

Software Freedom Democracy

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Computers everywhere

- For 21st century society, computers are a fundamental technology, like fire, wheels, or reading and writing
- We are living among and even in computers

Computers run software

- Software is what makes computers run
- A program turns a computer from a universal machine into a specific one - typewriter, TV, phone
- Code is Law: Software determines what a specific computer can do

Control

- Computers are controlled by whoever controls the software that runs on them
- With non-free software, that control lies with the software vendor
- With Free Software, the control lies with the user
- Four freedoms: use, study, share, improve

Power

- With control comes power – Code is Law
- This is where we touch upon the remit of this house: Giving European citizens the power to make the rules under which they want to live
- Software is an instrument of power

Releasing AT4AM

- The European Parliament should and must be the most transparent of European institutions.
- AT4AM is literally an instrument of power
- With AT4AM release, the European Parliament finally joins a long list of public bodies that have published their software
- Munich, Basque Country, European Commission... currently 4000+ projects released by EU public sector

Why release?

- Rationale: Citizens paid for the software, so citizens should have it
- Reuse, adaptation, vendor independence
- Transparency: AT4AM encodes EP processes, and so makes them clearer to outsiders

What more do we want?

- European Parliament & other EU institutions should make releasing software under free licenses the rule, not the exception (+develop in the open)
- Report on use of Free Software in the EP (2010 Discharge): See where we are, and where we go from there
- EP should give Members & staff full Free Software infrastructure to work with

Conclusions

- Software is power, and Free Software is essential to democracy
- Releasing AT4AM is good practice, and an important first step
- EP still has a long way to go towards fully embracing Free Software
- EFPSUG, FSFE & many others are here to help

Thank you!

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