

# Overtaking Proprietary Software Without Writing Code

a few rough insights on sharpening free software

# Disclaimer

This is intended to be used as a reference with a recording only. Many slides can be entirely misinterpreted otherwise.

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# Content

1. Overview
2. Obstacles
3. Shift gears
4. Overtake

# Who's that guy anyway?

Olivier, 24

Originally from the aerospace industry

Passionate about the concept of free software

Co-founded the *GNU/Linux Matters* non-profit, early 2007

A very poor programmer

Rides rusty bicycles

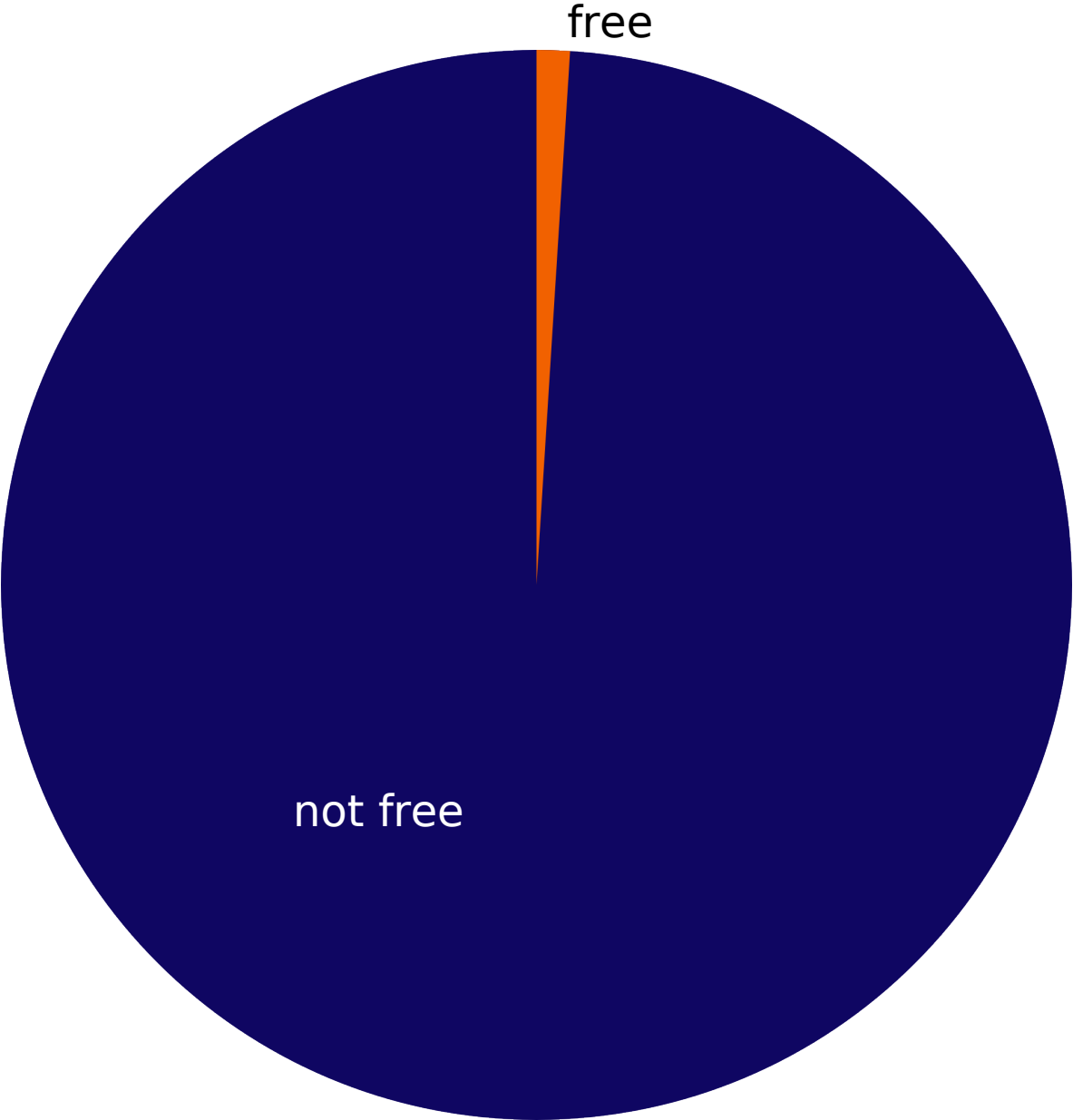


# 1. Market overview

## 1. Market overview

```
if      this
then    that
else    either that
         or      if      other
                then stop
```

1. Market overview



# Software

- 1bn PCs worldwide
- 95% of users don't care about software
- Two different approaches:
  - Software is just like hardware
  - Software is like maths

## Software

Only two ways to enter:

- Arrive pre-installed
- Network effect

# 1. Market overview

## Technically

### BOSS

Big, Old School Software



### FOSS

Free / « Open Source » Software



# 1. Market overview

## Economically...

### BOSS

Big, Old School Software

Microsoft turnover: \$40 bn

1<sup>st</sup> month of Vista: 20 million units

### FOSS

Free / « Open Source » Software



# 1. Market overview

(and especially culturally)

**BOSS**

Big, Old School Software



**FOSS**

Free / « Open Source » Software



**WIKIPEDIA**  
*Enciclopedia libera*



## 2. Obstacles

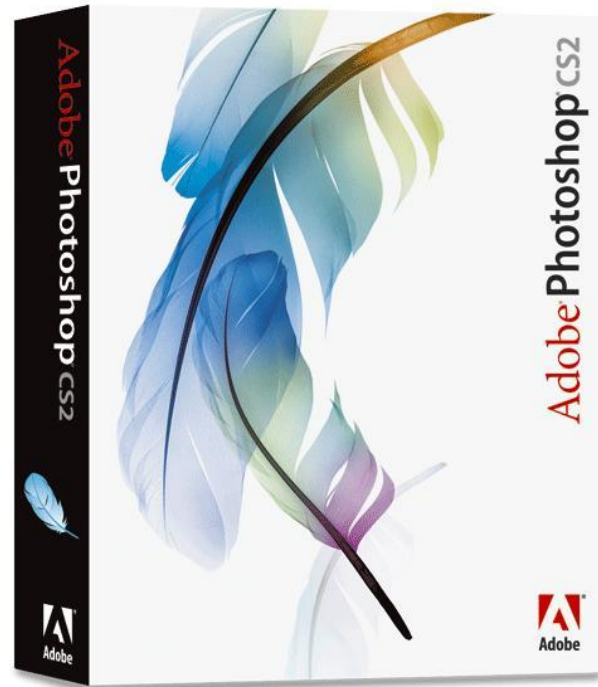
## 2. Obstacles

### #1 Nobody chooses his/her software



## 2. Obstacles

#2 We will never have a “killer app”



## 2. Obstacles

#3 The legal environment is hostile



## 2. Obstacles

### #4 The OS is disappearing



## 2. Obstacles

### #4 The OS is disappearing



## 2. Obstacles

#4 The OS is disappearing



## 2. Obstacles

- #1 Nobody chooses his/her software
- #2 We will never have a “killer app”
- #3 The legal environment is hostile
- #4 The OS is disappearing



### 3. Shift gears

### 3. Shift gears

## #1 Talk to Joe



## Could we put the focus elsewhere?

### 3. Shift gears

#1 Talk to Joe



### 3. Shift gears

#1 Talk to Joe



Bista tires



### 3. Shift gears

#1 Talk to Joe

francois.D open-Source  
Libre tires (crazy!)

Bedora 8

BNNU/Binux

Bubuntu E

Bandros

always costless

BnewSense

### 3. Shift gears

#### #1 Talk to Joe

what's your choice?



Pneus Bicrosoft Bista

1

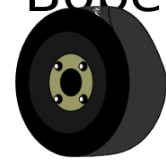
2

3



BNU/Binux

Bopen-Source



Android

BnewSense

Pneus Binux

Pas toujours gr

Pneu libre

E

Bubuntu B

Site

### 3. Shift gears

#2 Be relevant

```
"nextVal") , &kRDF_nextVal) ; gRDF-  
>GetResource( NS_LITERAL_CSTRING( WEB_NAMESPACE_URI  
"LastModifiedDate") , &kWEB_LastModifiedDate) ; gRDF-  
>GetResource( NS_LITERAL_CSTRING( WEB  
"LastVisitDate") , &kWEB_LastVisitDate) ; gRDF-  
>GetResource( NS_LITERAL_CSTRING( WEB_NAMESPACE_URI  
"LastCharset"
```

Let's kill source code



### 3. Shift gears

#2 Be relevant



nobody requests source  
code,  
anywhere



### 3. Shift gears

#2 Be relevant

open-source

free software

### 3. Shift gears



- We work on the gear shifting
- Vision : communicate the concept and importance of free software, on a very large scale.
- We're looking for funds ;-)

## get GNU/Linux

[What is Linux?](#)[Why not Windows?](#)[Making the switch](#)[About](#)

### Switch to Linux!

GNU/Linux, or simply *Linux*, is an alternative to Microsoft Windows. It is easy to use and gives more freedom to users. Anyone can install it: Linux is free as in freedom, and often available free of charge.



#### What is Linux?

Learn more about the free operating system



#### Why not Windows?

Why we should avoid using Microsoft Windows



#### Making the switch

Where to download and how to step into Linux



# LinuxPreloaded.com

## Linux Pre-loaded

No restrictive software to remove;  
GNU/Linux working out-of-the-box.




Get [Linux](#) without having to purchase a Windows license! If [installing GNU/Linux yourself](#) is not for you, you may consider buying a computer with [free software](#) pre-installed on it. We selected the vendors below for their focus on simplicity and service.

If you do decide to go with one of the sellers below and click through from this page, some will donate a portion of your fee back –so you can have a great computer and support our non-profit work at the same time.

### Zareason

The \$899 LightLapSR laptop is built on the latest Intel Santa Rosa chipset. Cool running, speed when you need it, and great battery life. Just one of a range of laptops and desktops pre-installed with Edubuntu, Ubuntu or Kubuntu at your choice.

  Ships worldwide from the USA



### System76

The Koala Mini is a clever and elegant replacement for any dusty



# SoftwareLiberty.com

**software liberty** refers to the freedom to control your own computing. Because it empowers the user to work, study and communicate, free software is important for anyone.

**Free software is relevant** just as free speech is. Software is run everywhere in our society today, governing most of what we can read and do. Unless the user has some fundamental freedoms over it, she/he has no knowledge or authority over what is happening inside it.



**Free software is enabled** by the availability of source code, the "recipe" for the software. You should always be able to access and inspect this source code.

`<code?>`

It does not matter if you do not have the knowledge or time to read and modify code: what matters is your freedom to do so, including the ability to have someone do it for you.

**Free software can be copied** at no cost. You may pay, however, for it to be written, adapted and updated – this is how free software companies generate revenue.



You may always use free software for any purpose, including commercial; on the condition that it remains free if you redistribute it. You can think of it as "mathematics".

**Free software is easy to use** and technically often superior to proprietary (non-free) software. Some famous examples, often merely called "open-source" <sup>1</sup>, include the [Firefox](#) browser and the [Linux](#) operating system.



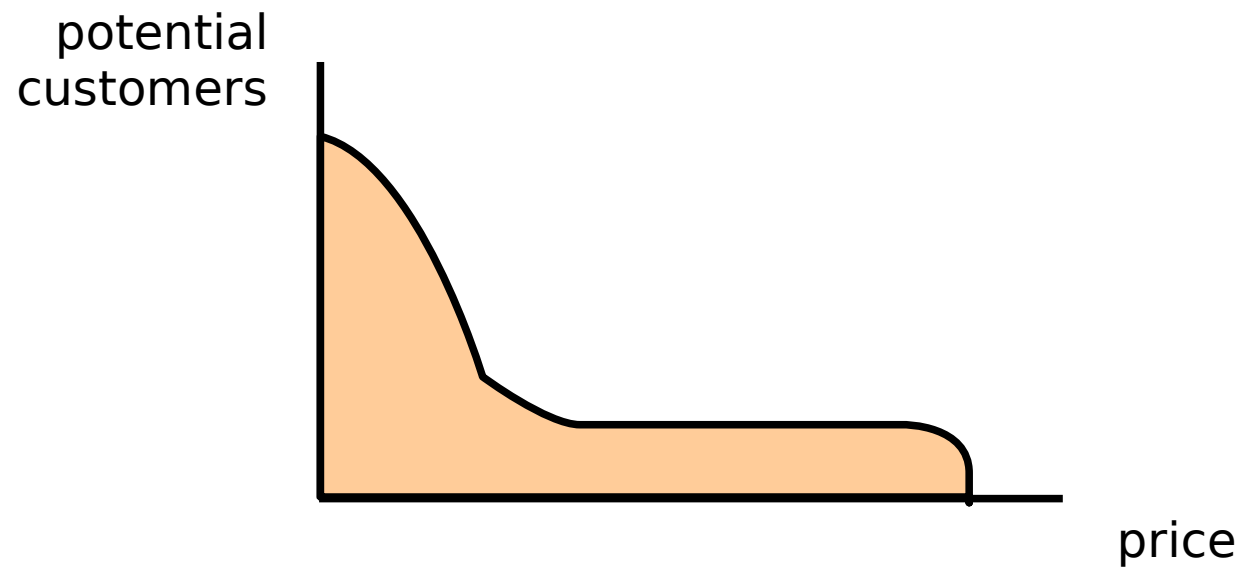
The precise definition of free software is maintained by the [Free Software Foundation](#).

Objective for 2008:  
Find one million people on the Internet  
Explain Linux and free software to them

## 4. Overtake

## 4. Overtake

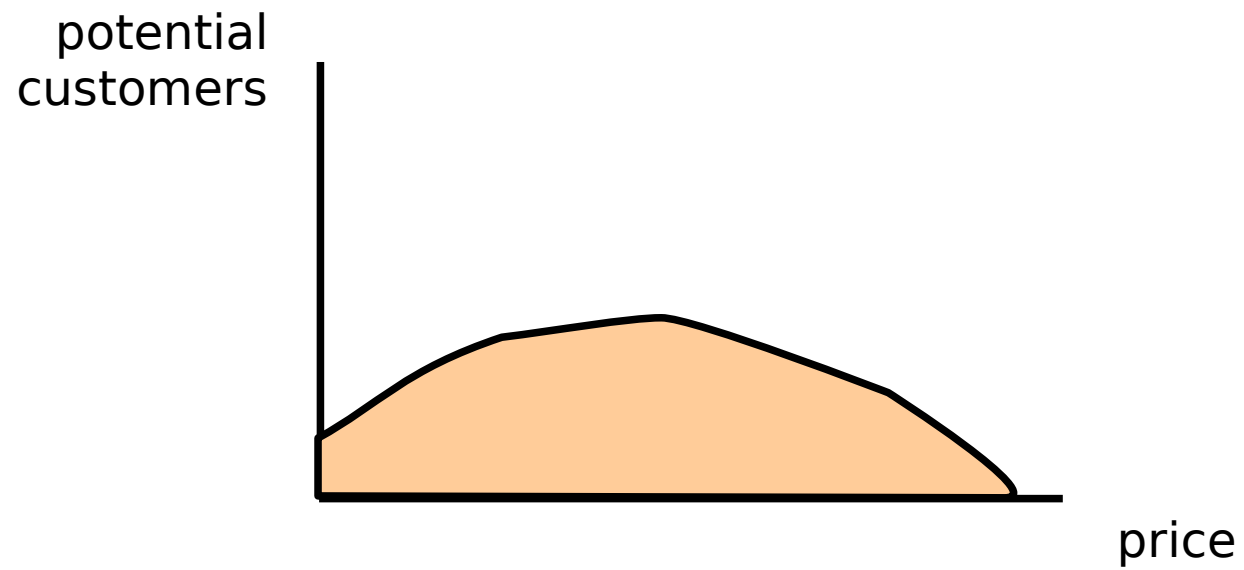
### Business rule #1?



ability to match your market.

ability to match, and shape, your market.

## 4. Overtake



ability to match, and shape, your market.

## 4. Overtake

BOSS



FOSS?

...still busy forking



### The v0.12 syndrome:

- A total dedication to quality
- “It's released when it's ready”
- An overwhelming disposition to forking

**yet**

Quality has never been a decisive factor

## 4. Overtake



- Terrible quality
- *But*, a stunning success!
- A major factor in opening up file formats

## 4. Overtake

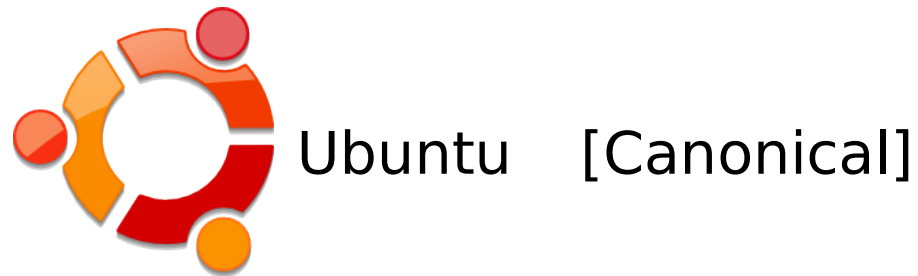


Firefox [Mozilla]

- Surfing is cool
- Quality is not the recipe...
- “talks to Joe”, but must continually prove itself “better”



## 4. Overtake



- Not any better than the 250 other distros
- But it's different. friendly-friendly-friendly.
- A lot of work outside of code-writing: branding, drivers, pre-install...
- Not afraid to be relevant

## 4. Overtake



Your project

- Build sharp software (not good software)

# checklist for sharpening your free software (1)

- Talk to Joe, be relevant
- Don't stay focused on a PC operating system

# checklist for sharpening your free software (2)

- Kick Quality out of the throne
  - Fix security bugs, that's all!
  - Stick to your users
  - Release “when it's wanted”
  - Avoid forking at all cost
- Join the FSF



# take-home

- The community is still a tiny player
- Free software needs to be made relevant
- Quality isn't a priority
- “Business-thinking” is the key



and the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud

was more painful than the risk it took to blossom

Anais Nin

# Danke sehr!

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[www.gnulinuvmatters.org](http://www.gnulinuvmatters.org)



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