

FreeSoftware or Freeware ? Gratis/Free issue

- *Is FreeSoftware gratis ?*

1. A FreeSoftware ([following the Free Software Foundation definition](#)) is a software distributed under license terms that are respecting FreeSoftware criteria. The conditions are, among others, that the software must be distributed with source code, and that it can be freely copied and distributed it, used on any amount of computers for any purpose. As consequence, its price is determined by the free concurrent market rules (see "[Le modèle économique du Libre](#)"), which is, in most of cases, so close to 0 that it is rounded to 0.

2. A software that is available at no charge is a "Freeware" (*gratuite*). There are no relations between those two categories of softwares. They are as different as "[free](#)" and "[gratis](#)"

. A software given to you at no charge is a Freeware. If it's not an OpenSource or a FreeSoftware, it might be dangerous for your freedom as it is a [proprietary software](#)

This looks a bit messy to you ? It's normal. Just keep in mind: **FreeSoftware is about Freedom, no price.**

But in practice, about all free softwares are available free of charge.

And come to us to discuss this in details if you wish to.

- *Are they examples of FreeSoftwares that are not "gratis" ?*

1. When you download a FreeSoftware like OpenOffice or [Scribus](#) , you pay for your Internet access, your electricity, your computer, so it's

not really cost-free.

2. If you are satisfied with the use of a given FreeSoftware, you can consider making a donation, to support the software development team.

3. Some sites propose the shipment of official installation CDs against reasonable payments, as well as goodies (caps, T-shirts, ...)

4. Some commercial companies are distributing OpenSource software as support for their business. Example: [TCL /TK](#) is a highly portable programming language, distributed under OpenSource licence. It is freely available. But if you wish some professional support, you could consider purchasing it from

[ActiveState](#)

, a company widely advocating for this OpenSource, freely available scripting language. And there is nothing bad about doing this.

5. Some commercial companies ([MySQL](#) as example) are distributing their very same software (

[MySQL relational database management system](#)

) under

[two different licenses: a free license and a non-free license](#)

. If you are using FreeSoftware and are plan to integrate this database into a FreeSoftware project, then you can download it freely from MySQL web site (and lots of mirrors) at no charge,

[including the source code](#)

. But if you wish a copy that allows you to integrate it into a project that is not FreeSoftware license, then you must ask MySQL for a copy under non-free license, and this will be charged to you. Also, if you wish professional support (30 minutes response time 24 hours a day), you should consider purchasing this service to MySQL corp. And there is nothing bad about doing this.

6. Some very known Linux distributors ([SuSE](#) , [RedHat](#) , ...)

demand an annual fee to have the right to run their software, even if it is FreeSoftware. How can they do that ? The Free Software Foundation conditions implies the right to run the software on any computer, for any purpose and the right to copy and distribute copies of the source code. So, how RedHat or SuSE can impose a fee for the right to run this kind of software ? Here is the trick: the conditions imposed by the Free Software Licence apply to

the source code

and not the compiled form (the binaries). RedHat or SuSE

do respect the conditions imposed by the FSF

as they give full free access to all the source codes and do not impose any

fee to run software compiled from those sources, but they do only when you run

their own compiled binaries

. Technically, there is no difference. The only one is here: RedHat proposes services (maintenance, assistance, upgrades, security fixes, ...) only when you run their binaries. Other companies (Lotus Notes, SAP, Oracle, ...) also impose the same condition to support professional deployments of their softwares. This way, you practically must pay the fee imposed by RedHat in case of professional production use.

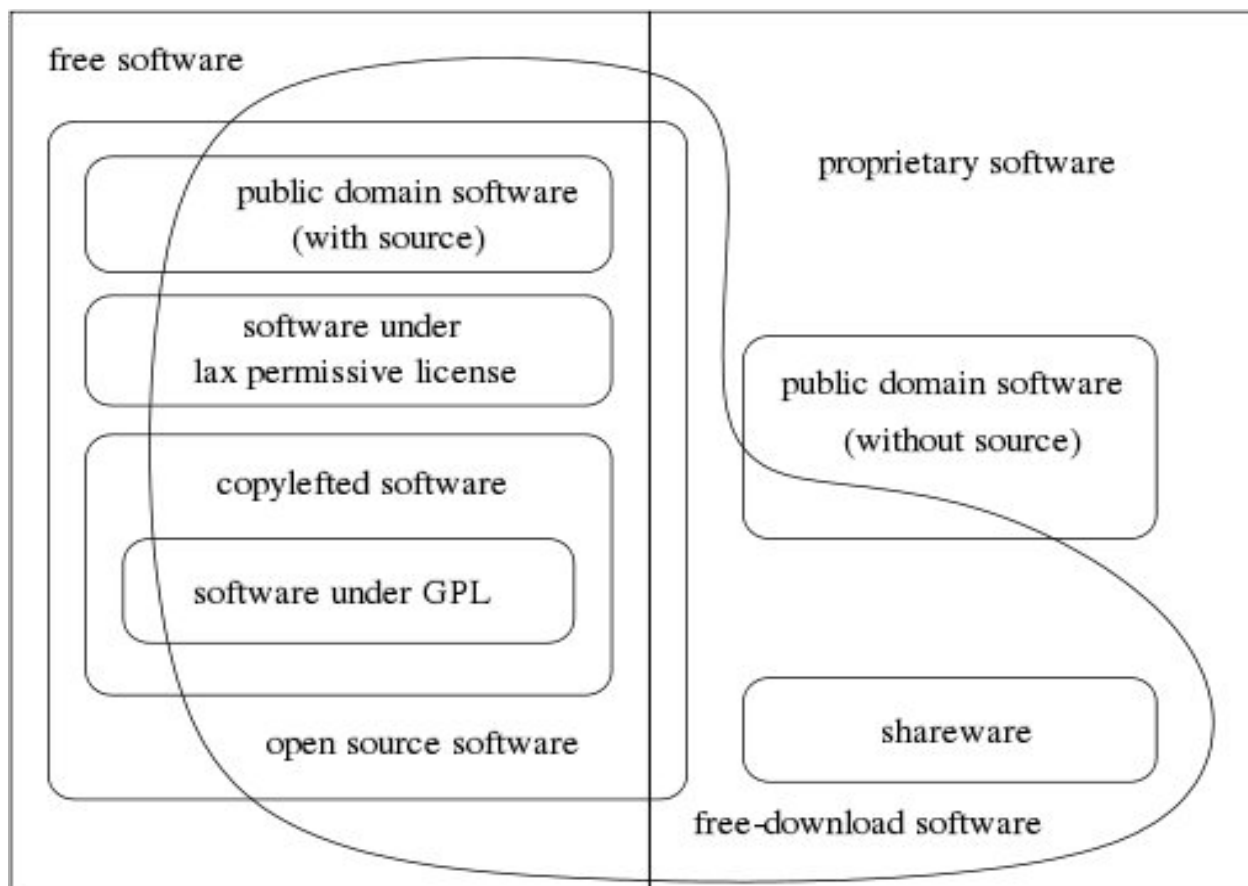
7. Largest computer companies already understood that FreeSoftware/OpenSource software development model is the best known at the moment. [IBM](#), Novell, Sun Microsystems and others participates strongly to GNU/Linux development and large software projects (OpenOffice development is helped by Sun, as example). By adopting this collaborative business model, they gain software stability, reduce software development costs, increase interoperability and software performance. They don't sell software licences anymore (even Solaris is given at no charge by Sun Microsystems) but they sell hardware, service, maintenance, support, specific developments. And there is nothing bad about doing this, far

from that.

Examples of commercial commitments to Linux

[IBM ad for Linux](#) [Novell ad for Linux](#) [Linux is evolution](#) [Be safe. Use Linux](#)

**FreeSoftware is about software users rights.
It is not against making profit or making honest
business based on FreeSoftwares.**



Various software licenses map

FreeSoftware/free software

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