

Free software

and who really controls your computer.

What is free software?

“Free software” means software that respects users' freedom and community.

More specifically, users have the freedom to **run, copy, distribute, study, change and improve** the software they are using.

Software is written by programmers in a programming language. This form of the program is known as the “source code”.

Anyone who knows how to write in a programming language can **read the source code, understand its functioning and change it.**

It is a requirement for a program to distribute its source code for it to meet the definition of free software.

Why is this important?

Most people use software that does not give the user these rights **e.g** Microsoft Windows, Google chrome and Skype.

Software of this kind is referred to a “non free” or “proprietary” software.

With proprietary software as the proprietor controls the source code, The user can not know what the program is doing and therefore accountability becomes nearly impossible.

As a result proprietary software can be malicious without being held accountable and often due to digital restrictions these are the only programs a user is allowed to run on their computer.

You can find examples of malicious behaviour in proprietary software at **gnu.org/proprietary**

The user also loses the ability to improve on the program and in most cases loses the ability to share it with others.

This prevents people from building upon other peoples work as there is a monopoly over development; non-free programs are often abandoned and so become unusable.

How can I learn more?

You can visit **fsfe.org** and **gnu.org** for more Information.

If you are interested to try a free operating system on your computer; **Debian (debian.org)** is well supported by a large and helpful community.

The text in this leaflet is licensed under the **GNUAIPermissive** License

Copying and distribution of this file, with or without modification, are permitted in any medium without royalty provided the copyright notice and this notice are preserved. This file is offered as-is, without any warranty.