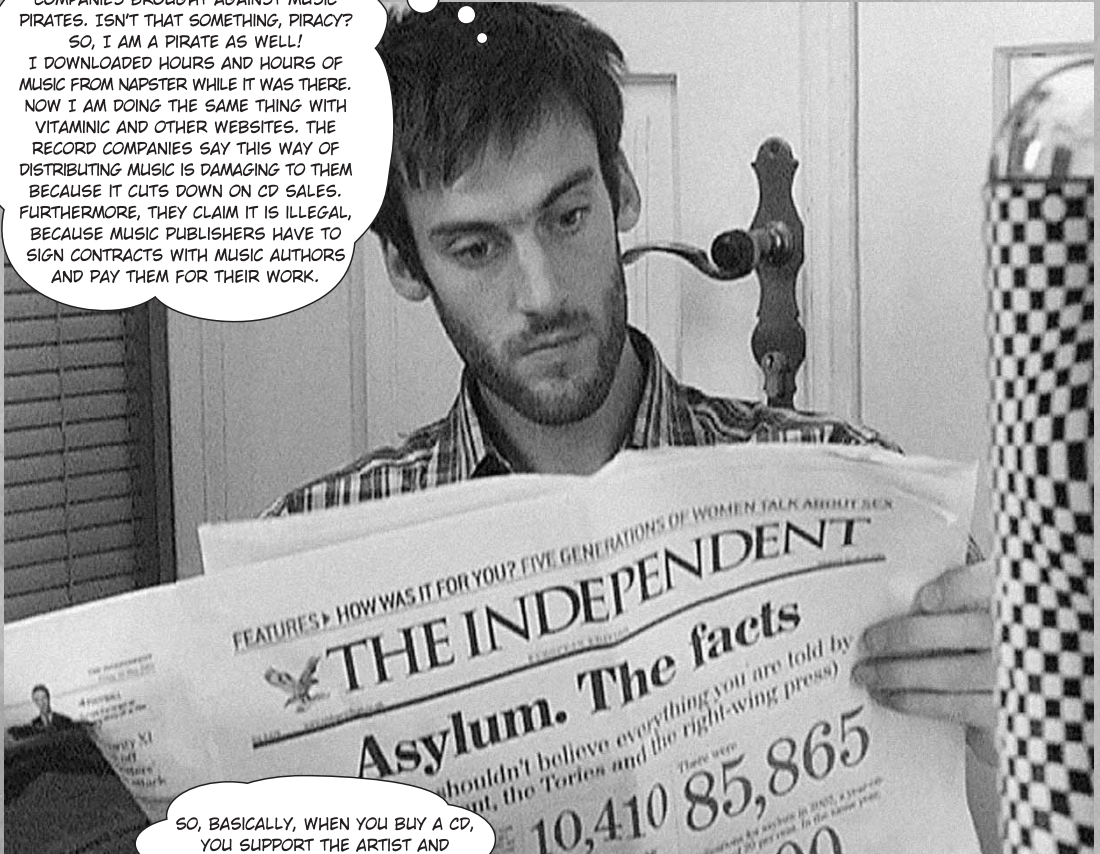


# Copyleft

CHECK THIS OUT.  
ANOTHER LAWSUIT BY RECORD COMPANIES BROUGHT AGAINST MUSIC PIRATES. ISN'T THAT SOMETHING, PIRACY?  
SO, I AM A PIRATE AS WELL!  
I DOWNLOADED HOURS AND HOURS OF MUSIC FROM NAPSTER WHILE IT WAS THERE. NOW I AM DOING THE SAME THING WITH VITAMINIC AND OTHER WEBSITES. THE RECORD COMPANIES SAY THIS WAY OF DISTRIBUTING MUSIC IS DAMAGING TO THEM BECAUSE IT CUTS DOWN ON CD SALES. FURTHERMORE, THEY CLAIM IT IS ILLEGAL, BECAUSE MUSIC PUBLISHERS HAVE TO SIGN CONTRACTS WITH MUSIC AUTHORS AND PAY THEM FOR THEIR WORK.



SO, BASICALLY, WHEN YOU BUY A CD, YOU SUPPORT THE ARTIST AND NOT THE PUBLISHER.



I'M NOT SO SURE.





ONE THING I KNOW IS, PUBLISHERS WOULD NEVER BRING OUT A SINGLE RECORD, A BOOK OR A MAGAZINE IF IT WASN'T FOR MONEY.



OF COURSE, I AGREE THAT THE AUTHOR HAS TO EARN HIS LIVING WITH HIS WORK, I AM NOT QUESTIONING THAT. THE QUESTION IS: IS SELLING CDS THE ONLY WAY TO SUPPORT AN ARTIST?



IF THINGS REMAIN AS THEY ARE NOW, THE ANSWER IS PROBABLY POSITIVE. SO, RECOGNIZING THE RIGHTS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY IS A JUST POLICY TO A CERTAIN DEGREE.



IF I AM A MUSICIAN I SHOULD BE ENTITLED TO MAKE A LIVING WITH MY MUSIC, SO EVERYONE PLAYING MY MUSIC IN PUBLIC OWES ME SOMETHING.



THEREFORE: AS AN AUTHOR I HAVE THE RIGHT TO ENJOY THE FRUITS OF MY TALENT AND MAKE A PROFIT FROM IT. AFTERWARDS, FOR PRACTICAL REASONS, I TRANSFER MY RIGHTS TO AN EDITOR WHO PUBLISHES MY WORKS AND SEES TO THEIR DISTRIBUTION, THINGS THAT I COULD NOT DO ON MY OWN. IN RETURN, THE PUBLISHER PAYS ME A FIXED FEE OR A SHARE OF THE SALES.



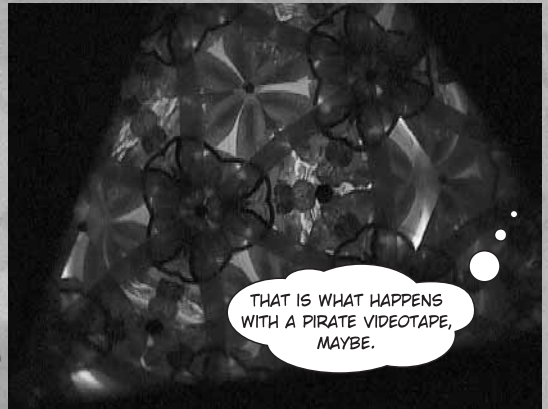
THIS IS A BASIC COPYRIGHT PRINCIPLE AND THERE IS VERY LITTLE TO OBJECTION TO IT IF THINGS WORK THIS WAY.



THERE ARE COPYRIGHT LAWS THAT REGULATE THE AUTHOR'S RIGHTS AND PROTECT THE AUTHOR AS THE OWNER OF THE COPYRIGHT.



BUT, NAPSTER OR VITAMINIC AREN'T REALLY VIOLATING THESE RULES. NO ONE HERE TAKES POSSESSION OF SOMEONE ELSE'S WORK TO SELL IT OR MAKE PROFIT WITHOUT PAYING THE AUTHOR.



THAT IS WHAT HAPPENS WITH A PIRATE VIDEOTAPE, MAYBE.



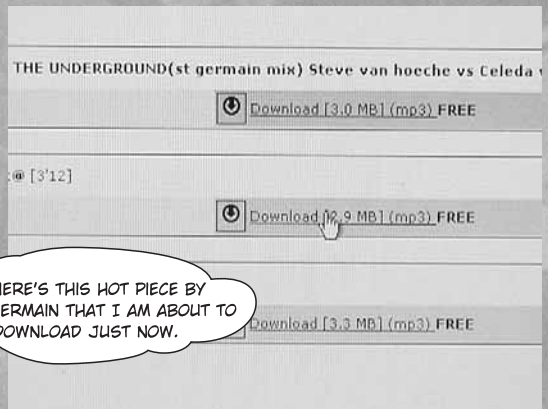
BUT IN THIS CASE THERE IS A COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE WHO EXCHANGE THINGS ALREADY IN THEIR POSSESSION.



WAIT, LET ME SEE IF THERE'S ANY NEW STUFF ...



THERE'S THIS HOT PIECE BY SAINT GERMAIN THAT I AM ABOUT TO DOWNLOAD JUST NOW.







DEFINITELY NOT FROM THE PUBLISHER'S WEBSITE. I'LL TAKE IT FROM THE HARD DRIVE OF SOMEONE WHO HAS IT AND IS CONNECTED TO THE WEB. I DON'T EVEN HAVE TO KNOW THE GUY.



AND WHILE I'M DOWNLOADING, SOMEONE ELSE MAY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MY CONNECTION AND DOWNLOAD FROM MY HARD DRIVE A PIECE OF MUSIC HE LIKES.



IT'S LIKE LENDING A BOOK OR A CD TO A FRIEND AND BORROWING ONE FROM HIM AT THE SAME TIME. ONLY IN THIS CASE, THE FRIENDS DON'T KNOW EACH OTHER. I AM NOT EVEN SO SURE WHETHER THIS INTERNET EXCHANGE REALLY BRINGS DOWN CD SALES. I'VE READ SOME QUITE CONTRADICTORY PIECE OF INFORMATION. I FOR ONE, STILL BUY CDS, THOUGH I DOWNLOAD MUSIC FILES FROM THE INTERNET. EVEN MORE SO.



AND EVEN IF THAT WAS THE CASE, THE INTERNET IS NOT THE ONLY ONE TO BLAME.



THE FACT IS THE RECORD COMPANIES ARE GREEDY AND ARE SELLING THE CDS AT MUCH HIGHER PRICES THAN WHAT THEY SHOULD OR COULD COST.



MANY PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY YOUNGER ONES, CAN'T AFFORD TO BUY THEM. THE INTERNET HAS MERELY GIVEN THESE PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LISTEN TO MUSIC THEY LIKE. WHO KNOWS, IF THE CD PRICES WENT DOWN ... MAYBE THIS WOULD ...

*DOWNLOADING!*



WHAT THE HECK IS WRONG NOW ?!

JAMMED AGAIN!



I'LL HAVE TO SHUT IT DOWN AND RESTART IT AGAIN. AND I'LL HAVE TO REPEAT THE DOWNLOADING FROM SCRATCH.



TO HELL WITH MICROSOFT!



I SAID I WOULD TRY LINUX BUT I NEVER HAVE TIME TO INSTALL IT. IT IS NOT LIKE COUNTING TO THREE BUT MY FRIEND ROBERT TELLS ME IT WORKS MIRACLES ONCE IT IS INSTALLED. HE SHOULD KNOW, HE'S AN EXPERT. IT NEVER GETS JAMMED, IT'S MUCH MORE RELIABLE.





I BET IT IS!



THOUSANDS MUST HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THAT OPERATING SYSTEM, TESTING AND RETESTING AGAIN.



IT'S A PERFECT WAY TO FIND ALL THE DOWNSIDES AND THE BUGS.



LINUX IS ACTUALLY A FREE OPERATING SYSTEM INVENTED BY THAT FINN, LINUS TORVALDS, WHEN HE WAS STILL A STUDENT, TEN OR MAYBE TWELVE YEARS AGO.



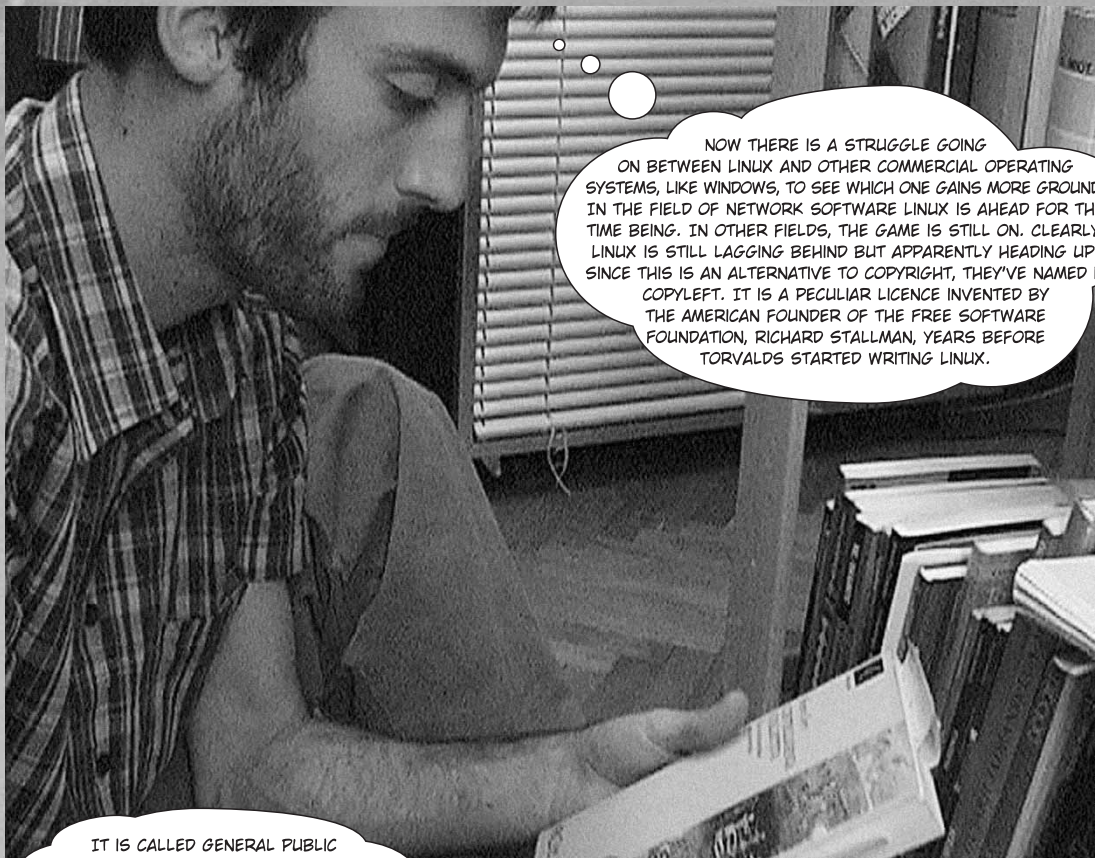
HE DIDN'T KEEP THE PROGRAM CODE SECRET AS HAPPENS WITH ALL COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE.



HE MADE IT PUBLIC BY PUTTING IT ON THE NET AS AN OPEN SOURCE FOR HUNDREDS OR THOUSANDS OF COMPUTER PROGRAMMERS TO WORK ON IT IF THEY FEEL LIKE IT.

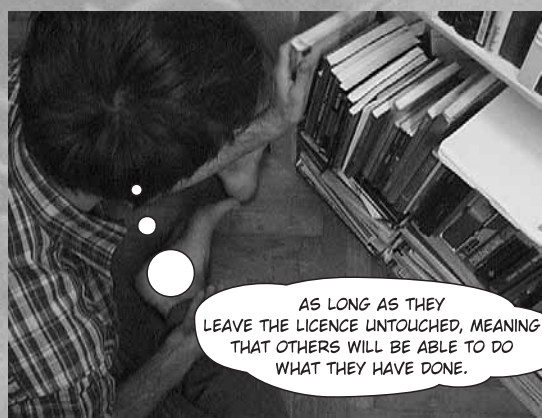


THEY'VE CORRECTED MISTAKES, IMPROVED THE OPERATION, BROADENED THE APPLICATIONS.



NOW THERE IS A STRUGGLE GOING ON BETWEEN LINUX AND OTHER COMMERCIAL OPERATING SYSTEMS, LIKE WINDOWS, TO SEE WHICH ONE GAINS MORE GROUND. IN THE FIELD OF NETWORK SOFTWARE LINUX IS AHEAD FOR THE TIME BEING. IN OTHER FIELDS, THE GAME IS STILL ON. CLEARLY, LINUX IS STILL LAGGING BEHIND BUT APPARENTLY HEADING UP. SINCE THIS IS AN ALTERNATIVE TO COPYRIGHT, THEY'VE NAMED IT COPYLEFT. IT IS A PECULIAR LICENCE INVENTED BY THE AMERICAN FOUNDER OF THE FREE SOFTWARE FOUNDATION, RICHARD STALLMAN, YEARS BEFORE TORVALDS STARTED WRITING LINUX.

IT IS CALLED GENERAL PUBLIC LICENCE, GPL, AND SAYS EVERYONE IS FREE TO COPY, MODIFY AND DISTRIBUTE SOFTWARE UNDER THAT LICENCE ...



AS LONG AS THEY LEAVE THE LICENCE UNTOUCHED, MEANING THAT OTHERS WILL BE ABLE TO DO WHAT THEY HAVE DONE.



I'VE READ ABOUT IT IN THIS BOOK *THE CATHEDRAL AND THE BAZAAR* BY ERIC RAYMOND.



OF COURSE, I'VE DOWNLOADED THE BOOK FROM THE NET AND PRINTED IT.

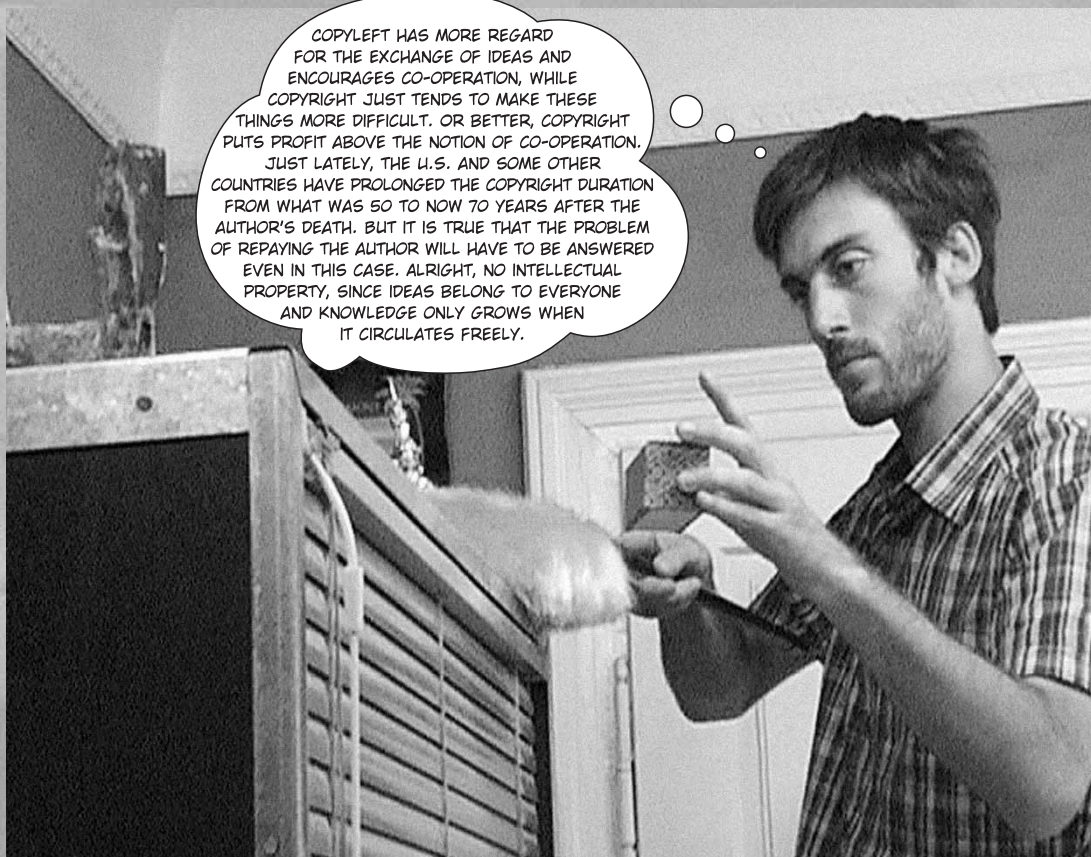




MAYBE THE SITUATION WITH SOFTWARE IS A BIT DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE OF MUSIC.



IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IN THIS SECTOR COPYLEFT MAY WORK BETTER THAN COPYRIGHT.



COPYLEFT HAS MORE REGARD FOR THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AND ENCOURAGES CO-OPERATION, WHILE COPYRIGHT JUST TENDS TO MAKE THESE THINGS MORE DIFFICULT. OR BETTER, COPYRIGHT PUTS PROFIT ABOVE THE NOTION OF CO-OPERATION. JUST LATELY, THE U.S. AND SOME OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE PROLONGED THE COPYRIGHT DURATION FROM WHAT WAS 50 TO NOW 70 YEARS AFTER THE AUTHOR'S DEATH. BUT IT IS TRUE THAT THE PROBLEM OF REPAYING THE AUTHOR WILL HAVE TO BE ANSWERED EVEN IN THIS CASE. ALRIGHT, NO INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, SINCE IDEAS BELONG TO EVERYONE AND KNOWLEDGE ONLY GROWS WHEN IT CIRCULATES FREELY.



BUT WHAT WILL THE AUTHORS LIVE ON?



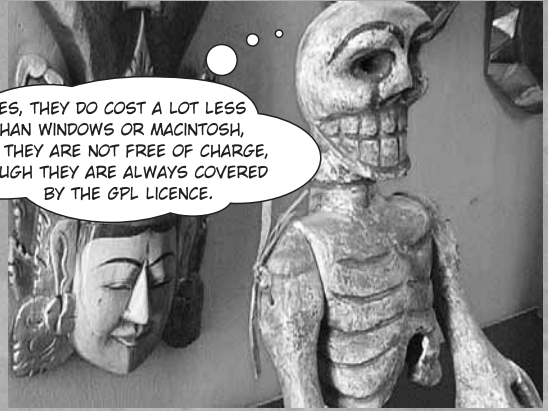
AFTER ALL, EVEN TORVALDS AND STALLMAN BEGAN WORKING FOR COMPANIES AS HIRED PERSONNEL OR AS CONSULTANTS EVENTUALLY.



AND, SINCE THE INSTALLATION OF THE FREE LINUX VERSION REQUIRES SOME SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE, THERE ARE NOW EASIER VERSIONS CIRCULATING, FOR PAYMENT.



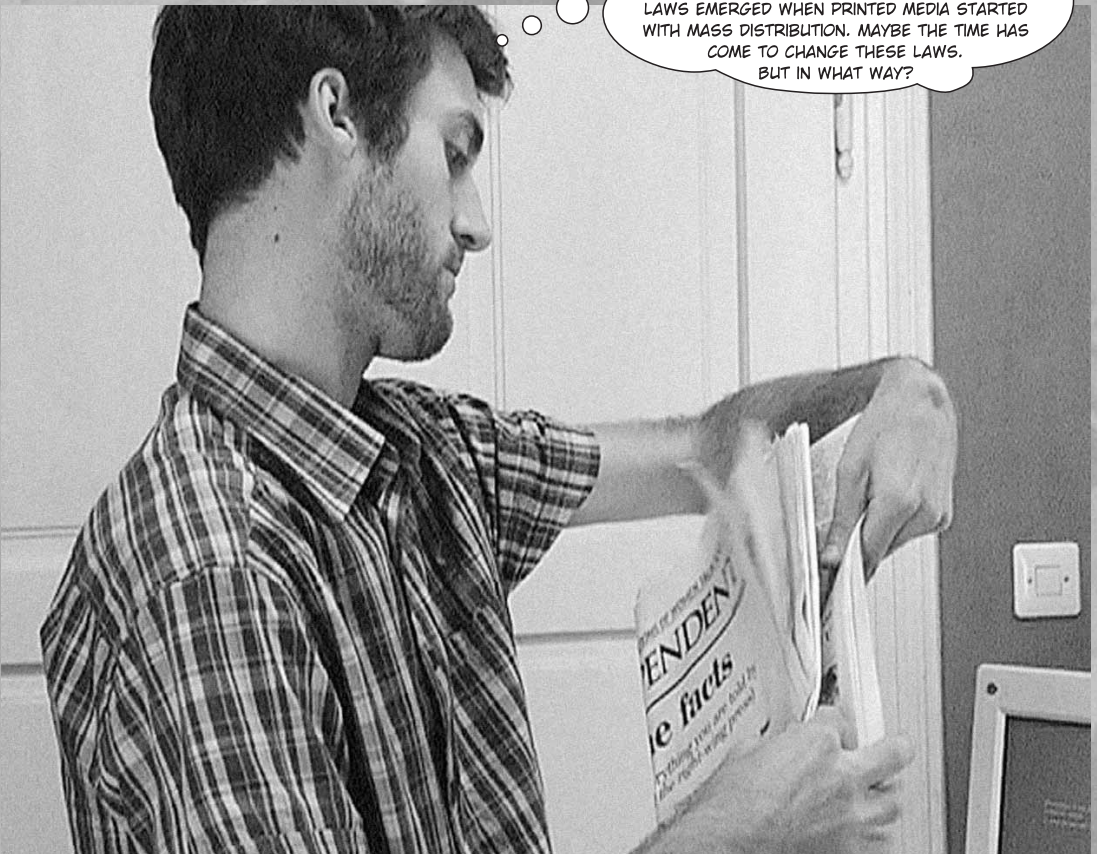
YES, THEY DO COST A LOT LESS THAN WINDOWS OR MACINTOSH, BUT THEY ARE NOT FREE OF CHARGE, THOUGH THEY ARE ALWAYS COVERED BY THE GPL LICENCE.



SO, MAYBE A LITTLE COPYRIGHT IS THERE AFTER ALL.



ALL THESE PROBLEMS DIDN'T EXIST SOME TIME AGO, BECAUSE THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A MORE POWERFUL TECHNOLOGY OF DATA TREATMENT AND DISTRIBUTION THAN THE COMPUTER. COPYRIGHT LAWS EMERGED WHEN PRINTED MEDIA STARTED WITH MASS DISTRIBUTION. MAYBE THE TIME HAS COME TO CHANGE THESE LAWS. BUT IN WHAT WAY?





### Vote!

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Yes

No

% Yes



% No

