

# Manifestos

A manifesto is a published declaration of the intentions, motives, or views of the issuer, be it an individual, group, political party or government. A manifesto usually accepts a previously published opinion or public consensus or promotes a new idea with prescriptive notions for carrying out changes the author believes should be made. It often is political, social or artistic in nature, sometimes revolutionary, but may present an individual's life stance. Manifestos relating to religious belief are generally referred to as creeds or, a confession of faith.

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# Guerilla Open Access Manifesto

Information is power. But like all power, there are those who want to keep it for themselves. The world's entire scientific and cultural heritage, published over centuries in books and journals, is increasingly being digitized and locked up by a handful of private corporations. Want to read the papers featuring the most famous results of the sciences? You'll need to send enormous amounts to publishers like Reed Elsevier.

There are those struggling to change this. The Open Access Movement has fought valiantly to ensure that scientists do not sign their copyrights away but instead ensure their work is published on the Internet, under terms that allow anyone to access it. But even under the best scenarios, their work will only apply to things published in the future. Everything up until now will have been lost.

That is too high a price to pay. Forcing academics to pay money to read the work of their colleagues? Scanning entire libraries but only allowing the folks at Google to read them? Providing scientific articles to those at elite universities in the First World, but not to children in the Global South? It's outrageous and unacceptable.

"I agree," many say, "but what can we do? The companies hold the copyrights, they make enormous amounts of money by charging for access, and it's perfectly legal — there's nothing we can do to stop them." But there is something we can, something that's already being done: we can fight back.

Those with access to these resources — students, librarians, scientists — you have been given a privilege. You get to feed at this banquet of knowledge while the rest of the world is locked out. But you need not — indeed, morally, you cannot — keep this privilege for yourselves. You have a duty to share it with the world. And you have: trading passwords with colleagues, filling download requests for friends.

Meanwhile, those who have been locked out are not standing idly by. You have been sneaking through holes and climbing over fences, liberating the information locked up by the publishers and sharing them with your friends.

But all of this action goes on in the dark, hidden underground. It's called stealing or piracy, as if sharing a wealth of knowledge were the moral equivalent of plundering a ship and murdering its crew. But sharing isn't immoral — it's a moral imperative. Only those blinded by greed would refuse to let a friend make a copy.

Large corporations, of course, are blinded by greed. The laws under which they operate require it — their shareholders would revolt at anything less. And the politicians they have bought off back them, passing laws giving them the exclusive power to decide who can make copies.

There is no justice in following unjust laws. It's time to come into the light and, in the grand tradition of civil disobedience, declare our opposition to this private theft of public culture.

We need to take information, wherever it is stored, make our copies and share them with the world. We need to take stuff that's out of copyright and add it to the archive. We need to buy secret databases and put them on the Web. We need to download scientific journals and upload them to file sharing networks. We need to fight for Guerilla Open Access.

With enough of us, around the world, we'll not just send a strong message opposing the privatization of knowledge — we'll make it a thing of the past. Will you join us?

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- Written by **Aaron Swartz** in July, 2008 at Eremo, Italy

# A Cyberpunk Manifesto

## I. Cyberpunk

1. We are those, the Different. Technological rats, swimming in the ocean of information.
2. We are the retiring, little kid at school, sitting at the last desk, in the corner of the class room.
3. We are the teenager everybody considers strange
4. We are the student hacking computer systems, exploring the depth of his reach.
5. We are the grown-up in the park, sitting on a bench, laptop on his knees, programming the last virtual reality.
6. Ours is the garage, stuffed with electronics. The soldering iron in the corner of the desk and the nearby disassembled radio- they are also ours. Ours is the cellar with computers, buzzing printers and beeping modems.
7. We are those that see reality in a different way. Our point of view shows more than ordinary people can see. They see only what is outside, but we see what is inside. That's what we are - realists with the glasses of dreamers.
8. We are those strange people, almost unknown to the neighborhood. People, indulged in their own thoughts, sitting day after day before the computer, ransacking the net for something. We are not often out of home, just from time to time, only to go to the nearby radio shack, or to the usual bar to meet some of the few friends we have, or to meet a client, or to the backstreet druggist... or just for a little walk.
9. We do not have many friends, only a few with whom we go to parties. Everybody else we know we know on the net. Our real friends are there, on the other side of the line. We know them from our favorite IRC channel, from the News-Groups, from the systems we hang-around:
10. We are those who don't give a shit about what people think about us, we don't care what we look like or what people talk about us in our absence.
11. The majority of us likes to live in hiding, being unknown to everybody except those few we must inevitably contact with.
12. Others love publicity, they love fame. They are all known in the underground world. Their names are often heard there. But we are all united by one thing - we are Cyberpunks.
13. Society does not understand us, we are "weird" and "crazy" people in the eyes of the ordinary people who live far from information and free ideas. Society denies our way of thinking - a society, living, thinking and breathing in one and only one way - a cliché.
14. They deny us for we think like free people, and free thinking is forbidden.
15. The Cyberpunk has outer appearance, he is no motion. Cyberpunks are people, starting from the ordinary and known to nobody person, to the artist-technomaniac, to the musician, playing electronic music, to the superficial scholar.
16. The Cyberpunk is no literature genre anymore, not even an ordinary subculture. The Cyberpunk is a stand-alone new culture, offspring of the new age. A culture that unites

our common interests and views. We are a unit. We are Cyberpunks.

## II. Society

1. The Society which surrounds us is clogged with conservatism pulling everything and everybody to itself, while it sinks slowly in the quicksands of time.
2. However doggedly some refuse to believe it, it is obvious that we live in a sick society. The so called reforms which our governments so adeptly use to boast, are nothing else but a little step forward, when a whole jump can be done.
3. People fear the new and unknown. They prefer the old, the known and checked truths. They are afraid of what the new can bring to them. They are afraid that they can lose what they have.
4. Their fear is so strong that it has proclaimed the revolutionary a foe and a free idea - its weapon. That's their fault.
5. People must leave this fear behind and go ahead. What's the sense to stick to the little you have now when you can have more tomorrow. Everything they must do is stretch their hands and feel for the new; give freedom to thoughts, ideas, to words:
6. For centuries each generation has been brought up in a same pattern. Ideals is what everybody follows. Individuality is forgotten. People think in a same way, following the cliches drilled in them in childhood, the cliches-education for all children: And, when someone dares defy authority, he is punished and given as a bad example. "Here is what happens to you when you express your own opinion and deny your teacher's one".
7. Our society is sick and need to be healed. The cure is a change in the system...

## III. The System

1. The System. Centuries-old, existing on principles that hang no more today. A System that has not changed much since the day of its birth.
2. The System is wrong.
3. The System must impose its truth upon us so that it can rule. The government needs us to follow it blindly. For this reason we live in an informational eclipse. When people acquire information other than that from the government, they cannot distinguish the right from the wrong. So the lie becomes a truth - a truth, fundamental to everything else. Thus the leaders control with lies and the ordinary people have no notion of what is true and follow the government blindly, trusting it.
4. We fight for freedom of information. We fight for freedom of speech and press. For the freedom to express our thoughts freely, without being persecuted by the system.
5. Even in the most-developed and 'democratic' countries, the system imposes misinformation. Even in the countries that pretend to be the cradle of free speech. Misinformation is one of the system's main weapons. A weapon, they use very well.
6. It is the Net that helps us spread the information freely. The Net, with no boundaries and no information limit
7. Ours is yours, yours is ours.

8. Everyone can share information, no restrictions.
9. Encrypting of information is our weapon. Thus the words of revolution can spread uninterrupted, and the government can only guess.
10. The Net is our realm, in the Net we are Kings.
11. Laws. The world is changing, but the laws remain the same. The System is not changing, only a few details get redressed for the new time, but everything in the concept remains the same.
12. We need new laws. Laws, fitting the times we live in, with the world that surrounds us. Not laws build on the basis of the past. Laws, build for today, laws, that will fit tomorrow.
13. The laws that only restrain us. Laws that badly need revision.

## IV. The vision

1. Some people do not care much about what happens globally. They care about what happens around them, in their micro-universe.
2. These people can only see a dark future, for they can only see the life they live now.
3. Others show some concern about the global affairs. They are interested in everything, in the future in perspective, in what is going to happen globally.
4. They have a more optimistic view. To them the future is cleaner and more beautiful, for they can see into it and they see a more mature man, a wiser world.
5. We are in the middle. We are interested in what happens now, but what's gonna happen tomorrow as well.
6. We look in the net, and the net is growing wide and wider.
7. Soon everything in this world will be swallowed by the net: from the military systems to the PC at home.
8. But the net is a house of anarchy.
9. It cannot be controlled and in this is its power.
10. Every man will be dependent on the net.
11. The whole information will be there, locked in the abysses of zeros and ones.
12. Who controls the net, controls the information.
13. We will live in a mixture of past and present.
14. The bad comes from the man, and the good comes from technology.
15. The net will control the little man, and we will control the net.
16. For if you do not control, you will be controlled.
17. The Information is POWER!

## V. Where are we?

1. Where are we?
2. We all live in a sick world, where hatred is a weapon, and freedom - a dream.
3. The world grows so slowly. It is hard for a Cyberpunk to live in an underdeveloped world, looking at the people around him, seeing how wrongly they develop.

4. We go ahead, they pull us back again. Society suppresses us. Yes, it suppresses the freedom of thought. With its cruel education programs in schools and universities. They drill in the children their view of things and every attempt to express a different opinion is denied and punished.
5. Our kids grow educated in this old and still unchanged system. A system that tolerates no freedom of thought and demands a strict obeyance to the reules...
6. In what a worlds, how different from this, could we live now, if people were making jumps and not creeps.
7. It is so hard to live in this world, Cyberpunk.
8. It is as if time has stopped.
9. We live on the right spot, but not in the right time.
10. Everything is so ordinary, people are all the same, their deeds too. As if society feels an urgent need to live back in time.
11. Some, trying to find their own world, the world of a Cyberpunk, and finding it, build their own world. Build in their thoughts, it changes reality, lays over it and thus they live in a virtual world. The thought-up, build upon reality:
12. Others simply get accustomed to the world as it is. They continue to live in it, although they dislike it. They have no other choice but the bare hope that the world will go out of its hollow and will go ahead.
13. What we are trying to do is change the situation. We are trying to adjust the present world to our needs and views. To use maximally what is fit and to ignore the trash. Where we can't, we just live in this world, like Cyberpunks, no matter how hard, when society fights us we fight back.
14. We build our worlds in Cyberspace.
15. Among the zeros and ones, among the bits of information.
16. We build our community. The community of Cyberpunks.

Unite! Fight for your rights!

**We are the ELECTRONIC MINDS, a group of free-minded rebels. Cyberpunks. We live in Cyberspace, we are everywhere, we know no boundaries. This is our manifest. The Cyberpunks' Manifest.**

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- Written by [Christian As. Kirtchev](#) on February 14, 1997

# A Cypherpunk's Manifesto

by **Eric Hughes**

Privacy is necessary for an open society in the electronic age. Privacy is not secrecy. A private matter is something one doesn't want the whole world to know, but a secret matter is something one doesn't want anybody to know. Privacy is the power to selectively reveal oneself to the world.

If two parties have some sort of dealings, then each has a memory of their interaction. Each party can speak about their own memory of this; how could anyone prevent it? One could pass laws against it, but the freedom of speech, even more than privacy, is fundamental to an open society; we seek not to restrict any speech at all. If many parties speak together in the same forum, each can speak to all the others and aggregate together knowledge about individuals and other parties. The power of electronic communications has enabled such group speech, and it will not go away merely because we might want it to.

Since we desire privacy, we must ensure that each party to a transaction have knowledge only of that which is directly necessary for that transaction. Since any information can be spoken of, we must ensure that we reveal as little as possible. In most cases personal identity is not salient. When I purchase a magazine at a store and hand cash to the clerk, there is no need to know who I am. When I ask my electronic mail provider to send and receive messages, my provider need not know to whom I am speaking or what I am saying or what others are saying to me; my provider only need know how to get the message there and how much I owe them in fees. When my identity is revealed by the underlying mechanism of the transaction, I have no privacy. I cannot here selectively reveal myself; I must always reveal myself.

Therefore, privacy in an open society requires anonymous transaction systems. Until now, cash has been the primary such system. An anonymous transaction system is not a secret transaction system. An anonymous system empowers individuals to reveal their identity when desired and only when desired; this is the essence of privacy.

Privacy in an open society also requires cryptography. If I say something, I want it heard only by those for whom I intend it. If the content of my speech is available to the world, I have no privacy. To encrypt is to indicate the desire for privacy, and to encrypt with weak cryptography is to indicate not too much desire for privacy. Furthermore, to reveal one's identity with assurance when the default is anonymity requires the cryptographic signature.

We cannot expect governments, corporations, or other large, faceless organizations to grant us privacy out of their beneficence. It is to their advantage to speak of us, and we should expect that they will speak. To try to prevent their speech is to fight against the realities of information. Information does not just want to be free, it longs to be free. Information expands to fill the available storage space. Information is Rumor's younger, stronger cousin; Information is fleeter of

foot, has more eyes, knows more, and understands less than Rumor.

We must defend our own privacy if we expect to have any. We must come together and create systems which allow anonymous transactions to take place. People have been defending their own privacy for centuries with whispers, darkness, envelopes, closed doors, secret handshakes, and couriers. The technologies of the past did not allow for strong privacy, but electronic technologies do.

We the Cypherpunks are dedicated to building anonymous systems. We are defending our privacy with cryptography, with anonymous mail forwarding systems, with digital signatures, and with electronic money.

Cypherpunks write code. We know that someone has to write software to defend privacy, and since we can't get privacy unless we all do, we're going to write it. We publish our code so that our fellow Cypherpunks may practice and play with it. Our code is free for all to use, worldwide. We don't much care if you don't approve of the software we write. We know that software can't be destroyed and that a widely dispersed system can't be shut down.

Cypherpunks deplore regulations on cryptography, for encryption is fundamentally a private act. The act of encryption, in fact, removes information from the public realm. Even laws against cryptography reach only so far as a nation's border and the arm of its violence. Cryptography will ineluctably spread over the whole globe, and with it the anonymous transactions systems that it makes possible.

For privacy to be widespread it must be part of a social contract. People must come and together deploy these systems for the common good. Privacy only extends so far as the cooperation of one's fellows in society. We the Cypherpunks seek your questions and your concerns and hope we may engage you so that we do not deceive ourselves. We will not, however, be moved out of our course because some may disagree with our goals.

The Cypherpunks are actively engaged in making the networks safer for privacy. Let us proceed together apace.

Onward.

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9 March 1993

# The GNU Manifesto

“ The GNU Manifesto (which appears below) was written by Richard Stallman at the beginning of the GNU Project, to ask for participation and support. For the first few years, it was updated in minor ways to account for developments, but now it seems best to leave it unchanged as most people have seen it.

“ Since that time, we have learned about certain common misunderstandings that different wording could help avoid. Footnotes added since 1993 help clarify these points.

“ For up-to-date information about the available GNU software, please see the information available on our web server, in particular our list of software. For how to contribute, see <http://www.gnu.org/help/help.html>.

## What's GNU? Gnu's Not Unix!

GNU, which stands for Gnu's Not Unix, is the name for the complete Unix-compatible software system which I am writing so that I can give it away free to everyone who can use it.(1) Several other volunteers are helping me. Contributions of time, money, programs and equipment are greatly needed.

So far we have an Emacs text editor with Lisp for writing editor commands, a source level debugger, a yacc-compatible parser generator, a linker, and around 35 utilities. A shell (command interpreter) is nearly completed. A new portable optimizing C compiler has compiled itself and may be released this year. An initial kernel exists but many more features are needed to emulate Unix. When the kernel and compiler are finished, it will be possible to distribute a GNU system suitable for program development. We will use TeX as our text formatter, but an nroff is being worked on. We will use the free, portable X Window System as well. After this we will add a portable Common Lisp, an Empire game, a spreadsheet, and hundreds of other things, plus online documentation. We hope to supply, eventually, everything useful that normally comes with a Unix system, and more.

GNU will be able to run Unix programs, but will not be identical to Unix. We will make all improvements that are convenient, based on our experience with other operating systems. In

particular, we plan to have longer file names, file version numbers, a crashproof file system, file name completion perhaps, terminal-independent display support, and perhaps eventually a Lisp-based window system through which several Lisp programs and ordinary Unix programs can share a screen. Both C and Lisp will be available as system programming languages. We will try to support UUCP, MIT Chaosnet, and Internet protocols for communication.

GNU is aimed initially at machines in the 68000/16000 class with virtual memory, because they are the easiest machines to make it run on. The extra effort to make it run on smaller machines will be left to someone who wants to use it on them.

To avoid horrible confusion, please pronounce the g in the word “GNU” when it is the name of this project.

## Why I Must Write GNU

I consider that the Golden Rule requires that if I like a program I must share it with other people who like it. Software sellers want to divide the users and conquer them, making each user agree not to share with others. I refuse to break solidarity with other users in this way. I cannot in good conscience sign a nondisclosure agreement or a software license agreement. For years I worked within the Artificial Intelligence Lab to resist such tendencies and other inhospitalities, but eventually they had gone too far: I could not remain in an institution where such things are done for me against my will.

So that I can continue to use computers without dishonor, I have decided to put together a sufficient body of free software so that I will be able to get along without any software that is not free. I have resigned from the AI Lab to deny MIT any legal excuse to prevent me from giving GNU away.(2)

## Why GNU Will Be Compatible with Unix

Unix is not my ideal system, but it is not too bad. The essential features of Unix seem to be good ones, and I think I can fill in what Unix lacks without spoiling them. And a system compatible with Unix would be convenient for many other people to adopt.

## How GNU Will Be Available

GNU is not in the public domain. Everyone will be permitted to modify and redistribute GNU, but no distributor will be allowed to restrict its further redistribution. That is to say, proprietary modifications will not be allowed. I want to make sure that all versions of GNU remain free.

# Why Many Other Programmers Want to Help

I have found many other programmers who are excited about GNU and want to help.

Many programmers are unhappy about the commercialization of system software. It may enable them to make more money, but it requires them to feel in conflict with other programmers in general rather than feel as comrades. The fundamental act of friendship among programmers is the sharing of programs; marketing arrangements now typically used essentially forbid programmers to treat others as friends. The purchaser of software must choose between friendship and obeying the law. Naturally, many decide that friendship is more important. But those who believe in law often do not feel at ease with either choice. They become cynical and think that programming is just a way of making money.

By working on and using GNU rather than proprietary programs, we can be hospitable to everyone and obey the law. In addition, GNU serves as an example to inspire and a banner to rally others to join us in sharing. This can give us a feeling of harmony which is impossible if we use software that is not free. For about half the programmers I talk to, this is an important happiness that money cannot replace.

## How You Can Contribute

“ (Nowadays, for software tasks to work on, see the High Priority Projects list and the GNU Help Wanted list, the general task list for GNU software packages. For other ways to help, see the guide to helping the GNU operating system.)

I am asking computer manufacturers for donations of machines and money. I'm asking individuals for donations of programs and work.

One consequence you can expect if you donate machines is that GNU will run on them at an early date. The machines should be complete, ready to use systems, approved for use in a residential area, and not in need of sophisticated cooling or power.

I have found very many programmers eager to contribute part-time work for GNU. For most projects, such part-time distributed work would be very hard to coordinate; the independently written parts would not work together. But for the particular task of replacing Unix, this problem is absent. A complete Unix system contains hundreds of utility programs, each of which is documented separately. Most interface specifications are fixed by Unix compatibility. If each contributor can write a compatible replacement for a single Unix utility, and make it work properly in place of the original on a Unix system, then these utilities will work right when put together. Even allowing for Murphy to create a few unexpected problems, assembling these components will be a feasible task. (The kernel will require closer communication and will be worked on by a small, tight group.)

If I get donations of money, I may be able to hire a few people full or part time. The salary won't be high by programmers' standards, but I'm looking for people for whom building community spirit is as important as making money. I view this as a way of enabling dedicated people to devote their full energies to working on GNU by sparing them the need to make a living in another way.

# Why All Computer Users Will Benefit

Once GNU is written, everyone will be able to obtain good system software free, just like air.(3)

This means much more than just saving everyone the price of a Unix license. It means that much wasteful duplication of system programming effort will be avoided. This effort can go instead into advancing the state of the art.

Complete system sources will be available to everyone. As a result, a user who needs changes in the system will always be free to make them himself, or hire any available programmer or company to make them for him. Users will no longer be at the mercy of one programmer or company which owns the sources and is in sole position to make changes.

Schools will be able to provide a much more educational environment by encouraging all students to study and improve the system code. Harvard's computer lab used to have the policy that no program could be installed on the system if its sources were not on public display, and upheld it by actually refusing to install certain programs. I was very much inspired by this.

Finally, the overhead of considering who owns the system software and what one is or is not entitled to do with it will be lifted.

Arrangements to make people pay for using a program, including licensing of copies, always incur a tremendous cost to society through the cumbersome mechanisms necessary to figure out how much (that is, which programs) a person must pay for. And only a police state can force everyone to obey them. Consider a space station where air must be manufactured at great cost: charging

each breather per liter of air may be fair, but wearing the metered gas mask all day and all night is intolerable even if everyone can afford to pay the air bill. And the TV cameras everywhere to see if you ever take the mask off are outrageous. It's better to support the air plant with a head tax and chuck the masks.

Copying all or parts of a program is as natural to a programmer as breathing, and as productive. It ought to be as free.

# Some Easily Rebuted Objections to GNU's Goals

**“Nobody will use it if it is free, because that means they can't rely on any support.”**

**“You have to charge for the program to pay for providing the support.”**

If people would rather pay for GNU plus service than get GNU free without service, a company to provide just service to people who have obtained GNU free ought to be profitable.(4)

We must distinguish between support in the form of real programming work and mere handholding. The former is something one cannot rely on from a software vendor. If your problem is not shared by enough people, the vendor will tell you to get lost.

If your business needs to be able to rely on support, the only way is to have all the necessary sources and tools. Then you can hire any available person to fix your problem; you are not at the mercy of any individual. With Unix, the price of sources puts this out of consideration for most businesses. With GNU this will be easy. It is still possible for there to be no available competent person, but this problem cannot be blamed on distribution arrangements. GNU does not eliminate all the world's problems, only some of them.

Meanwhile, the users who know nothing about computers need handholding: doing things for them which they could easily do themselves but don't know how.

Such services could be provided by companies that sell just handholding and repair service. If it is true that users would rather spend money and get a product with service, they will also be willing to buy the service having got the product free. The service companies will compete in quality and price; users will not be tied to any particular one. Meanwhile, those of us who don't need the service should be able to use the program without paying for the service.

**“You cannot reach many people without advertising, and you must charge for the program to support that.”**

**“It's no use advertising a program people can get free.”**

There are various forms of free or very cheap publicity that can be used to inform numbers of computer users about something like GNU. But it may be true that one can reach more microcomputer users with advertising. If this is really so, a business which advertises the service of copying and mailing GNU for a fee ought to be successful enough to pay for its advertising and more. This way, only the users who benefit from the advertising pay for it.

On the other hand, if many people get GNU from their friends, and such companies don't succeed, this will show that advertising was not really necessary to spread GNU. Why is it that free market advocates don't want to let the free market decide this?(5)

### **“My company needs a proprietary operating system to get a competitive edge.”**

GNU will remove operating system software from the realm of competition. You will not be able to get an edge in this area, but neither will your competitors be able to get an edge over you. You and they will compete in other areas, while benefiting mutually in this one. If your business is selling an operating system, you will not like GNU, but that's tough on you. If your business is something else, GNU can save you from being pushed into the expensive business of selling operating systems.

I would like to see GNU development supported by gifts from many manufacturers and users, reducing the cost to each.(6)

### **“Don't programmers deserve a reward for their creativity?”**

If anything deserves a reward, it is social contribution. Creativity can be a social contribution, but only in so far as society is free to use the results. If programmers deserve to be rewarded for creating innovative programs, by the same token they deserve to be punished if they restrict the use of these programs.

### **“Shouldn't a programmer be able to ask for a reward for his creativity?”**

There is nothing wrong with wanting pay for work, or seeking to maximize one's income, as long as one does not use means that are destructive. But the means customary in the field of software today are based on destruction.

Extracting money from users of a program by restricting their use of it is destructive because the restrictions reduce the amount and the ways that the program can be used. This reduces the amount of wealth that humanity derives from the program. When there is a deliberate choice to restrict, the harmful consequences are deliberate destruction.

The reason a good citizen does not use such destructive means to become wealthier is that, if everyone did so, we would all become poorer from the mutual destructiveness. This is Kantian ethics; or, the Golden Rule. Since I do not like the consequences that result if everyone hoards information, I am required to consider it wrong for one to do so. Specifically, the desire to be rewarded for one's creativity does not justify depriving the world in general of all or part of that creativity.

### **“Won't programmers starve?”**

I could answer that nobody is forced to be a programmer. Most of us cannot manage to get any money for standing on the street and making faces. But we are not, as a result, condemned to spend our lives standing on the street making faces, and starving. We do something else.

But that is the wrong answer because it accepts the questioner's implicit assumption: that without ownership of software, programmers cannot possibly be paid a cent. Supposedly it is all or nothing.

The real reason programmers will not starve is that it will still be possible for them to get paid for programming; just not paid as much as now.

Restricting copying is not the only basis for business in software. It is the most common basis(7) because it brings in the most money. If it were prohibited, or rejected by the customer, software business would move to other bases of organization which are now used less often. There are always numerous ways to organize any kind of business.

Probably programming will not be as lucrative on the new basis as it is now. But that is not an argument against the change. It is not considered an injustice that sales clerks make the salaries that they now do. If programmers made the same, that would not be an injustice either. (In practice they would still make considerably more than that.)

### **“Don't people have a right to control how their creativity is used?”**

“Control over the use of one's ideas” really constitutes control over other people's lives; and it is usually used to make their lives more difficult.

People who have studied the issue of intellectual property rights(8) carefully (such as lawyers) say that there is no intrinsic right to intellectual property. The kinds of supposed intellectual property rights that the government recognizes were created by specific acts of legislation for specific purposes.

For example, the patent system was established to encourage inventors to disclose the details of their inventions. Its purpose was to help society rather than to help inventors. At the time, the life span of 17 years for a patent was short compared with the rate of advance of the state of the art. Since patents are an issue only among manufacturers, for whom the cost and effort of a license agreement are small compared with setting up production, the patents often do not do much harm. They do not obstruct most individuals who use patented products.

The idea of copyright did not exist in ancient times, when authors frequently copied other authors at length in works of nonfiction. This practice was useful, and is the only way many authors' works have survived even in part. The copyright system was created expressly for the purpose of encouraging authorship. In the domain for which it was invented—books, which could be copied economically only on a printing press—it did little harm, and did not obstruct most of the individuals who read the books.

All intellectual property rights are just licenses granted by society because it was thought, rightly or wrongly, that society as a whole would benefit by granting them. But in any particular situation, we have to ask: are we really better off granting such license? What kind of act are we licensing a

person to do?

The case of programs today is very different from that of books a hundred years ago. The fact that the easiest way to copy a program is from one neighbor to another, the fact that a program has both source code and object code which are distinct, and the fact that a program is used rather than read and enjoyed, combine to create a situation in which a person who enforces a copyright is harming society as a whole both materially and spiritually; in which a person should not do so regardless of whether the law enables him to.

### **“Competition makes things get done better.”**

The paradigm of competition is a race: by rewarding the winner, we encourage everyone to run faster. When capitalism really works this way, it does a good job; but its defenders are wrong in assuming it always works this way. If the runners forget why the reward is offered and become intent on winning, no matter how, they may find other strategies—such as, attacking other runners. If the runners get into a fist fight, they will all finish late.

Proprietary and secret software is the moral equivalent of runners in a fist fight. Sad to say, the only referee we've got does not seem to object to fights; he just regulates them (“For every ten yards you run, you can fire one shot”). He really ought to break them up, and penalize runners for even trying to fight.

### **“Won't everyone stop programming without a monetary incentive?”**

Actually, many people will program with absolutely no monetary incentive. Programming has an irresistible fascination for some people, usually the people who are best at it. There is no shortage of professional musicians who keep at it even though they have no hope of making a living that way.

But really this question, though commonly asked, is not appropriate to the situation. Pay for programmers will not disappear, only become less. So the right question is, will anyone program with a reduced monetary incentive? My experience shows that they will.

For more than ten years, many of the world's best programmers worked at the Artificial Intelligence Lab for far less money than they could have had anywhere else. They got many kinds of nonmonetary rewards: fame and appreciation, for example. And creativity is also fun, a reward in itself.

Then most of them left when offered a chance to do the same interesting work for a lot of money.

What the facts show is that people will program for reasons other than riches; but if given a chance to make a lot of money as well, they will come to expect and demand it. Low-paying organizations do poorly in competition with high-paying ones, but they do not have to do badly if the high-paying ones are banned.

### **“We need the programmers desperately. If they demand that we stop helping our neighbors, we have to obey.”**

You're never so desperate that you have to obey this sort of demand. Remember: millions for defense, but not a cent for tribute!

### **"Programmers need to make a living somehow."**

In the short run, this is true. However, there are plenty of ways that programmers could make a living without selling the right to use a program. This way is customary now because it brings programmers and businessmen the most money, not because it is the only way to make a living. It is easy to find other ways if you want to find them. Here are a number of examples.

A manufacturer introducing a new computer will pay for the porting of operating systems onto the new hardware.

The sale of teaching, handholding and maintenance services could also employ programmers.

People with new ideas could distribute programs as freeware(9), asking for donations from satisfied users, or selling handholding services. I have met people who are already working this way successfully.

Users with related needs can form users' groups, and pay dues. A group would contract with programming companies to write programs that the group's members would like to use.

All sorts of development can be funded with a Software Tax:

Suppose everyone who buys a computer has to pay  $x$  percent of the price as a software tax. The government gives this to an agency like the NSF to spend on software development.

But if the computer buyer makes a donation to software development himself, he can take a credit against the tax. He can donate to the project of his own choosing—often, chosen because he hopes to use the results when it is done. He can take a credit for any amount of donation up to the total tax he had to pay.

The total tax rate could be decided by a vote of the payers of the tax, weighted according to the amount they will be taxed on.

The consequences:

- The computer-using community supports software development.
- This community decides what level of support is needed.
- Users who care which projects their share is spent on can choose this for themselves.

In the long run, making programs free is a step toward the postscarcity world, where nobody will have to work very hard just to make a living. People will be free to devote themselves to activities that are fun, such as programming, after spending the necessary ten hours a week on required tasks such as legislation, family counseling, robot repair and asteroid prospecting. There will be no need to be able to make a living from programming.

We have already greatly reduced the amount of work that the whole society must do for its actual productivity, but only a little of this has translated itself into leisure for workers because much nonproductive activity is required to accompany productive activity. The main causes of this are bureaucracy and isometric struggles against competition. Free software will greatly reduce these drains in the area of software production. We must do this, in order for technical gains in productivity to translate into less work for us.

# Footnotes

1. The wording here was careless. The intention was that nobody would have to pay for permission to use the GNU system. But the words don't make this clear, and people often interpret them as saying that copies of GNU should always be distributed at little or no charge. That was never the intent; later on, the manifesto mentions the possibility of companies providing the service of distribution for a profit. Subsequently I have learned to distinguish carefully between "free" in the sense of freedom and "free" in the sense of price. Free software is software that users have the freedom to distribute and change. Some users may obtain copies at no charge, while others pay to obtain copies—and if the funds help support improving the software, so much the better. The important thing is that everyone who has a copy has the freedom to cooperate with others in using it.
2. The expression "give away" is another indication that I had not yet clearly separated the issue of price from that of freedom. We now recommend avoiding this expression when talking about free software. See "Confusing Words and Phrases" for more explanation.
3. This is another place I failed to distinguish carefully between the two different meanings of "free". The statement as it stands is not false—you can get copies of GNU software at no charge, from your friends or over the net. But it does suggest the wrong idea.
4. Several such companies now exist.
5. Although it is a charity rather than a company, the Free Software Foundation for 10 years raised most of its funds from its distribution service. You can order things from the FSF to support its work.
6. A group of computer companies pooled funds around 1991 to support maintenance of the GNU C Compiler.
7. I think I was mistaken in saying that proprietary software was the most common basis for making money in software. It seems that actually the most common business model was and is development of custom software. That does not offer the possibility of collecting rents, so the business has to keep doing real work in order to keep getting income. The custom software business would continue to exist, more or less unchanged, in a free software world. Therefore, I no longer expect that most paid programmers would earn less in a free software world.
8. In the 1980s I had not yet realized how confusing it was to speak of "the issue" of "intellectual property". That term is obviously biased; more subtle is the fact that it lumps together various disparate laws which raise very different issues. Nowadays I urge people to reject the term "intellectual property" entirely, lest it lead others to suppose that those laws form one coherent issue. The way to be clear is to discuss patents, copyrights, and

trademarks separately. See further explanation of how this term spreads confusion and bias.

9. Subsequently we learned to distinguish between “free software” and “freeware”. The term “freeware” means software you are free to redistribute, but usually you are not free to study and change the source code, so most of it is not free software. See “Confusing Words and Phrases” for more explanation.

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Source: <https://www.gnu.org/gnu/manifesto.html>

# The Crypto Anarchist Manifesto

## Timothy C. May - 1988

A specter is haunting the modern world, the specter of crypto anarchy.

Computer technology is on the verge of providing the ability for individuals and groups to communicate and interact with each other in a totally anonymous manner. Two persons may exchange messages, conduct business, and negotiate electronic contracts without ever knowing the True Name, or legal identity, of the other. Interactions over networks will be untraceable, via extensive re-routing of encrypted packets and tamper-proof boxes which implement cryptographic protocols with nearly perfect assurance against any tampering. Reputations will be of central importance, far more important in dealings than even the credit ratings of today. These developments will alter completely the nature of government regulation, the ability to tax and control economic interactions, the ability to keep information secret, and will even alter the nature of trust and reputation.

The technology for this revolution--and it surely will be both a social and economic revolution--has existed in theory for the past decade. The methods are based upon public-key encryption, zero-knowledge interactive proof systems, and various software protocols for interaction, authentication, and verification. The focus has until now been on academic conferences in Europe and the U.S., conferences monitored closely by the National Security Agency. But only recently have computer networks and personal computers attained sufficient speed to make the ideas practically realizable. And the next ten years will bring enough additional speed to make the ideas economically feasible and essentially unstoppable. High-speed networks, ISDN, tamper-proof boxes, smart cards, satellites, Ku-band transmitters, multi-MIPS personal computers, and encryption chips now under development will be some of the enabling technologies.

The State will of course try to slow or halt the spread of this technology, citing national security concerns, use of the technology by drug dealers and tax evaders, and fears of societal disintegration. Many of these concerns will be valid; crypto anarchy will allow national secrets to be traded freely and will allow illicit and stolen materials to be traded. An anonymous computerized market will even make possible abhorrent markets for assassinations and extortion. Various criminal and foreign elements will be active users of CryptoNet. But this will not halt the spread of crypto anarchy.

Just as the technology of printing altered and reduced the power of medieval guilds and the social power structure, so too will cryptologic methods fundamentally alter the nature of corporations and of government interference in economic transactions. Combined with emerging information markets, crypto anarchy will create a liquid market for any and all material which can be put into words and pictures. And just as a seemingly minor invention like barbed wire made possible the fencing-off of vast ranches and farms, thus altering forever the concepts of land and property rights in the frontier West, so too will the seemingly minor discovery out of an arcane branch of mathematics come to be the wire clippers which dismantle the barbed wire around intellectual property.

Arise, you have nothing to lose but your barbed wire fences!