It's alright not to pay

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One doesn't need to be a computer genius to download a 60MB image file off the internet and burn it on a CD Rom. In fact nothing more is necessary in order to get a comprehensive, intuitive, functional, fast and reliable operating system with full network support, word processing, email, WWW applications and much more. It's name is "Puppy" [4]. Burn it, boot it, work!

Now if someone told you that all this is free of charge, does not require any advanced computer skills, is secure, marketing-free, and even resists viruses, you may ask "Where is the catch?" Answer: there is none! What used to cost hundreds in software fees and hours of installation comes for free. How is this possible?

It is possible because there are people who are driven by technical possibilities rather than revenue forecasts and market share. Thanks to them we have the internet, emails, the world wide web, and last but by no way least the operating system behind Puppy: Linux. It offers a superior alternative to the desktop operating system from Microsoft. Most of us don't even realise that they are paying for their operating system because it comes with their computer. If you buy a computer, turn it on and it says "Microsoft Windows..." then you have already payed a significant amount in licence fees, it was just hidden in the price of the computer.

 So how come a majority is still willing to pay for unstable, insecure and aging computer systems? Because they don't know. Why don't they know? Some claim an evil force keeps the truth away from them. It is more true that companies rarely inform you about free alternatives to their products. From my observations the real reason is that most people don't want to know. They are afraid of change, and they are afraid that if they knew they would only feel how wrong they are. So while they get less for money when they could get more for free, they are willing to pay for their own ignorance. We all use our computers for writing, and a large majority for internet activities like chatting, looking at web pages, or reading their emails. [1] What is easier than taking any old PC or laptop, insert the Puppy CD, boot and work?

This example shows drastically that even giants like Microsoft can be left behind when they don't deliver what the markets require. It may be questionable if there is a market if the products don't cost anything. This contradicts the market models in which monetary compensation is received by the provider of a benefit. But this is by no means a new concept. German automaker Daimler-Benz [todays Daimler Chrysler] used ABS systems in their cars in the 1970s while

Bosch is said to have invented them and to hold the patent. The patent, however, was never used against other manufacturers because the company argued the chance to safe lives was too important to be destroyed in court battles. In another example IBM designed the first personal computer but allowed other companies to copy the design to help proliferate computer technology. The more one thinks about technology we take for granted today the more it occurs that they have their roots in the generosity and foresight of those that made them available for free. And neither Bosch, nor Daimler or IBM went out of business. Leaders in their markets they only sparked technological progress.

Isn't it time that operating systems become state-of-the-art for free? We breath without breathing permits, we talk to each other without a communication limit or language license, we work without having to aquire a working permit [at least in our home countries]. Isn't is time we boot our computers savely without paying someone to enable us to use our own hardware, or to protect us from the vulnerability of an insecure system? While it may seem impossible to persuade Microsoft to give away Windows for free, you don't have to. As a matter of fact you don't need them anymore. Neither for your personal work nor for doing business. As multiple examples demonstrate [2] companies are very successful in using open source models to generate revenue and giving away benefits to users at the same time. Linux-related services are said to deliver over a to both IBM and HP alone.

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4] Puppy Linux Website for
Downloadshttp://www.goosee.com/puppy/download/downpage.htm