

Frequently Asked Questions

- *Difference between FreeSoftware and OpenSource ?*

A [Free Software](#) is a software provided with a license matching requirements of the [Free Software Foundation](#)

. An

[OpenSource software](#)

is a software distributed with a license matching the

[OpenSource Initiative](#)

definition. The differences are tiny and not impacting LiLux (we are not fundamentalist. We are just luxembourg computer users supporting consumer right of choice). There are huge differences in the motivations of both movements, but their conclusions are very close. In summary, Free Software Foundation declares every software should be free, to protect its users rights. OpenSource Initiative notes that sharing the source-code leads to a better quality, faster, more reliable software development cycle.

Both are right. The FSF was, however, the first to start the movement, so by default, we use sometimes the words "*Free Software*".

OpenSource initiative accepts the most used Free Software license ([the famous GPL](#)) as "OpenSource compliant", so softwares distributed under GPL (including Linux and GNU tools) are either Free

and

OpenSource softwares.

For details about the differences, read Richard Stallman's [Why "Open Source" misses the point of Free Software](#)

- *Copying a software, it is not forbidden by law as it is stealing its owner ?*

It is commonly heard (especially from proprietary software vendors) that copying a software is an act of piracy. Actually, as soon as the licence allows the copy, there is no piracy in copying a software. A free software or an OpenSource software can legally be copied and shared. It is even encouraged.

Piracy is an act of physical violence. Even an illegal copy does not imply any physical violence. However, at LiLux, we don't encourage at all illegal copies. If a software license refuse you the right to copy the software, access and modify the source code and use the software the way you wish, just refuse this software and look at a Free Software or OpenSource alternative.

The owner of a Free Software is not stolen by a copy. The difference between a software and a

FAQ

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car (as example) is that if I give my car to somebody, I don't have it anymore. If I give a copy of my software, I still have it. Software is by nature different of physical objects and thus should follow a different economic model. See " [Le modèle économique du Libre](#) " for details.

- *How is it possible to earn money by writing Free or OpenSource Software ?*

The proprietary software vendor business model is clearly harmed by the availability of Free/OpenSource softwares. Exactly as music CD distributors are harmed by the alternative way of distributing music offered by new technologies (Internet). As for music, the old-fashioned business sector is fighting against progress before adapting to it or disappearing: the "music industry" is trying to forbid music distribution by alternative ways to keep monopoly and huge profits. However, they will have to adapt to the new reality, accept to sell music through the Internet and live with some artists that chose to be only distributed by themselves, using the new medias. Distributors that refuse to adapt will disappear, as consequence of the market choice, which goes always to the most economical and efficient solution.

The same way, some proprietary software editors are polluting the Internet, politicians and medias with false affirmations about Free Softwares. But making softwares by sharing source-code and getting wide participation of the user community (the business model behind Free or OpenSource Softwares) is legal and much more efficient. Some old-fashioned industries didn't understand the issue (Borland, Netscape, SCO, ...) and vanished, while others are evolving (Sun Microsystems, Oracle, IBM, MacIntosh, Novell ...) more or less on the right direction, at various speeds.

Companies building their business on Free Software model exist ([RedHat](#) , [OpenERP](#) , [Scribus](#) , [Compiere](#) ,

[Canonical](#)

, ...) and are successful. As software user, you shouldn't care about their way to be profitable (as long as you are not shareholder), especially because you use Free/OpenSource Software: even if they fail, you have total control over the software you are using, as you have the source code. But if you really want to understand the business model behind Free/OpenSource Software, have a look at the presentation "

[Le modèle économique du Libre](#)

".

LiLux not advising to copy illegally proprietary software. Instead, we advise the use of Free/OpenSource software, that is freely copyable and distributable.

LiLux is neither advising nor encouraging the illegal copy of copyright protected material, such as CDs or DVDs.