

Reader: Public software projects provide innovation

5 June 1998

In response your article on Microsoft (June 02) and in particular, the section titled ‘the Socialist Perspective,’ I would direct your attention to the Free Software movement/the GNU project at <http://www.fsf.org/> and Linux at <http://www.linux.org/>

These projects are wonderful examples of free association of workers and worker control producing products that far better serve the consumer than anything produced by private industry.

All products licensed under the GNU Public License (include Linux, the free UNIX clone) are exactly as you describe: the source code is public and administered by a body of programmers and experts. This allows for a platform that can be simultaneously very widespread and standardized as well as responsive to consumer demand and needs. What’s the source of this Utopian condition? Lack of profit motive and worker control of the means of production.

These, particularly Linux, answer a resounding NO to the assertion that private industry is necessary to provide innovation in the computer software field.

TS

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