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in Government and the Private Sector.

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Slaying The Giant

Author Ruben Safir

One would think, after Microsoft has dodged the anti-trust bullet twice, and with the increasing pressure on businesses to license software through narrower and narrower agreements, that the competition to the Microsoft Office and general business computing would be almost non-existent. But despite all the hurdles being thrown at the competitive process, Free Software advocates are making suprising inroads on the business desktop PC, and might be in a position to finally blow open the market in a way the government anti-trust legislation has so far failed to do.

Free Software, for those hearing about it for the first time, is a development model where programmers from around the world collaborate in developing software for the general public under licesnses which allow reuse and delvelopement buy anyone. The software is copyrighted and released to end users with a complete set of ownership rights which allows for those using the software to make alterations to the programs and allows for the distribution of the software to others. Free Software is unhindered by per seat licensing, or any other restrictions on the software use, accept that it restricts any of the users to redistristribute the software without the source code to the software. Each user has to guarantee that their products are sold and released to others with similar rights to which they received. Hence the term 'Free Software" as in “Free Markets" or the word “Freedom".

Free Software, until now, has been used extensively on the internet, and in fact is responsible for the birth of the interent itself. It's mail services, networking protocals, application servers, and web servers provide the foundation of the internet today. The growth of the internet is directly a result of Free Software. That means nearly every computer user has used Free Software extenssively. Everyone relies on this software for mission criticle uses every minute of every day.

Much of the focus of Free Software has remained on the server side of the information technology (IT) world. But increasingly, it's the Free Software desktop which should be getting the attention of your corporate executives and your IT managers. Not only is the Free Software desktop ready for primetime, but deployment of the free desktop in business, according to Free Software proponents, will dramatically decrease your tech support costs and positively effect your bottom line.

The recent developments which make it so important for businesses to explore this market is the development of the Open Office office suite, the KDE and GNOME desktops, and the avalanche of recent commercial grade applications which have been released in the last year for desktop productivity. Those of us in New York City are blessed with a large number of home grown professionals who can support your businesses efforts and help you migrate off the more expensive and restrictive desktop solutions. These products will finally get your business off of what has been described as the 'upgrade escalator', the practice of software vendors to tie up your business in their restrictive products and to force you into ever more expensive product upgrades. The business model of these vendors is designed to entangle the end users into purchasing constantly more expensive and larger software updates. Free Software consultants, on the other hand, have learned to collaberate together, and thereby give your business the kind of 24/7 support which your business might not you migh not be used to receiving, since customers expectations have been trimmed by their experience in dealing with big players like Microsoft and Adobe.

The local organization to spearhead the business development of Free Software is called NYLXS, informally known as The New York GNU/Linux Scene. On their website, http://www.nylxs.com, you'll find a huge selection of activities these busy folks have undertaken. Among their efforts include the development of an educational program, a program to help schools save money in education with free software, a quarterly journal, several business expos, a weekly radio show, and support groups. For your business needs, the most important effort is what they have dubbed as 'The Free Software Chamber of Commerce'. What is the Free Software Chamber of Commerce? The organizations president, Ruben Safir, has described it as follows:

> 'The Free Software Chamber of Commerce is simply the best collection of computing professionals in the City, banded together to help businesses obtain the goals of reducing cost and increasing efficiency through the use of Free Software. Our group of consultants and technical people eat sleep and breath digital systems

> and are the most dedicated in the city at providing you, the client, with the services and products you need in this changing business economy. We provide everything for Telephony service, to secure remote access, to advanced desktop, audio-video and mundane web services. Most businesses haven't tapped even a quarter of the potential of their investment into IT services. We can not only unlock that other 75%, but we can do it under budget, and on time.'

But how can free software compete with the big boys on the desktop, when other businesses such as WordPerfect and Lotus have failed? The key is that Free Software develops faster than the big guys and produces better product. Look at the OpenOffice.org business suite as an example. It's hard to imagine that OpenOffice.org is barely a year old. And yet, it has nearly the complete functionality of Microsoft Office, without any of it's security issues. The OpenOffice.org Word Processor is simple to use, smartly designed and has full integration with databases, graphic programs and spread sheets. It is fast, efficient and easy to learn. It's presentation program revials Power Point, and it has a full complelent of graphics, charting ability, document revision control and groupware features. It was cleaved off of Sun Microsystems Star Office and now has a life of it's own.

And it's free for the download. Say good-bye to all that time and money spent tracking license keys. Spend that time and money on something more important, like your business.

Another example of productivity software for the modern Free Software Desktop including the K-Office Suite. It's a spin off of the KDE Desktop initiative originally produced by Troll Tech. While the KDE Desktop is technically superior, very windows like, and stable, it's crown jewel is K-Office. It is installed with nearly every KDE environment, and it also has Spread Sheets, Word Processors, Database tools, and more. Businesses that work with KDE miss nothing but restrictive licensing and high costs. Users find it intuitive and it never crashed.

It's Free Software rival is the GNOME project. GNOME also produces a productivity suite which include GNUCASH, a quicken like program for book keeping and accounting, as well as it's break through mail and collaboration client Evolution. Evolution provide your business with a beautify crafter user environement for calendaring, scheduling, mail, and more. What it doesn't have is the suseptability to email viruses. In fact, this is the common theame in Free Software. Security is built in from the start.

And networking is also built into Free Software systems. Unlike the primitive Microsoft desktop. Every application on the Free Software desktop is network ready. This is a huge advantage for the businessman on the go. Anywhere they login into the GNU/Linux system, they are able to run their desktop remotely. The miracle behind this is the X windowing system out of MIT. X windows allows users to run their programs from anywhere in the world. In combination with VPN encryption, you can quickly and securely run your office desktop from Mars (4th planet from the Sun).

Marco Scouffier, another member of the NYLXS Free Software Chamber of Commerce explains it this way:

> 'When MIT create the X desktop, the goal was not to just create a means to display applications locally at the keyboard. That level of application was done nearly a decade earlier at Xerox Parc. Instead, the key to X was to design in as an applications server which could provide centralized security and computing power to lighter micro systems around the globe. The result of this is what we now call X. And through the security and capabilities of X, we can provide with free Software services which cost thousands, if not millions of dollars through Citrix on the close priopitary platform. It's even possible through Virtual Network Computing to run a windows desktop remotely through a standard DSL line.'

Previous attempts to move Free Software into the mainstream has been hindered by three things. First, there is the problem of the Microsoft Monopoly. Second, there is the perception that Free Software is for computer geeks, and third is that there is limited support. It seems likely that two of three of these barriers have been breached.

Joe Maffia, or the accounting firm, Rosenzweig and Maffia LLP (http://www.rmcpa.com/), tells a story very differntly than one hears about the problems with Free Software ussage. Mr Maffia had hired Free Software consultants from NYLXS not long ago, and he has found them to be the most useful and cost effective IT professionals he has ever ever hired. In addition to developing the most stable backend network that they've ever had, Mr Maffia has found that the GNU/Linux desktop has great potential for his business and his clients. They have implemented the PHPGroupware Server on their intranet for calendaring and collaberation. And they are looking at other Free Software tools for their business, including SQL Ledger (http://www.sql-ledger.com/), OpenOffice.org and several project management solutions. Mr Maffia swears by the Free Software and he has integrated into his business.

> “As accountants, we are always looking for the technology edge which will make us more competitive and which will allow us to provide a higher quality of service for our clients. Free Software, with the help of the Free Software Chamber of Commerce, gives us that edge. The VPN solution implemented by Brooklyn Linux Solutions has not only extended the productivity of our workers by providing fool proof remote access at minimal costs, but it is causing us to look at both customer marketing and customer services in a whole new light.
>
> We are now looking at the Internet as a means to give products and services in a fashion only the big companies had done before. For example, we are an official Oracle and Net Ledger provider, and we've had some success with this product. However, we now see that we might be able to provide even a higher level of service for clients right off our network through a single DSL connection. The solutions we implemented for our own office usage might be a cornerstone for a whole group of potential clients, especially small businesses who find the cost of running and maintaining enterprise file servers and mail systems prohibitive. Because we are free from restrictive software licenses, the up side of integrating office management solutions for clients with our already world class accounting services is something with huge upside potential and very little risk to our current busines model.”

In addition, Mr Maffia raves about the different attitude Free Software providers bring to his organization. “From the very start, things were very different when we interviewed Free Software professionals to help us with our back end network. They immediately evaluated everything from the point of view of what would enable us in our goals of providing service for our clients They made our priorities their priorities. They've acted as partners in our enterprise, rather than victems of their enterprises. And we couldn't be happier”.

And accounts in the New York City area aren't the only ones who are benefiting. Lawyers find that not only does OpenOffice.org makes a superior Office Application, but that the built in encryption available on every Free Software Desktop lowers the exposure to neglignce law suites do to lost laptops and mail viruses. SuSe Linux (http://www.suse.com) comes with an option to encrypt local hard drives. This protects the Law Firm from having their computers information stolen or lost, and finding the private information in the hands of others.

Professional Graphic Artists also benefit from Free Software. Marco Scoffier raves about the the GIMP and Blender. The GIMP is the Raster Photo Editor free with almost every GNU/Linux distribution. Several times more powerful and Photoshop, and with built in Perl and SCHEME language support, Marco claims that there is almost nothing he can not do with the GIMP for online graphic support. Furthermore, the use for work in the print media is also impressive. Marco is also an advocate of BLENDER. Blender is a 3d graphics and animation program with the Python Language programming hooks for advanced gaming graphics and digital animation. He has given several ectures on it's use and interface across the tri-state area. His latest lecture was at the Long Island GNU/Linux Group in Farmingdale LI.

Government is another area where Free Software is poised to benefit everyone. NYLXS, as an organization tried to get their software into Brooklyn Borough Hall, but ran against the kind of resistance often seen when trying to market Free Software. On his election, Marky Markowitz, the Brooklyn Borough President, made a call for technical assistence because they had a large need for IT solutions, but no budget. NYLXS sent to Borough Hall three of it's best people, Kevin Millani, Jon Bober and Ruben Safir. Their experience was rough. As Mr Safir tells the story,

> “First, when we first contacted Borough Hall, they told us there was no way that they would consider anything but a Microsoft solution. Later, I was able to get in an see Scott Cotton, who was in charge of this area for the Borough Presidents Office. However, when push came to shove, they just wouldn't do what

> was reasonable. These private companies came in and dropped propietory solutions on them, companies like Con-Ed and SIAC. And despite the fact that we were willing to come in, train them and install everything they needed, free of cause, it all seemed to boil down to fear, and the fact that one individual in the office was particularly found of an old version of a contact management system several years old, and not that good. This kind of closed mindedness is going to cost the City thousands of dollas over the near term future, and it won't provide them a single service that NYLXS and Free Software would provide them instead.”

Others in the Free Software community are pointing out other obvious examples where New York City Government can be cutting costs and enabling the governments. During this urgent ficsical year (2003), facing a huge budget deficiet, the Police Department is trying to figure out how it is going to invest in an IT infrastructure suited for the 21st century. Currently, the police department is still working with typewriters and paper forms. Free Software, with it's free word processors, enterprise ready databases and it's high security can save the city millions of dollars in computing costs, both on the installation side and on the maintemence side. Is New York City smart enough to leverage this natural resource with and protect its budget. The NYLXS Free Software institute is ready to find out.

New York City Free Software Technology Meeting Opens in Brooklyn

Author Dave Williams and Ruben Safir

NYLXS, New York's busiest Free Software group, is at it again! This April they're opening the area's first Free Software Technology andEducation Center in Brooklyn, NY. Located in one of New York's largest business districts, the NYLXS Free Software Education Center and Internet Cafe is a collaborative effort between Alex Shvartsman (http://66.150.119.242/cgibin/strategy/article.cgi?id=3980) and RubenSafir.

Alex is the owner of Kings Games, a computer gaming center which caters to players of "Magic, the Gathering". Ruben met Alex several months ago when Kings Games first opened. He found the place to be a comfortable environment for getting work done while enjoying a change of scenery from his home office. The two quickly developed a fast friendship, and before long Kings Games was hosting its first installfest. A meeting of NYFairUse (http://fairuse.nylxs.com) was held there, and from then on only good things started to happen. The creation of a Free Software Center is something NYLXS has been trying to accomplish for many months, and thanks to Alex's generosity it is now a reality.

Kings Games had a huge space available in the venue's second floor, overlooking the Kings Highway business strip. Several months ago the building was purchased by a bank which didn't want an upstairs residence. They offered Alex and his partners the floor, customized to their requirements. Alex and Ruben were already discussing the possibility of creating an educational center in the space, and the change in ownership plus the subsequent move opened up this possibility.

Together they designed the entire basement (easily over 80 by 50 feet in area) to be usable as a Free Software educational facility and anInternet cafe. It was built to their specifications, and everything was looking good for both NYLXS and Kings Games.

The NYLXS Board was informed of the plans, and President of NYLXS at the time, Marco Scoffier agreed to invest in six new computers and provide technical support to Kings Games. A hardware recycling program has been implemented, and plans for both subsidized and non-subsidized educational programs are in place.

According to Ruben,

> "This is the best opportunity yet for the New York City Free Software community to really spread its wings and provide unprecedented services to the public at large. Not only will it give people a chance to hang out and collaborate, but it also has serious long term possibilities as an incubator for Free Software projects and businesses. The room is huge and completely wired, the management at Kings Games is the best, and Alex is one of the most fairminded individuals I've ever worked with. NYLXS members will be announcing hours at the facility when our experts and members will be available (currently

> Sunday nights from 6:00PM to Midnight) to help new users and others with Free Software issues and development. Overall, this is the most exciting thing to come out of the New York City Free Software community in a long time. It is going to be our ultimate asset."

Alex is also excited about the prospects for the project. "We arereally happy to establish a 'white hat' hacker community here in Brooklyn," he said. "The guys from NYLXS have amazing energy and enthusiasm, and only good things will come from that."

Computer access will initially be available for non-NYLXS members at a rate of $5.00 per hour. You can also bring your own laptop computer and plug into the network. The Center's first open house meeting was on Monday, April 21st, and scheduling for support personnel is currently being arranged. If anyone is interested in getting involved please contact the NYLXS president at president@nylxs.com, or any member of NYLXS (http://www.nylxs.com/).

Free Junk - is Apache ready for the enterprise

Author Ruben Safir

A recent local GNU/Linux users group recently ran a thread on the viability of the Apache in the Enterprise. Initially one would have thought the post, though rather poorly written and without a clear context, was designed to either promote some non-free computer usage or was just an immature rant made out of youthful ignorance. However, the follow-up messages seemed to better clarify the nature of the question. The inquiry was not about Apache at all. It was about the creeping nervous insecurity setting in the Free Software community about job prospects and business posibilities. When people consider their future in the current information technology economy, there are ominous signs on the horizon regarding Free Software's role in future business and job opportunities.

As originally posed the question was, "Can the Apache Web Server work in the enterprise environment?" The answer to that question has long been put to bed. Not only is Apache Application Server technology superior to any other current solution, but it has also shown itself to be remarkably flexible for a variety of environments -- from the largest web-based enterprises to the smallest customized jobs. Apache has been the poster child for GNU/Linux, and the driving force behind many of those "under the radar" installations which jump started the Free Software craze of the late 1990s. So the question was a little upsetting. If we rephrase the it to, "Since we know that Apache is a top-notch web development applications server, and since we know it is widely deployed, where are all the Free Software jobs which many of us have made a substantial investment in? Why does it seem that every job (such as there are in this recession) is asking for WebSphere and DotNet experience?"

Now this is a really good question which deserves exploration. For young people in their late twenties and early thirties their entire adult life has been one great economic boom, driven largely by enthusiasm for the dawning digital age and the positive fundamental economic conditions in the wake of the end of the cold war. We have been looking at reduced production costs and a growing scale of global information and commerce. The gains in modern production techniques were largely possible because of advancements in computer technology.

It's inevitable under these conditions that the ability to produce outstrips the ability to consume, and overproduction leads to economic recession. A healthy economic recession imperfectly shakes out business models which are inefficient and cannot be sustained. It drives the customer base to the more successful models which can be sustained, and as a whole, industries may collapse to be replaced by newer ones in the following economic expansion. A healthy recession prepares the economyfor its next economic spurt.

This recession, especially for the technology sector, has been anything but healthy. The problems in the Free Software world reflect the larger economic conditions. Technology across the board has been devastated,even for the monopolists. But the economic conditions for Free Software are especially troubling, and it is partly a situation of our own making. People who hope to work with free Software in the future, as a staple of their livelihood, and not just as a hobby, need to adapt and adapt soon.

First, let's look at some impediments to the economic growth of FreeSoftware in the coming months. Then let's look at the previous successes and failures of Free Software business, and do an analysis on how we can improve our chances for the widespread business adoption of Free Software once the current shakeout is finished.

Larry Augustin, the founder of VA Research/VA Linux/VA Software, has been famous for saying (and has recently repeated on Don Marti's LinuxElitist mailing list) that if we have a piece of software and thesoftware is free but the software is junk, it's just free junk and he can't , as a CTO, in good faith with free junk and advocate its use. While this sounds like a reasonable position we'll see that this line of reasoning has several serious flaws. It's not a viable position to take in a business environment by responsible people.

It's generally known throughout the technology world that many proprietary closed systems, produced and deployed by the largest enterprises in the world, are insecure, buggy, expensive, and high-maintenance. The quality control of the typical corporate IT infrastructure fails miserably on multiple levels. As a primary example of this look at the Microsoft Exchange Server and the Outlook mail client. Few applications have caused more damage to the corporate bottomline than this virus plagued, network destroying piece of junk. And yet it is probably the most popularly deployed “protocol breaking”, “spam-ware” in existence. The great majority of business desktops come preloaded with the Exchange client, all ready to be plugged into the network to propagate viruses.

Similarly, in its now historic battle with Netscape, this same company advocated "free as in cost" junk on nearly every Microsoft Windows desktop in the market with its early Internet Exporer application. Microsoft had no moral qualms whatsoever about embedding its Internet Explorer Web Browser technology directly into the Microsoft Windows Operating System. It took almost two years for Microsoft's "Free Junk" to become a viable browser, and today people are so used to it that they look at all other browsers as strange and non-standard, even (as in the case of Mozilla) when they are measurably better than the Internet Explorer product.

Microsoft is not alone in advocating junk, free or otherwise. Quickbooks was also initially junk (and still is, in my opinion). In fact, it's the kind of junk that breaks basic accounting principles and misappropriates personal data. Adobe, Apple, Peachtree, Oracle, Sun, and nearly every other vendor on the market has advocated, and still advocates, junk. What makes Larry Augustin think he is so special?

Why stop with Software? Ford Motor Company sold junk which blew up on contact, Chrysler sold junk which rusted prematurely, Firestone sold junk which endangered the lives of passengers in SUVs, Tyson's Chicken sold junk which poisoned people, McDonalds sells junk which makes people fat, Eli Lilly sold junk which destroyed people's livers, Anheuser-Busch sells junk as their primary product. The key to all of these companies is their desire to sell.

Michael Kingsley of Slate Magazine recently reminded me of the ground breaking work in economics by John Kenneth Galbraith, in which he put forth the proposition that the post-industrial revolution economy is dependent on the ability of producers to satisfy markets of their own making. Once we got past the basic needs for food, clothing and shelter, successful businesses fill the market with products to make teeth brighter, to feel freedom on the highways, or to be the proudest soccer mom on the playground. Free Software, in some basic regards, has failed to make its market. Instead we've been content to let others create markets and then try catching up. Meanwhile we miss the opportunity to create our own market, based on a new creative concepts which people are going to need.

These patriotic times might be just the moment to focus on the market we are most trying to build. Enterprises will want information services in the future. Individuals will want information services in the future. And, as sure as Nike sells excitement in a shoe, Free Software needs to sell freedom in a box. A sales slogan might be, "Freedom -- built into everybox". Free as in Freedom needs to move from an explanation of the GPL philosophy to a motto with which will sell. We need to sell this "Freedom Junk" and sell it now.

The case for freedom as a sales tool is compelling. Look at how a lack of freedom is contributing to the economic woes of the nation. Look at how a lack of freedom has hurt the economy. A causative agent for the depth of this current recession is the artificial restraint of innovation and trade in the information distribution segment of the economy. One of the few growing information technology markets which showed signs of prospering in the early part of this recession, and which developed during the boom of the late 1990s, was the music and entertainment delivery business. Companies like MP3.com, Napster and others were developing the means for broad, inexpensive delivery of quality music to clients in a flexible and innovative fashion. These companies and their expanding workforces were poised to hire the next generation of information technology professionals. They were snuffed out in their youth by a vicious and tyrannical consortium of copyrightholders. A few special interest media conglomerates and movie distribution companies throttled the growing technology economy overnight. The $60 Billion in estimated damages which the RIAA won against MP3.com destroyed the company as an independent entity; today it's owned by Vivendi-Universal. Napster was put out of business by the RIAA as well. In fact, everyone in the technology business has become scared to death of doing anything with music. After all, Bertelsman AG was sued for $17 Billion for settling with Napster and investing in them. Kaazaa was chased out of the country, Internet Radio has been regulated out of existence, and so on. These actions have produced serious depressive effects on information technology business.

The direct result of this litigation is that software innovation has produced has destroyed new business development nationwide. Just combining the words "computer" and"music" sends a shiver down the spine of business planners. Instead of an economy which leverages growing technological innovation with over a 100 years of recording history toward economic expansion, we've allowed petty bickering between autocratic recording industry executives and telecom business leaders to drive the independent Internet Service Providers out of business.

The most grievous abuse of this bickering could be seen in the stockprices of AOL-Time Warner. Here we had a match made in heaven. The combination of AOL with Time Warner had the potential to be so successful that it sent a chill through the entire Internet Provider industry because of the obvious monopolistic position the new company would have on both content and access. Here we had the nation's largest subscription Internet and Digital Services Provider gaining access to one of the largest monopolistic reservoirs of content in the world. Additionally, Time Warner had the obvious advantage of gaining access to one of the largest cable networks in the world, permitting AOL to side step one of the largest pitfalls to broadband access, foot dragging by the Baby Bells. AOL gained content and the "last mile" of network connectivity in one swoop. So what went wrong?

The corporate culture of Time Warner entrenched itself and fought AOL all the way. Time Warner refused to provide real content to AOL and refused to make the cable network available to AOL, forcing their Virginia division to reinvent the wheel. Time Warner even played with the idea of decoupling the two companies after they drove AOL's innovative chief executive Steve Chase out of the company. The executives of Time Warner preferred to lose two-thirds of their equity value rather than freeing up their content for mass distribution.

Clearly Free Software can develop a new market, a "Freedom" market, and succeed as others have failed. But it also has to overcome the huge political disadvantage that it currently suffers. Politics and business are integrated. Business and free enterprise have been the moving force for global democratization since the dawn of civilization. As the banking and mercantile classes accumulated increasing wealth inthe 15th and 16th centuries, political favoritism, standardized commercial laws and individual rights became increasingly demanded from governments. Governments which heeded this call, like Great Britain and the Netherlands, grew into world dominating powers. Governments which failed to heed the needs of business, like France and Italy, drove themselves toward brutal revolutions and a weakened world position.

If you are interested in business but not interested in politics, get comfortable with politics now or get comfortable with predestined financial failure. For Free Software to survive in business it absolutely needs a constructive engagement in the political process. The only question should be, "What does Free Software need from government?"

First, Free Software businesses need free access to all digital information and hardware, unencumbered by artificial barriers. It needs to proactively fight the various Digital Rights Management schemes now being bantered about by the content industry and consumer electronics manufacturers. Free Software needs freedom, and it needs to promote freedom.

Second, Free Software needs a fair playing field in a competitive marketplace. It needs inexpensive broadband access. It needs access to domestic and foreign markets. It needs a fair and just application of anti-trust regulations and sane contract law. If you want Free Softwareto have a chance at succeeding in the market you're going to have to fight for a place at the table. Keep your local congressman's phone number handy. Don't become confused by rhetoric which is against your self-interest. Your interest is marketing Freedom. Don't let any minute details confuse the overall requirements of your livelihood.

Finally, it's important to keep your marketing strategy in front of you. If you evaluate the immediate job potential of different technologies you can ask if Apache is a viable application server but you shouldn't stop there. Visual Basic is also likely in your future, as is advanced skill with Excel spreadsheets. There is no need to just limit yourself the Internet specific application services. In the next six months VBA and Microsoft Access are as likely to land you work as much as anything else. The entire technology field is currently in a severe economic recession. If you want to work with Free Software, you need to become an advocate of Freedom. Much of the reason for place of closed systems in the economy has to do with a lack of access to markets. It could well be that the type of technology career you envisioned for yourself three years ago may never materialize. It could be that we are facing a future in which only a very few of the brightest engineers will make money in the information technology market. And those individuals will be working for only a few of the largest monopolies that still exist. The current trend is to put easily exploitable programming tools into the hands of non-programmersin order to fill the needs of various industries. It doesn't take a genius to write business logic programs, and a great number of accountants, human resources people, and administrative assistants are capable of doing it. As closed systems become simpler and easier to program and adjust, putting these programming tasks directly into the hands of the business user who understands his needs makes increasing sense. What kind of job does that leave you with on a locked down Microsoft C# desktop? Even Oracle has simple GUI tools to develop a great deal of the software which people use today.

The fact that same people who are wondering about the future of Apache in the enterprise should think twice about their future in the computing field. Obviously something about Free Software appeals to you, because otherwise the question doesn't cross your mind. What is it that you consider so important for your future? It's the freedom Free Software gives you which is the appeal? And you need this freedom to market yourself to others? If the question arises about how to market yourself in the current economy, you're going to have to market freedom if you want to work with Free Systems.

Look at what IBM has done. IBM has invested heavily in GNU/Linux. They've put Linux in the minds of the public. And for that the FreeSoftware community should be grateful. But IBM is not selling Freedom and an open markets. IBM is selling WebSphere, DB2, Java, and hardware. The last time I looked, IBM's products weren't free. They've successfully exploited a Free Software platform, but that's only marginally beneficial to the community.

If every Apache Application Server running on Free Software is eventually replaced by IBM's WebSphere your market for work has receded,and Free Software is no better off than it was before GNU/Linux was even on IBM's radar. In fact, things will be significantly worse because all of the applications will be running on a proprietary server and a closed Microsoft desktop. The innovations of Free Software application development will have come to a dead stop.

Who knows what IBM will do in the future. They can decide to take their ball (WebSphere) and go home. As a result of IBM's work, and due to the efforts of Microsoft, you are asking today, "Is Apache ready for the enterprise?", even in the face a proven track record of successful and profitable deployment. And yet it appears that Apache is being outflanked by the bungled marketing strategies of far too many groups. The Larry Augustin's of the world have put us all behind the eight ball.The one thing that WebSphere and C# can not compete on is Freedom, andFreedom is the market which we must develop. In the long run Freedom is the most cost-effective choice for businesses and individuals. It is far more cost-effective than enslavementware. Instead of compromising with every vendor of enslavementware, attention needs to be focused on the freedomware we sell.

Lots of money and effort have been funneled into Free Software, but like the broad band debacle we are hung up on the last mile. We not only need to focus on that mile, that piece of software which exists between the users and the information they need, but we need to work hard on building demand for our product.

The time is long overdue for us to stop chasing enslavement-ware marketing plans and create our own freedom-ware products and services. We need to market these products up and down the entire technology tree. We not only need good desktop systems but unique features that enhance those freedoms people can't live without. We need databases and spreadsheets and word processors. But at some point we need to break with the current offerings and make them unique, expanding our freedom. And if our software is sometimes, as Larry puts it, "Free Junk", at least it is **our** free junk and not theirs. We have the capacity to improve our junk better than the competition can improve theirs, and we can do it at a lower cost. So when our Free Junk doesn't work all is not hopeless. The challenge for those dedicated to getting FreeSoftware into the enterprise is to build our market, the market of Freedom, and to sell as much "Free Junk" as is humanly possible.

NY Fair Use catches Media Giants in lieing during Copyright Office testimony

Author Ruben I Safir

At the May 2nd, 2003 hearing for exemptions to the anti-circumvention provisions of the DMCA, New Yorkers for Fair Use, one of the sub-committees of NYLXS, confronted several false statements in the testimony given by the MPAA, CSS corporation and Time-Warner/AOL. CSS corporation provides the encryption system for all DVD disks produced by the member corporations of the MPAA. The falsehoods given by the content control industry swept through a whole gamut of issues ranging from a claim that Linus Tovalds stated that the GPL was compatible with the DRM scheme of the MPAA, to an attempt to cover up the fact that regional coding was inaccessible without first hacking the CSS encryption system. Along the way, Time-Warner's representative claimed that copyright holders had the right to say in what location an individual was allowed to watch DVDs. NY Fair Use Chairman, Ruben Safir, offered opening testimony once all witness were introduced to the panel. In his remarks Mr Safir made the point that the failure to legally be able play DVDs on a Free Operating system deprived millions of people of their fair use rights. Mr Safir stated that while the class of works under discussion was audio-visual works, he had originally written to ask the copyright office to to include all copyrighted works which were purchased in a normal cash and carry transaction without an explicit contract. The leader of New Yorkers for Fair Use then read several passages out of the 4th and 5th amendments US Constitution which guarantee the rights of individuals in regard to their private property and security in their homes. Such clauses as the 4th amendment:

> *The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.*

And the 5th Amendment:

> *nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law, nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.*

After reading the property clauses of the constitution, he then put on a demonstration with Phil Gengler as to the kind of theft that DRM is.

Mr Safir held up a audio CD of Fats Waller. He then gave it to Mr. Gengler. Mr Safir then asked Mr Gengler, "Can I buy that CD from your store?" Mr Gengler then said "Yes". "How much is it?" asked Mr Safir. Mr Gengler replied, "It's 50 cents". Mr Gengler accepted 2 quarters as payment and then put the disk into the hands of Mr Safir who then tried to put the disk in his bag. Mr Gengler then refused to release the disk. The Chairman of NY Fair Use then addressed the committee and said, this is an example of theft. This is what the DRM on DVDs does to every consumer when they can't fast forward on their disks past the previews, or play it on their Free Operating System, or when they can't play it on their unauthorized blender if they choose to. He concluded the demonstration with the statement, "**DRM is theft**, and it steals from the stakeholders in copyright, It steals from the public. **We are the stakeholders** of copyright. It violates the rights of individuals under the 4th and 5th amendments of the US Constitution which, as recently pointed out by Judge Ginsberg on the Supreme Court in the Edridge Case, the Fair Use doctrine is enshrined in the rights of individuals and free speech as outlined in the Constitution. It is enshrine by those causes which I've already read to this committee."

At this point, the Chairman of NY Fair Use then leveled the first charge of dishonesty at the content control industry. The chairman noted that in last year's testimony, Barry Sorkin of Time-Warner, and the MPAA together claimed that DVDs with their encryption prevents piracy by preventing the physical copying of disks to disks with direct copying. They claimed that DRM was a deterrent to piracy. In fact, this was simply not true. A few weeks later a Queens warehouse was busted with several hundred copies of illegal DVDs that had been made by copying the disk with encryption and keys intact. It makes no difference whatsoever if the content copied to a DVD is encrypted or wherever or not has no encryption when copied. The disk simply plays in a standard DVD player. Mr Safir then told the panel that in light of the previous deception on the part of those who oppose exemptions, that their testimony in this round needs to be discounted and held under suspicion.

As testimony continued, NY Fair Use, and Robert Moore of 321studios, caught the content industry of several more lies. Time Warner and CSS proved to be dishonest and evasive when responding to the panel's questions. The panel was particularly interested in regional coding and asked if it was possible to access the the regional coding technology without hacking into the CSS encryption itself. Rather than give the panel a yes or no answer, the witnesses evaded the bottom line with an incomprehensible answer that took nearly 10 minutes to explain. The Copyright Office panel became frustrated and asked the question again. When pressed, the MPAA finally said that it is possible to access the regional code without decrypting the disk. Mr Moore of 321studios then objected and said he disagreed. 321Studios has a product to repair and back up DVDs. He knows every aspect of the DVD engineering. He objected to the answer from the MPAA that the regional codes can be accessed without decryption of the disk. Mr Safir then objected that those in opposition to the exceptions being proposed are stalling, befuddling their answers, and now lied. He complained that this is a simple yes and no quest ion that does not warrant throwing a bunch of unrelated techno-jargon at the panel in an effort to confuse them. He then compared this testimony to the Challenger disaster hearing which the engineers spent weeks confusingly testifying to Congress until finally someone dropped the rubber o-ring in to liquid nitrogen, dropped it on the table, shattered the rubbery substance, and said, "That's the problem that likely caused the accident". The Chairman of NY Fair Use then pointed out that this is a simple matter. "The regional coding is in the encrypted data or not. As a fact it is within the encoding. You can't access the yolk of an egg until you break the shell."

Later, the panel asked a very tough line of questions regarding the reasons for the regional coding. In this discussion, Steve Tepp, the Policy Planning Advisor of the Copyright Office, asked why the regional code was necessary for marketing. Time Warner/AOL's representative, Shira Permutter offerred a convoluted testimony where she said that Time Warner didn't want people to see the movies in different countries for marketing reasons. Futhermore, she explained that these market reasons were usually inline with the desires of the copyright holders who have the right to determine what people should be allowed to access the work in question. This brought a strong response by the copyright panel. They asked her if they thought that they had the right to prevent someone who buys a disk in Japan from viewing it in the US. She said yes. And then howls came from the audience and from the panel. She then changed her answer.

Time Warner, also stated that they were strong proponents of this cyclic review process by the copyright office on the DMCA. But they later gave an argument that they saw no current conditions in which section 1201 a or 1201 v(D) can be invoked as there is no such thing as a non-infringing use since the copyright holder had exclusive rights. Phil Gengler then interjected that under those conditions, the entire 1201 section is invalid. Phil said that according to the line of reasoning where only copyright holders have the right to evaluate who and when works can be accessed 1201 is useless. The NY Fair Use Chairman then injected that this kind of reasoning would be thwarting the will of Congress. Time Warner was again caught in their lies. They claimed that they supported the process while proposing that any criteria of evaluation one can argue is excluded the enforcement of current copyright law as passed by Congress.

Fritz Attawy of the MPAA testified claiming that it was currently legal to watch DVDs using Linux and that Linus Tovalds claimed that nothing in the "Linux" license or the operating system prevented the use of CSS DRM. He presented an article to this affect to the panel. NY Fair Use said that the MPAA is lying and didn't represent the entire article. There is nothing in the article which allows the development of CSS DRM. The Panel said we'd be able to discuss this in more detail later, but never came back to the discussion in which Tovalds made clear that keys would need to be visible in the source code, which is a violation of the CSS license. Furthermore, the panel never explained how the community would be able to adequately protect the integrity of the keys and limit the hacking of the source code to alter key functionality of the software with CSS keys inside of it under the CSS licensing agreement. As such, clearly the MPAA lied again, and befuddled the issue before the copyright commission.

Overall, despite strong questioning, it is very unlikely to get exemptions from this Copyright Office panel. The panel apparently rejects the Supreme Court rulings and limit their view of fairuse to only the provisions in statutory law which defines the Fair Use Doctrine as specificied by section 107 of the copyright code. It does this despite the long legal tradition of fair use and the plain reading of the Constitutiuon. NY Fair Use and the broader NYLXS has a great deal of education to still do with the public, which has yet been able to connect all the dots on these complex issues. Mr Safir told the panel that as a public and a society, that we have two paths in front of us. One is a free society with increasing opportunity for participation and education in society. The other path is a blind march to George Orwell's 1984 in which this narrow definition of Fair Use is leading us. Many examples of the inhibitions currently in place where given on how society is being harmed without the proposed exemptions. We will need to continue our efforts to educate the public and untether information from the content control industry and enforce the 4th and 5th amendments of the Constitution.

The Windows Refund Battle

Author Adam Kosmin

"We're not budging an inch on this, he is obviously just trying to promote his website". These were just some of the words spoken by the legal representation of Toshiba America Information Systems, Inc. (TAIS) on March 6, 2003 to mediators in the Queens County courthouse. Although the case has been continued for April 23, TAIS has given us an opportunity to understand the techniques that will be used to fight the WindowsRefund claim. It is now obvious that the company fully understands the significance of what this small claims case and what it can set into motion if the court rules in favor of the plaintiff. As a result, TAIS has validated our course of action. The most important thing we can do to put an end to this problem is to continue bringing computer manufacturers in to court. I am suggesting that it is no longer good enough that we are"right", we need to show persistence.

TAIS is focusing on a few easily manipulated details of these transactions in an attempt to persuade the court to rule on their behalf. First, they are bringing to the court's attention that customers understand that they are buying a computer with Microsoft's software bundled/preinstalled and therefore, are not entitled to a refund. What they are trying to prevent from "getting out of the bag" is that the facts do not stop there. A more accurate representation of these transactions reveals that customers know they are being forced to pay for tied products that come with a license agreement which instructs them to return the unused software, which has not been copied, to their place of purchase when the terms of the agreement are not accepted. In other words, Toshiba is trying to manipulate the court by suggesting that customers who bought the tied software, actually wanted it. This is nothing more than a simple attemptto bring the situation out of scope. We must stay on track and let the courts know that we are not here to argue whether or not we purchased it (of course we did, we had no choice), but rather, that we are here to obtain the refund that we are entitled to.

Secondly, Toshiba is bringing a lot of attention to their Master End User License Agreement (MEULA) that comes attached to the plastic bag which the computer ships in. The MEULA is an important component in their attempt to justify this obvious case of fraud and has served its purpose over the years by intimidating those customers who have requested a refund. To summarize, the MEULA is an agreement between TAIS and the customer which overshadows the terms of Microsoft's EULA. Well,what they call an agreement, I call a proposal. The interesting (or sickening?) thing to note is the actual point in time that TAIS considers this proposal to turn into a full-fledged agreement. Customers who may or may not have had a chance to review the terms of the proposal agree to its terms and therefore, enter into an agreement when they tear open the plastic bag. If we want to be successful in the courtrooms, we must not allow ourselves to be distracted by discussing the terms of the MEULA. We must convince the court that it is invalid since its terms are not disclosed. In other words, TAIS can not be allowed to hold a customer to the terms of an agreement if they can not prove that its terms were reviewed and accepted. This piece of their strategy allows for the most opportunity to stray the course and get lost in pointless squabbles.Therefore, we must focus on common sense. One argument I like to bring up is how crazy someone would think I'd be to look for additional MEULAs by examining each piece of small white foam that stood in the way of the newly received product. As ridiculous as that sounds, its essentially no different from their "plastic baggie" argument.

Regardless of how this individual case turns out, we now know that the courthouse provides us with an extremely effective course of action. The articles, protesting efforts, and general enthusiasm of the late 90's did not put an end to this violation against consumers. There is an obvious reason why TAIS is clearly willing to spend thousands of dollars to battle this claim involving only a few hundred. They have acknowledged the loose brick in the dam and are doing everything in their power to plug the leak. While they stand a good chance of doing just that, I'll point out that our persistence is the key to an eventual victory. We must continue to bring our cases to court over and over again. Even if they manage to beat us every time with their trained lawyers who know how to "massage" the law to suit their client's interests, we will gain a new ally inside these companies. That ally is the bean counter; the one who sees that the cost of fighting the refund issue is far greater than the cost of satisfying it.

BEWARE THE FALSE ADVOCATE!

"Think of these things: Whence you came, where you are going, and to whom you must account."
-- Ben Franklin, Poor Richard's Almanac

As this conference begins, we, the representatives of NYLXS / New Yorkers for Fair Use, want you to know that the organizers do not represent the Free Software Movement. Although nominally described as an event wherein representatives of municipal, provincial and national governments can share their experiences with Open Source Software and learn about new offerings and best practices, in truth this noble purpose has been corrupted by those who would seek to gain personal and political advantage.

"Few men have virtue to withstand the highest bidder."
-- George Washington

The sponsors of this gathering, in the person of their representative Tony Stanco, Esq., have elected to include participants who neither produce Open Source Software nor support it. In fact these organizations are actively opposed to Free and Open Source Software, as it threatens the archaic structures upon which their criminal businesses are based. Any free-thinking individual can know in advance what their message will be, so why must we suffer their appearance today?

"Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence."
-- John Adams

By the application of our faculties of reason, we conclude that Mr. Stanco is using this conference to advance his personal and political ambitions, applying careful re-interpretation of the guidelines he himself laid forth to violate the spirit, if not the letter, of Free and Open Source Software. In the process he robs those who would otherwise represent themselves and their work admirably for the benefit of all present, and gives both aid and advantage to those who would deprive us of our freedoms!

"When bad men combine, the good must associate; else they will fall one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle."
-- Edmund Burke, Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontent

No business is guaranteed the right to survive if its offerings are harmful or outdated. NYLXS is obligated, as a community of developers and technicians on the forefront of this coming economic revolution, to stand up, demand accountability, and represent the truth. Free and Open Source Software is the only responsible choice for openness, standards-compliance and accountability in government. Join us in demanding higher standards from those who wrap themselves in the banner of liberty!

DON'T TREAD ON FREE SOFTWARE!!

NY Fair Use Pamphlet

Responsible Leadership: Tony Stanco's Egov-OS problem

Author Ruben Safir and Dave Williams

NYFairUse representatives (http://fairuse.nylxs.com/), costumed as the America Founding Fathers, left the warm comfort of their homes at 4:00 in the morning on March 17th, 2003, to go down to Washington DC. We left for George Washington University in full colonial regalia in a 15 person passenger van. The purpose of our trip was to protest the mismanagement of the EGOVOS conference taking place that morning.

The central issue which galvanized NYFairUse is the increasingly irresponsible manner in which Free and Open Source Software advocates have been putting together conferences and events. EGOVOS was supposed to be a showcase for Free and Open Source Software in government, be it local, national, or international. The conference had the potential to open up a stubbornly closed market by laying out the legal, moral and practical foundation for the use of Free Software in everyday government operation. Instead it became a platform and photo opportunity for the Microsoft organization. This is the inevitable result when the $40 billion company dedicated to destroying Free Software is invited to make a presentations. As expected, Microsoft didn't let their shareholders down. The few news items that came out of this conference were about Microsoft's "Shared Source". Microsoft's money buys real loyalty in the technology press, and in a conference with little media coverage the only mainstream press was from E-Week which ran a full article on Microsoft's misdirections under the headline "Microsoft's Matusow: No Right Way to Create Software". The article did everything it could to blur the differences between Free Software and the closed, anti-competitive methods of the monopolists of Redmond. All of this becomes fodder for their next $100 million campaign aimed at every CTO in the nation. Worse than that, it takes food off the table of our Free Software consulting industry and the developer community it supports. Their presence crippled people who sell Free Software for a living. It damaged those who could offer the uninitiated (such as the attendees of the conference) a solid firsthand impression of the benefits of Free Software. It leaves the public confused about the benefits of Free Software in their businesses, jobs, and lives.

Bad Leadership: Right Advocacy

NYFairUse first heard of the problem with EGOVOS through the NYLXS mailing list, as part of a follow-up on our experiences with the 2003 Linux World Exposition in New York. At the Expo NYLXS member David Sugar voiced his confusion about his product (the GNU/Bayonne telephony system) losing the award for 'Best System Integration Software' to Microsoft's "Services for Unix". NYLXS had its annual dinner after the convention, and we spoke with Linux Journal editor Don Marti about the award and its implications to our membership. Something just didn't seem right, but Don offered a reasonable explanation for the turn of events. NYFairUse had an impromptu discussion about the award, and about the rumblings coming from SCO which suggested they might be preparing lawsuits against the GNU/Linux community for infringing upon Unix patents. We decided to keep an eye on upcoming developments on both fronts, when a few days later David Sugar emailed the NYLXS list about Microsoft's presentation at EGOVOS.

We quickly had a broad and lively discussion about the situation, with the participation of the Washington DC-area LUGs, developers from California and Canada, members of the Free Software Foundation, NYFairUse, GNU Enterprise, The OpenOffice.org Marketing List, a few interested journalists, NYLUG, and eventually Bruce Perens (who just happens to be a member of the group hosting the EGOVOS conference, the Cyber Security and Policy Institute). I watched my email account fill with hundreds of private messages from people across the east coast, all volunteering to protest Microsoft's inclusion. NYFairUse had an internal discussion and decided that the last thing we wanted was an unwieldy demonstration in front of hundreds of government officials who might be investigating Free Software for the first time. We need to reverse the trend of Microsoft getting a free public relations boost at the expense of Free Software developers and advocates, particularly at our own venues, so we decided that NYFairUse would go in with a focused message presented by a small and prepared group. We rejected the calls for a broad and raucous protest: If all the volunteers showed up we would have outnumbered the actual conference participants.

We had to figure out how to attract attention, raise the necessary issues, put the Open Source "leaders" on notice, and still not turn the conference completely upside down. The answer NYFairUse came up with was exciting, fun and effective. We are fortunate to have associates working on Broadway, and they introduced us to costume designers who dressed us as Colonial Americans, circa 1776. Suddenly everything came together, and NYFairUse was ready to move ahead in a constructive manner. The core of the NYFairUse action included Joe Grastara, Dave Williams, Cesar Vargas, Sunny Dubbey, Adam Kosmin, Tim Wilcox, Ruben Safir, Marco Scoffier, Vincenzo L. and Ray Connolly. Dave Williams and Joe Grastara helped us construct an effective message which became our pamphlet. Ray arranged for transportation and drove both to and from the event, a total of twelve hours of driving. Cesar, Sunny, Ray, Tim, Adam and Ruben dressed as "Founding Fathers". Marco and Vinnie helped everyone prepare. The entire enterprise was underwritten by NYLXS. Most of us met in Brooklyn and stayed overnight at Ruben's home where a weekend-long "installfeast" was taking place. Ray, as the driver, got several hours sleep while the rest of us made final preparations. At 4:00 AM, NYFairUse embarked on the trip to Washington. We arrived safely at 9:30 in the morning, fully dressed in costumes and ready to make our case.

Reaching our Audience: Confronting Hostile Guards

Upon our arrival at George Washington University the appearance of seven historic American heroes astonished people. Cameras flashed all around, and after we picked up our badges and began handing out our pamphlets people flowed out of the main auditorium to surround us and inquire about who we were and what we were handing out. We brought 400 pamphlets, and all but a dozen where given away. Each NYFairUse member became a center of attention. We managed to talk personally with nearly every member of the conference accept for Bradley Kuhn, who refused to talk to any of us for some reason.

Our pamphlet strongly condemned the organizers of the conference for not appropriately representing the Free Software movement, and for caving in to self-interest over the good of the community. We explained that they were giving Microsoft a free public relations opportunity to confuse the issues and to promote their "Shared Source" disinformation campaign. The conference itself, although filled with luminaries from the international Free Software Community, was limited in its attendance. During our visit no more than 500 people were at the presentations, but the numbers might have been closer to 300. The small gathering proved useful, as NYFairUse was able to contact nearly every participant directly. We had nearly 100% penetration of the conference, including both attendees and speakers. Many of us spent several minutes talking to individuals, and I personally had the pleasure of speaking about the problem with European Union Minister Philip Aigrain, whom I had previously met in Bordeaux last year. I also spent a few minutes talking to Georg Greve of the European FSF, David Axmark of MySQL, Sarah Brown from Public Knowledge, and many others whose name I failed to get. The same was true for all of the NYFairUse members.

At one point while giving out pamphlets the security guards came over. Searching for the leader of the protest, one guard approached me and asked who was in charge. I waved him off and he became very annoyed. He asked me my name, so I smiled and said, "George... like in Washington, and you're in my University" I spotted journalist Grant Gross and said, "Look Grant, they're throwing us out of here!" Grant took out his notepad and the cameras gathered around. The guard retreated and went to speak with Tony Stanco. They decided that it was better to let us proceed than to face the bad press.   A few minutes later Tony Stanco came over to talk to me. I spent a couple of minutes with him, during which he asked me if I got everything I wanted out of the event. I told him that we'll know in a few months, if Microsoft still getting a free ride courtesy of the Open Source community. Mr Stanco reassured me that what we were doing was alright. Having his approval was not reassuring. I made it clear that it wasn't our intention to have a blood-letting. Our purpose was to get a message across to the Open Source leadership, explaining what we require of them and what standards we expect. Mr Stanco then pointed to the crowd, saying, "You see these people? You'll never get through to them with screaming and yelling." I replied, "Maybe -- it depends on the need. In this case, we don't need to scream. In another situation, a louder voice might be useful." Mr Stanco then said, "Have you ever heard Microsoft talk? They're going to be the best promoters of Free Software when they open their mouths." I reiterated my points: Microsoft's presence at the EGOVOS conference takes attention away from other, more deserving individuals and focuses it on themselves. Mr Stanco refused to recognize the situation he created. He also failed to understand that this was part of a broader trend the community faces: The increasing encroachment of Microsoft in venues designed to sell Free Software to the public. The public deserves better.

People have often asked why NYFairUse discriminates against Microsoft. The truth is that NYFairUse has no such bias. Our approach to Microsoft is the same as it is toward any company which warns businesses to avoid the GPL (as if a standard Microsoft EULA would withstand legal scrutiny). After all, they publish detrimental lies such as this one from the current Microsoft website:

> The GPL is designed to prevent commercial development of software distributed under the license. It does this largely by requiring licensees to make available, at little or no cost, the entire source code for any program that incorporates any amount of GPL code. Given that requirement, commercial developers cannot recover their research and development investments by charging reasonable and appropriate fees for their original software if it uses any GPL code. Free-software developers have every right to pursue this anti-commercial objective.
>
> Microsoft's concern is the resulting degradation of the software ecosystem that would be triggered by widespread acceptance of the GPL, particularly within the governmental and academic research sectors. This ecosystem has sustained unparalleled innovation throughout the industry for the past quarter-century. The principal role of government and universities in the ecosystem is to undertake basic research and to dispense the findings both into the societal base of technical knowledge and to private enterprises and individuals capable of developing these innovations commercially. Commercial enterprises, in turn, engage in applied research to develop products that

> advance the state of technology, generating jobs, profits and tax revenues that boost the economy (funding additional basic research in the process). Commercial enterprises also disseminate innovations directly into the larger technical-knowledge base.

Microsoft uses its monopoly to thwart Free Software projects like SAMBA when it bans companies from releasing CIFS tools under the GPL, and when it participates in the Digital Rights Management scam which will end the practical use of Free Software through the Palladium "trusted computing" platform. But it wasn't Microsoft that we were upset with on that occasion. We are mad at people like Tony Stanco who discriminates against Free Software developers and distributors for their own personal advancement. And we let them know about it.

As a footnote, after our trip to George Washington University NYFairUse made a trip to Capitol Hill while still dressed in our costumes. We got big smiles all along the halls of Congress, especially at Congressman Weiner's office. He's a member of the the sub-committee on Intellectual Property and the Internet, and we have a handshake deal to install a GNU/Linux system in his office so stay tuned ...

Software Freedom in the Czech Republic

Author David Sugar

This past March I was invited to attend and speak at "OpenWeekend", a free software event that was held at the Czech Technical University (czech tech if you will...) in the city of Prague. This event was hosted by the university with some participation from the information ministry of their national government and from many local free software groups.

The average age of the hackers I met in Prague were in their 20's, compared to Macedonia, which were much younger. A few already had free software related companies of their own. There is also an older core of hackers who have been activily involved for a long time in linux kernel development and other well known free software projects including OpenOffice.org.

Curiously enough, this experienced core of hackers among them clearly articulate their belief in free software philosophy, yet they are quite willing to tolerate the almost universal use of the term "open source" and choose to not directly promote or advocate the core issues of freedom. I also think it is in part because many of their more respected hackers have worked on the linux kernel that they universally refer to"Linux" rather than "GNU/Linux", and have no interest in changing that. Richard had suggested that I talk about the history of GNU and why we choose to call it GNU/Linux. At the time I did not find good words of my own to express this, so I did not add this to my speech. I now believe I should have done so.

The Czech university campus is itself a major center of free software activity of various types. They have some of the best connectivity to be found anywhere in Eastern Europe, and have distributed it out across the campus housing in a very egolitarian fashion. They have perhaps the highest population density of gigabit ethernet to be found. Hence, everyone commonly uses ip video feeds and other high bandwidth applications in ways they rarely get to be used by end users. Ironically, this near universal and unlimited network access is balanced by the fact that electricity is a less than reliable commodity.

This ready availability of bandwidth meant that my talk, among others, was broadcast live as a video feed (mpg, I think fed through something like shoutcast) over the campus, and that most people watched it from their rooms rather than attending the event in person. This produced amost curious feeling of a virtual community.

While I certainly do enjoy the travel and like the attention I receive when I travel to speak, I do not feel I need to speak just to hear myself, unlike some of the speakers that I know and have heard. My reasons for speaking was because I thought it would be useful to do, and I wished to do it so long as I could do so effectively. My speech was primarily on software freedom in relation to public sector software, a copy of which had been circulated on the hangout list before.

After my speech, we did have a panel discussion that turned a little into a debate between the deputy minister from the Czech government, and members of the community and the panel. It is unfortunate that this did not prove to be a more effective opportunity for dialog, and it seemed he was in a big hurry to leave once the panel was over, though an assistant he had who specialized in education remained and seemed both better informed and more concerned with free software issues.

Of course, I was dealing with the handicap of translation, so often I would miss hearing what was said fully until things had advanced to another question. And certainly I don't think I particularly helped informing any dialog in that I found it necessary to point out that the minister's continual reference to their use of "proprietary standards" as acceptable was not since there was no such thing as a "proprietary standard". I was also quite aware from the expression on his face, when he said that the state should not care about software freedom since so very few could exercise it effectively (as in use/modify/compile source), when I choose the analogy that while most of the population may not beable to effectively use their right to vote this does not mean one should eliminate elections. However, there were many comments from others both on the panel and in the audience of a similar rhetorical level...

Incidently, the panel discussion was originally intended to discuss the Czech government's use and future requirement of a new web based service for commercial companies to use in electronic filing of taxes. This new service includes a web site that can only be accessed from Microsoft Internet Explorer, and a proprietary tax preporation program that the government distributes which only runs under Microsoft Windows. It was claimed by three seperate people that this proprietary package specifically includes GPL licensed code.

In addition to OpenWeekend, I spent the following week in the city of Prague. I think readers here are well aware of why I originally choose to stay longer in Prague and not attend the eGovOS event in D.C. As it happens, Prague is a very interesting city to visit, and is one of the few cities in Eastern Europe that has not been ruined by years of Soviet occupation and domination.

I could spend considerably more time discussing the wonders of Prague, but this is not a travel guide, so I will stop here...

Running A Server Behind A Masquerading Gateway

Author Bill Putney

Across the Internet, many systems administrators use *iptables*, or its predecessor, *ipchains,* to set up Network Address Translation (NAT) or IP Masquerading for their networks. NAT and IP Masquerading allow networks of client computers to access the Internet using a single public IP address for the entire network. This can be useful if the network is behind a DSL line or a cable modem where only one or a handful of public IP addresses are available for use by the entire network.

This type of setup has both benefits and drawbacks. On one hand, all of the computers behind the Masquerading gateway are not reachable from the Internet unless a connection is first established to the gateway machine. This provides some level of security but also makes it difficult to run a server on the Masqueraded network. On the other hand, networks on DSL or cable modems are often only allotted one or two IP addresses and a Masquerading gateway allows a large number of computers to operate in such a situation. Also, as previously mentioned, there is a level of security afforded by such a configuration because Masqueraded computers are not directly reachable from the public Internet.

A few months ago, NYLXS's Free Software Chamber of Commerce (FSCC) decided to incorporate so it could raise money and employ some Free Software professionals by offering up services and solutions based on Free Software. The FSCC needed its own server running several applications which had to be accessible from the Internet. The NYLXS network in Brooklyn was an ideal place to locate the server but NYLXS's network hangs off of a DSL circuit and is behind a Masqueraded Linux gateway. The FSCC had to do some research to find out how to configure the NYLXS gateway to allow Internet traffic both to and from their server.

As it turned out, only a couple small changes were necessary. The first was to add another IP address, or an *alias*, to the gateway machine's external network interface. Luckily, the DSL provider offered 5 IP addresses for NYLXS to use so one of these was added as an additional address to eth0 on the gateway with the command:

```
ifconfig eth1:1 64.105.122.139 netmask 255.255.255.0
```

The next step was to add an *iptables* rule to make sure the gateway correctly routed all traffic bound for the new server. The FSCC's server was given a private, non-routable address on the NYLXS network and it became the job of the gateway to translate between the private and public addresses so the new server would be reachable from the Internet. The command which accomplished this was:

```
iptables -t nat -A PREROUTING -d 64.105.122.139 -i eth1 \ -j
DNAT --to-destination 10.0.0.62
```

If one wanted to forward traffic only on a specific port, such as port 80 for a web server, the command to issue would be:

```
iptables -t nat -A PREROUTING -p tcp -d 64.105.122.139 \ -i
eth1 --dport 80 -j DNAT --to-destination 10.0.0.62:80
```

This is a bit more secure for a webserver than the previous example since only port 80 is reachable from the Internet.

Iptables is a very powerful tool with many uses. More information, source code, and documentation are available at the iptables/netfilter homepage at http://www.netfilter.org