Leaving big tech

For T-DOSE, May 2025
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T-DOSE
The place where experts meet

Big Tech, why not?

- Power abuse
  - Monopoly allows for one sided decisions, also in open source projects (for example Chromium).
  - Lobbying for political influence.
  - And (political) use of dependence.
  - Commercial companies want to earn, not necessarily improve.

AP News · 5d

Trump's sanctions on ICC prosecutor have halted tribunal's work

By Molly Quell

- Linear connection between Big Tech SNS and societal problems.
  - Increased depression rates, suicide attempts and succeeded suicides among teenagers and youngsters.
  - Polarization in society.
  - Distribution and normalization of factual non-truths.
  - Shortened attention range.
  - See The Social Dillema (ENG) and VPRO's Tegenlicht "Error 404: het internet in crisis" (NL).

But don't they care?

- No, not really…
  - activity → seeing ads → $$$
  - And so:
    - Get people addicted!
    - The more data, the better they can build something that entices you.
    - But often that's not the "boring" nuances truth.

  - And no, **nobody** is immune.
    - Also not if you know how it works.
    - Not even the creators themselves.

It's all about the money

Outside of social media

Get you stuck in an ecosystem.
- Lure in
- Get stuck
- Enshitification & abuse of dependency

Open software:
- Chromium → Manifest V3.
- RCS → one sided additions.
- AOSP → Play Integrity API.

Then, how go without?

It's not all or nothing, every bit helps!

FOSS or not?
- All FOSS is *possible*, but generally not practical.
- Often a mix of FOSS and proprietary.

My recommendations 🦊 : https://gitlab.com/cambionn-random/altlist
- Lot's more lists.

Start simple, what can you do on your own?
- MS Office → **LibreOffice**
- Gmail/Outlook → Proton Mail, **VPS with mail server**
- Chrome → **LibreWolf**
- Android → **GrapheneOS**, **Linux**
- OneDrive → **NextCloud**, TransIP Stack, Proton Drive
- Password in browser → 1Password, **Bitwarden**, Proton Pass, **Keepass**

And of course:
- Windows/MacOS → **Linux**

- Socials are nothing without users…
  - So don't be part of the problem.

FOMO?
    No need!
    Important things will come! But only when needed...
    ‣ Still don't dare? Do both!

Convince others?
- Be nice.
- Use prudence.
- Don't get angry at the people.

But… A lot of that cost money!

You always pay.
- With data, with all the just mentioned issues.
- Or with something else?

Support your software!
- Money.
- Work.
  - Not only programming, but also testing, translating and business management.
- Spread the word!
  - You don't need to have an audience (but it does help 😉)
    - Mouth to mouth advertisement is the most effective type in existence.

"Free as in freedom"
  - Not "no money".

Everything cost money!
Always? Truly always?
  - Yeah, basically so.
  - Everything cost money, free does not exist.

Then who pays FOSS?
  - Donations
  - Companies
  - paid side-projects and services

Oke, excluded hobby projects.
  - But once those grow...

IT'S
FREE

Then what about companies?

- "You can never secure that"
- "It doesn't work"/"it's inefficient".
- "That doesn't work with what our customers are using".

But the only one that's really true:
- But that's not an ecosystem!

So:
- Certain knowledge and skill is needed.
- FOSS is not a way to cut cost, but moves cost.

But:
- In the current geopolitical climate, do you want to outsource that to Big Tech?
- Good selling-point: no US-dependency, own knowledge.

ONE DOES NOT SIMPLY

CHANGE CORPORATE CULTURE

Companies are trendsetters and normalizers!
The bigger, the more that's true.

"If they do it, it has to be good!"
~ Average Joe and other companies

Questions?

Abbreviations
- SNS = Social Networking Service
- RCS = open chat protocol to replace SMS
- AOSP = Android Open Source Project, the open source basis of Android
- FOSS = Free Open Source Software

Extra links

- https://www.privacyguides.org
  Well respected website with privacy friendly software advise.
- https://european-alternatives.eu/
  Website with European alternatives for big tech services.
- https://gathering.tweakers.net/forum/list_messages/1704541
  Long going topic on the Tweakers forum with lot's of input regarding personal privacy (Dutch only).
- https://grapheneos.org/faq
  - Aside of OS specific info also contains lots of good info regarding security & privacy on mobile devices and networks.
- https://www.bitsoffreedom.nl/
  Dutch organisation that fights for privacy and a free internet.