

Leaving Big Tech



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Who am I?



Jessica Tran

- ❑ Security Officer @ team.blue
- ❑ Privacy advocate
- ❑ Computer nerd
- ❑ Degree: HBO-ICT Software Engineering
- ❑ Absolutely not a designer (as this presentation may show)

team.blue





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



Big Tech, why not?

Geopolitical dependencies

- Cloud Act
- EU-US DPF, but no DPRC
- Political interference

Power abuse

- Monopoly allows for one-sided decisions, also in open source projects (like 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





Customers (should) care!

Increasing disdain for US & Big Tech

- Enshitification
- Behaviour of leaders
- Worries about political changes

Linear connection between Big Tech SNS and societal problems

- Increased depression rates, including suicide (attempts and succeeded) rates
- Polarization in society
- Distribution and normalization of factual non-truths
- Cognitive issues, like shortened attention range
- See [The Social Dillema](#) (ENG) and [VPRO's Tegenlicht "Error 404: het internet in crisis"](#) (NL)





But doesn't Big Tech 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





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!

To FOSS or not to FOSS?

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

My recommendations 🦊 <https://gitlab.com/cambionn-random/altlist>

- Many more lists

Start simple, what can you do independent?

- 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**
- Windows/MacOS → **Linux**



What about the socials?

Socials are nothing without users...

- So don't be part of the problem!
- Less engagement, but more interaction
 - Don't dare? **Do both!**



Note regarding private use

FOMO?

- No need!
 - Important things will come! But only when needed...

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



But the F in FOSS!

“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

Ok, maybe excluded hobby projects

- But once those grow...

IT'S
FREE





So what about companies?

Only one is true

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



The background is a complex, abstract composition. It features a dense field of small, semi-transparent squares in various shades of green and orange, scattered across a dark, textured surface. Overlaid on this is a series of concentric, glowing green circles that create a sense of depth and focus, drawing the eye towards the center. The overall effect is one of digital complexity and dynamic energy.

Questions?

Abbreviations

EU-US DPF

EU-US Data Privacy Framework

DPRC

Data Protection Review Court

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

Privacy Guides

Well respected website with privacy friendly software advise.

European Alternatives

Website with European alternatives for big tech services.

Tweakers - Persoonlijk Privacy Topic

Long going topic on the Tweakers forum with lot's of input regarding personal privacy (Dutch only).

GrapheneOS FAQ

Aside of OS specific info also contains lots of good info regarding security & privacy on mobile devices and networks.

Bits Of Freedom

Dutch organisation that fights for privacy and a free internet.