

LESSON 56

PROPRIETARY AND OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE

PROPRIETARY SOFTWARE

Proprietary software is also called closed source software. The closed source software or proprietary software offers a stable system with support if the software fails or malfunctions.



EXAMPLES OF PROPRIETARY SOFTWARE



OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE

Open source software is:

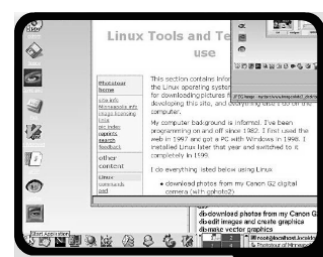
- software provided for use, modification and redistribution
- software that any programmer can download from the Internet for free and modify with suggested improvements.
- the only qualification is that changes can't be copyrighted,



Why is it popular? Because this software is not closed software. Any programmer can make improvements which can result in better quality software.

EXAMPLES OF OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE

Linux is the popular multi-tasking UNIX type operating system. Some versions of Linux are command line. Others are GUI. The two most popular GUIs available for Linux are GNOME and KDE.



Many application programs, utilities and plug-in have Linux versions including OpenOffice.org, PHP-Nuke, The GIMP, Mozilla, ClamAV, OpenLDAP, Audacity and RedHat.

Users can obtain Linux in a variety of ways. Some download it for free from the web. Others purchase it from vendors.



COMPARISON

Windows XP (Proprietary Software)	Linux (Open Source Software)	Mac OS X (Proprietary Software)
<p><i>Pros:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • runs on a wide range of hardware • has largest market share • has many built-in utilities 	<p><i>Pros:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • runs on a wide range of hardware • has largest number of user interface types • can be used as server or desktop PC OS 	<p><i>Pros:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • easy to install • best Graphical User Interface(GUI) • secure and stable
<p><i>Cons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • security problems • not efficient as a server OS • have to reboot every time a network configuration is changed 	<p><i>Cons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited support for games • limited commercial applications available • can be difficult to learn 	<p><i>Cons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supports only Apple computers • base hardware more expensive than other platforms • fewer utilities available • fewer games than Windows • many applications still being updated to run with OS X

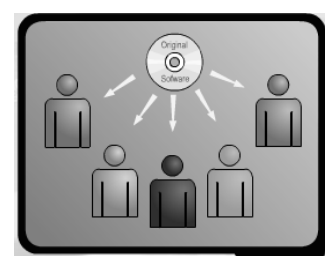
LESSON 57 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF PROPRIETARY SOFTWARE

Vendors of proprietary software say “keeping the source code closed make their product more secured”. Keeping the source code closed might deter some hackers, but the large number of successful attacks against Windows and other proprietary software proves that it certainly does not provide any kind of high level security.

There are advantages and disadvantages of proprietary software from the perspectives of both the manufacturer and the user.

ADVANTAGES OF PRODUCING PROPRIETARY SOFTWARE

The producing company creates software that must be purchased in order to be installed and used, thus

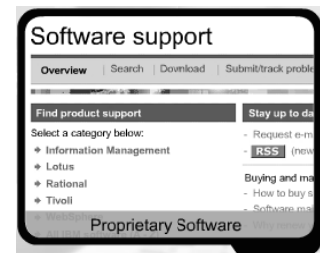


giving room for profit. The company can set limit to the licence of use. This will allow the company to control and monitor the installation and distribution of the software sold.

ADVANTAGES OF USING PROPRIETARY SOFTWARE

The advantages of using proprietary software are :

- ✚ The software offers a stable system support if it fails or malfunction.
- ✚ The software is safe and guaranteed to be safe from dubious threats like programming bugs and viruses thus providing ease of mind for the user.
- ✚ The software is easier to install and used as the production is planned and extensive research is carried out to ensure users purchase only the best.
- ✚ Furthermore, free updates and latest information on the software are usually provided to the user.



DISADVANTAGES OF PRODUCING PROPRIETARY SOFTWARE

Disadvantages of producing proprietary software are:

- ✚ manufacturers are often under massive amounts of pressure to release the software before it is ready, causing major problems later. This is because the release of the software would affect the profit
- ✚ security is a major issue. Manufacturers will have to invest in an ongoing research against threats from hackers



DISADVANTAGES OF USING PROPRIETARY SOFTWARE

Disadvantages to users of using proprietary software are:

- ✚ users need to spend a long time downloading and installing security patches to fix bugs announced by the manufacturer.
- ✚ Any improvements would usually require fees, which is often expensive.
- ✚ users are not allowed to describe and share the software as that are licensed.
- ✚ Customising the software is nearly impossible because when users buy proprietary software will receive binary version of the program, not the code as the code is the manufacturer's trade secret.

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ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE

Have you heard about Linux?

Linux is one of the fastest growing operating system. Linux is an example of open source software which means its code is provided for use, modification and redistribution. There are other open source software, such as the Firefox and GIMP.



In addition to the basic operating system, Linux also includes many free utility programs. Users can obtain Linux in a variety of ways. Some download it free from the web. Others purchase it from vendors for a minimal fee.

There are also open source browsers such as Firefox and open source image editor – the GIMP. The GIMP is very reliable and cost effective for normal users who do not need extra features offered in other graphics software such as Adobe Photoshop.

ADVANTAGES OF OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE

Some advantages of open source software are:

- ✚ The source codes are available to users and they have the rights to modify them.
- ✚ This will allow improvements to the software without having to invest large sum of money in research and development.
- ✚ The modified and improved source codes can be freely redistributed.

MORE ADVANTAGES OF OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE

The open source software is created according to industry demands but allows for upgrades to take place freely when the need arises. Therefore, if bugs in the codes are found, they can be fixed by anyone interested and capable. Fixes and patches to rectify the bugs are rapidly developed.



The software can be used in any way and for any legal purposes. There is no restriction in a unilateral way on how the software could be used.

DISADVANTAGES OF OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE

Since nobody in particular is responsible for the codes, there is no exact knowledge and assurance on when the codes are going to be fixed if there a bugs in it. Thus, users will have to use the problematic software until someone rectifies the problem.

MORE DISADVANTAGES OF OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE

Other disadvantages of open source software are:

- ✚ The codes are too complicated for novice users to understand.
- ✚ There is no particular official monitoring the works of a programmer improving the codes. This is because anyone is free to use, modify or even distribute the codes.



Open source usually comes without warranty and after sales support should the software fail or malfunction. This is because the software usually distributed free of charge or sold for very minimal fees.