested in reading some points of view from others.

Dave

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