

Reclaiming data, servers and services as a FLOSS policy

If you don't deal with technology, technology will deal with you

- Speaking from a FLOSS community viewpoint towards public policy
- Based on work and action inspired by Eben Moglen
- Latest embodiments: the freedom box projects and the Decoupling freedom chapter of the 2010 edition of the FLOSS Roadmap

Public policy beyond FLOSS adoption

- Capability building in citizens
- The creation of critical public space for software and information technology
- Education central, but also exemplarity of architecture choices (architecture matters)

Cloud is a cloudy world

- Looks like it speaks of computing in many little drops or ice crystals
- Reality is server farms, virtualization and centralized services
- Virtualization is a great technology when put in the hands of decentralized service provision

As FLOSS community, we were terribly slow reacting to the recentralization of IT services

- Inefficient centralized models and the war against P2P have created unbalance in networks and now serve as a pretext to attack neutrality
- User control on data and software is endangered
- Strategic user capabilities hindered

Centralized services that could be easily decentralized:

- Facebook but also document production and commenting recentralization, video and music hosting, and AppStores
- Convenience as a key explanation of adoption
- wordpress.com as a example of convenience without locking in centralization

Not everybody needs to run servers

- ... but at least enough so each of us knows and trusts someone who does

Examples of policy choices:

- Health information systems
- Video and sound hosting

Conclusion

We need slow software like slow food (in the sense of self-reflective choices regarding IT, lightweight user and contributor centred technology, covering all aspects of the chain of data production and use). Don't worry it won't be slow at all when it runs. It will be more efficient, just as Arduino, end-to-end non-deterministic networks and peer-to-peer sharing.

- public policy can play a role
- by protecting network neutrality and free innovation at the periphery of networks
- possibly by supporting "reclaiming" innovation
- certainly by educating critical IT users with FLOSS
- and by using decentralized or decentralizable IT