

Re: GNU Public Licences Revisited (again)

Source: <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/General/comp.programming/2005-09/msg00769.html>

- *From:* "Joe Butler" <ffffh.no.spam@xx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 26 Sep 2005 17:49:53 +0100
-

"Willem" <willem@xxxxxxxx> wrote in message
news:slrndjg3sb.e0b.willem@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

> Joe wrote:

- >) There's a effect where chimpanzies will make a "I've found food!"
- >) exclamation when they find food – nearby chimps will hear this and come to
- >) the location of the food. Now, for the `_individual_` chimp that found the
- >) food, it is invariably better if that chimp could eat as much of the food as
- >) it wanted before calling out – but it's an inbuilt behaviour that the chimp
- >) cannot control. Naturalists have observed chimps putting their hands over
- >) their mouths when they cry out. I.e. there is a conflict in the chimps
- >) brain when it finds food: inbuilt behaviours that have evolved naturally
- >) and have given the chimp species a particular advantage, over the wants of
- >) an individual from that species.
- >)
- >) So, to consider what is better for the buyer alone is to ignore a bigger
- >) picture.
- >)
- >) Well then, could you make a case why closed source is better in the bigger
- >) picture ?

If closed source were no good, it would have died out. A lot of free open source persists, simply because it is free. Of course, some of it persists because it is better than the dominant closed source alternative.

- >)
- >) Besides the fact that 'locking in' your buyers is good for a vendor ?

At this point, we haven't yet established if 'locking in' isn't a myth persisted by the OSS 'community'.

>)

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- > Monopolies are also good for the vendors, but it is widely accepted that
- > it is not good for the big picture. Closed Source could just as well be
- > argued to not be good for the big picture.

Monopolies. Where did that come from?

- >
- > Here's a random argument: Open Source Software means that the vendor has
- > to deliver quality support, because otherwise other companies would step
- > in and deliver better support. This means that the overall quality of
- > support will be better, which is a good thing.

What I can never understand about this argument is that if the product was any good, you wouldn't be able to make any money out of support, period – because the user would not have any reason to want support. I guess also, it's a weird concept: Let's not make any money out of the product itself, let's make money out of supporting the product – we've kind of shot ourselves in the foot here, but if we provide the best support, we can have a monopoly on the support, not on the product.

- > (This is the old 'competition is good, monopoly is bad' argument.)
- >
- > So, why is Closed Source better for the 'Big Picture' than Open Source ?

Closed source has evolved and survived (so far). It has been able to sustain itself. Open source (with the GNU licence) seeks to change the 'eco-system' in a forced, unnatural way. It's 'unnatural', because it wants to compete in the eco-system, but on its own terms (i.e. it doesn't say, "Anyone at all can use this source – even if you make your customers pay for it – after all, it is OPEN source.", it says, "Only entities in the eco-system that won't eat can play") – in the evolutionary model, if open source was viable, free open source software would survive even if there were payed-for alternatives of the very same open source product. The problem for open source is that most payed-for software is far more user friendly than free software and this divide is only increasing.

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- *Follow-Ups:*
 - ◆ **Re: GNU Public Licences Revisited (again)**
◇ *From:* Willem
 - *References:*
 - ◆ **Re: GNU Public Licences Revisited (again)**
◇ *From:* Joe Butler
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◇ *From: MSCHAEF.COM*

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