

About FREE SOFTWARE Magazine

Editorial, FSM
RON's Datacom Co., Ltd.

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FREE SOFTWARE managzine (“FSM” for short) is a free (the free in “freedom”) monthly periodical devoted to the global free software community. It is published in online electronic form on the world wide web (<http://www.rons.net.cn>) and in printed paper copies by **RON's Datacom Co., Ltd.**, with the direct support of **Free Software Foundation**, and **FSF, China Academy**. We invite you to read and contribute.

1 What Is Free Software?

Free software means users have these freedoms:

- The freedom to run the program, for any purpose.
- The freedom to study the program, and modify it to suit her/his needs. In practice, access to the source code is a precondition.
- The freedom to redistribute copies, either for a fee or gratis.
- The freedom to distribute modified versions of the software, and thus contribute to the community.

Please read <http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-sw.html> for more details.

2 What Is Copyleft?

One way of giving users these freedoms is to put the program source code in the public domain. However, this allows modified versions to be non-free; the users can lose their freedom if non-free versions displace the original free version.

“**Copyleft**” free software licenses are designed give users the essential freedoms, but also to require all modified and extended versions to be equally free. This actively defends the users’ freedom and eliminates the danger that freedom will be lost in future versions of the program. The primary example of a copyleft license for software is the **GNU General Public License (GNU GPL)** for short). For more information about free software licenses, see <http://www.gnu.org/licenses/>.

The Free Software Movement was launched in 1984 along with the development of the GNU operating system. People at GNU Project believe that users are entitled to these freedoms as a matter of right, and nobody should be able to take it away from them.

3 What Is “Open Source”?

In the 1990s, as some free software packages and the GNU/Linux system became popular, some users and developers chose free software for its practical advantages but did not agree with the Free Software Movement’s values. In 1998 they began using the

term “open source”, as a way of talking about free software without making people aware of the Free Software Movement and its views. The Open Source Movement cites only practical advantages in being able to modify and redistribute software; they studiously avoid calling this an ethical imperative. They gave their term a definition similar to the definition of “free software” but not identical. Most open source programs are free software, but some are not.

Because the term “open source” is very much associated with the views and the values of the Open Source Movement, we do not use it. We remain, as we have been since 1984, the Free Software Movement.

See <http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-software-for-freedom.html> for more explanation about the difference between free software and open source.

4 What Is GNU?

GNU is a Unix-compatible operating system that consists entirely of free software (The name “GNU” stands for “**GNU’s Not Unix**”, and is pronounced “guh-noo”). Development of GNU began in January 1984. A Unix-like operating system includes a kernel, libraries, editors, compilers, mail software, and many other utilities and tools. The GNU system is source-compatible with Unix, meaning that program source code written to run on Unix should also run on GNU. See <http://www.gnu.org/gnu/> for more information.

5 What Is Linux?

Linux is a kernel which has been developed by Linus Torvalds since 1991. The kernel is the component of an operating system that is responsible for running other programs and keeping them separate, for reading and writing disk files, for low-level network communication, and some other tasks. Linux is free, just as GNU software is, and it provides the

same functionality as the kernel of a proprietary Unix system.

6 What Is GNU/Linux?

GNU/Linux is the combination of Linux and the GNU system, modified to work together smoothly. Many people call this combination “Linux”, but that is a misnomer, since the system is basically GNU and Linux is the kernel. The misnomer leads regularly to confusion about the history and nature of the system. See <http://www.gnu.org/gnu/linux-and-gnu.html> for more explanation.

Today’s free software ranges from free operating systems such as GNU/Linux, to office suites, databases electronic publishing, network utilities, and scientific research tools. We believe more and more free software will be available in the future. Free Software magazine covers all kinds of free software that we think is noteworthy for our community.

7 How to get involved?

If you want to contribute to Free Software Magazine, you can do it in the following ways:

- **Write** an article. Go see the Submission Guidelines listed as below.
- **Send** your suggestions, comments, criticisms or trick (or more) with a brief explanation to fred@mail.rons.net.cn.
- **Help** preview articles! Send a note with your name and email address to fred@mail.rons.net.cn.
- **Mirroring** Free Software Magazine in your local area.

- **Buy** Your Hard Copy from us. Your payment will be used to finance **MNM Project** to support the free software community. Please send your order to *orders@mail.rons.net.cn*
- **Place** Advertisement about your free software, or free software based system, hardware, or service.

8 Submission Guidelines

Authors: Please read the following guidelines before you submit us your article!

8.1 Policies

These are the legal and organizational issues you should be aware of before submitting your article to us:

All articles we will accept should be under free license which is defined by Free Software Foundation, Inc. and it should be submitted via email to *fred@mail.rons.net.cn* or *hongfeng@gnu.org*. We prefer you adopt the GNU FDL of the copyleft license as the default, but if you have your own reason and not allow others to change/modify your points and views, then you should at least reach the minimum freedom requirement like this:

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Before your submit, if you have multiple files including graphics, please tar them into a tarball, and compress the tarball with **gzip** or **bzip2**. Please **uuencode** it and send me as the attachment of email

so that our editors could extract it from GNU Emacs with ease.

Once submitted, you retain the original copyright but we reserve the right to publish, re-publish, and edit all articles in perpetuity.

Generally, we will not make major edits without your consent. Do not submit articles to Free Software magazine that you have submitted to other “forums” unless you retain the copyright on such material.

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8.2 General Formatting

Free Software Magazine uses leading-edge technology of the new millenium, so we recommend you could write your article in XML now (using the TEI's DTD). TEI's specification could be downloaded from *http://www.tei-c.org*. XML submissions are preferred. There is a nice shrink sized TEI-Lite specification (or barebone TEI) shows you how to use the DTD.

If you ask yourself why you should go to the trouble

of learning TEI or TEI-Lite, think about advantages like the fact that your text will also be available as DVI, PostScript, PDF, for easier printing. Also, if Free Software Magazine changes its layout, your article will instantly follow these changes according to our style sheets, unlike a document that is written in HTML.

Though we clearly prefer XML submissions, we accept plain old boring HTML, too. In that case, please follow these rules:

Please include your real name, email address and your snail address with postcode with your submission. If this is your first submission, please include a recent photo of you, short biography within 100-200 words that lists your interests and experience, along with relevant contact data (that is real name, your email address(es), snail address and your homepage URL).

Please make up a title for your article. While we try to correct spelling and grammar, you should spell-check and proofread your writing before submitting it.

Articles should be either in plain text ASCII format or fully-formatted HTML. If you are not confident in your ability to format your article so that everyone (including users of text-based browsers like GNUScape) can read it, please send it in formatted ASCII and let our editors do the work.

If your article is not properly formatted, we will have to send it back to you with suggestions on how to format it, because we don't have too much of the time to do it for you.

We suggest you run your article through a validation tool such as GNUScape (i.e. GNU Emacs plus W3 package) or Mozilla. If your article is in HTML format, please make sure that you use as few special HTML tags as you can. Since we will convert it to XML eventually, any fancy stuff you use in your submissions has to be removed anyway.

Do not use any Netscape or Internet Explorer

extensions: This means no JavaScript, no frames, no ActiveX controls, etc. In essence, please use only the following tags: `h1`, `h2`, `h3`, `h4`, `em`, `strong`, `small`, `img`, `p`, `br`, `pre`, `ul`, `ol`, `li`, `table`, `tr`, `th`, `td`.

Please Use lower-case for your tags, and try to write well-formed HTML. If you do your own complete HTML formatting, then images are acceptable. Graphics are often necessary to get your point across. Unfortunately, old versions of GNUScape does not display graphics, so keep in mind that just use GIMP to create your graphical files in JPEG or PNG formats. Try to include ALT text in your IMG tags so they will at least know what they're missing. Multiple-file submissions are accepted, but we would prefer one article per email to simplify copyright issues.

8.3 Other formats

we also accept your article in DVI, PostScript and PDF format. If you typeset your article in these formats, be sure you have not used any proprietary fonts in your text.

If you deliver your article in DVI format, please send us the .tex file in plain \TeX , \LaTeX , $\text{\LaTeX 2}\epsilon$ or \TeXinfo as well. If you have a make script file to automatically generate the output, be sure use GNU Make.

If you try to include images into your article in DVI, PostScript formats, be sure using the editable .eps format, which could be interpreted and viewed by GhostScript and Ghostview, or GV.

8.4 Source Code

Articles about programming, scripting and software customization tend to contain source codes, please consider these guidelines:

We could not published any proprietary source codes

even you have got the copyright holder's permission to do so. This is just because our magazine is about free software, we could not allow any proprietary software source codes appearing on it.

We try to check the source code for obvious errors, but you should make sure all your code works well and does not rely on any undefined behavior (unless you state it specifically).

Unless specifically stated, all source code should be fully in ASCII codes, including the comment statements coming together with the source codes. Try to keep your code well commented, so others can understand. Of course that depends on the level of the article. So don't over-do it.

We welcome API and platform specific code, but don't assume that the readers are able to guess your platform if you don't tell them.

Format your source code consistently and cleanly, unless you are purposely writing obfuscated code. If your source code has compiler specific code, you must explicitly state so.

9 Get Your Paper Copy

There is no difference between the contents of web version and paper version. But needless to say, the paper version is much easier to read, and you might want it. There are a lot of ways to get your paper copy of Free Software magazine.

9.1 Print It

Perhaps the easiest way is to get the articles from our web site, and print all of them out with your own printer, and bind the papers up to be a magazine of your own. Whatever web browser you use, the output will be different with our original paper copy, but you could use the sourcefiles to typeset in your own style

to print.

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10 Become A Distributor

We encourage people in the different countries or areas to become our "official" international distributors.

To be our international distributors, we will ask you to commit a minimum circulation in the local country or area. The minimum circulation varies from country to country or region to region, but it is set to 100 copies as the default.

We will offer you a discount price (depends upon the ordered quantity), plus the air shipping cost, plus

5price. The distributor will pay for the import duties or taxes (if any) at his own expenses.

To ensure the subscribers to obtain the subscription implemented in time, we will ask the official international distributor to enter a distribution contract with us for 12 months, and the circulation number could be renewable each quarter.

11 Become A Reprinter

Some distributors would be interested in being a reprinter so as to cut off the cost of import, and we encourage such efforts.

To become our “official” reprinter, we will ask you to pay us technical support fees, most part of which will be used to support **MnM Project** and improve the future issues of the magazine. With the payment, we could supply you all the files which are ready to go to printer with a CD-R delivered to you by express mail as soon as we finish the typesetting in China, which enables you could release the magazine at the same time as we do.

Both the “official” distributors and reprinters are listed on our web site, and printed in the each issue of the paper copy.

Of course, as this is Free Software magazine, so anyone can legally copy and redistribute it. But in this case, you are not regarded as our “official” distributors/reprinters.

12 Translation

Generally, translation is regarded as a sort of modification of works, and we encourage you to translate our magazine into your own language locale other than English.

However, please note, though most articles in the

magazine are under GNU FDL which enables you make the translation freely, some are not so. They only reached a minimum requirement freedom to allow you copy them verbatim, not in form of translation. In this case, if you want to translate them, please contact with us for copyright affairs.

We are looking for publishers world widely to make the “official” translations of Free Software magazine to expand the brand, if you are interested in it, please feel free to contact with us directly.

— **FSM**

About the Publisher: RON's Datacom Co., Ltd., founded in 1995, is the leading company in China to support free software community. It's located in Wuhan, the hinterland of China. RON's Datacom is the supporter of FSF-China by offering programmers working for **MnM Project**.

RON's Datacom is also the supporter of RON-SNET — the virtual online community at <http://www.rons.net.cn> for free software developers. The online version of this magazine is also hosted at this web site.

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