Free Software for e-government: an opportunity, a *necessity*

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E-government

Goals :

- ▶ Simplify access to administrative data

    - ▷ for the administration (IDA initiative)

    - ▷ for the citizen (portals)

- ▶ Reduce management costs

- ▶ Improve the citizen/government relationship

- ▶ Increase citizen participation e-elections **?**

Means :

E-government: requirements

Some requirements *specific to* the public administration

- ▶ very long term archiving, data integrity (anagraphic data, fiscal data...)

- ▶ data security (privacy, confidentiality, sensitive information, defense, ...)

- ▶ moderate cost

- ▶ citizen identification

    all this subject to

- ▶ technological ecumenism

Does the end justify the means?

Temptation:

- ▶ turnkey closed commercial solutions

Advantages:

- ▶ No thinking required

- ▶ Backed up by solid multinational software companies

- ▶ Maybe you make the cover of Times on the side of some "computer science genius"

But the means may corrupt the end...

Closed, or worse, monopolistic software, leads to giving up:

▶ technological control: no source access, prisoner of proprietary data format and protocols

▶ financial control: **X P**, software rental, information tax

▶ technological neutrality (e.g. :UK EG odissey)

▶ data confidentiality (SirCam viruses, etc.)

▶ "illusion" of security (no check without source access)
The push to silence security firms actually *reduces* security

▶ control of your technological agenda: you are not the one that holds the knife on the safe side

Solutions that:

- ▶ give control back to the user

- ▶ allow to choose among a large set of providers (quality and price thru competition)

- ▶ guarantee technological neutrality (open formats and protocols)

- ▶ preserve the "illusion" of security (public auditing of the code)

- ▶ provide for everlasting solutions (user driven, not reseller pushed)

This is technologically, socially, economically feasible today!   via *free software*

Definitions

Freeware

software for free

Definitions

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software for free

Shareware

software for sale, with a trial period

Free Software

(Open Source, Logiciel Libre)

Something radically different, at the origin of the Internet and Web success

Free, Open Source Software : Logiciel libre

Free (français: gratuit):

software you do not pay (today)

Free (français: libre):

software with 4 rights

▶ Freedom to use the software

▶ Freedom to examine the source code and adapt it to your needs

▶ Freedom to distribute copies

▶ Freedom to distribute the source (possibly modified)

There are obligations too, that vary according to the licence:
GPL/BSD/Mozilla/X, etc.

Libre *is not* gratuit

non libre, gratuit :

Internet Explorer, MacTCP, Acrobat Reader, freeware, etc.

non libre, non gratuit :

no comment . . .

libre, gratuit :

Mozilla, Linux, FreeBSD, OpenBSD, sendmail, perl, etc.

libre, non gratuit :

commercial Linux distributions, etc.

Logiciel libre vs. proprietary software

Logiciel libre :

- ▶ creation of a competent worforce

- ▶ multiplies verifiers, divides crackers: access to the source attracts competent programmers

- ▶ gives control to the users

- ▶ necessary prerequisite to data security

Proprietary software :

- ▶ no understanding, no customization

- ▶ no control of the technological evolution

- ▶ cannot guarantee security

- ▶ multiplies pirates, divides verifiers

- ▶ tends to create monopolies that exact an information tax

Bottomline

Free software is not just a good idea . . .

. . . it's a necessity!

PowerPoint ?

No

What is Active DVI ? a DVI previewer written in Ocaml at INRIA. . .