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# Reaching A Milestone

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## Abstract

Nowadays there exist many groups of people spreading the word about free software around the world and, despite there is no coordination among these people, the way of approaching non-technical people has been improving over time, as a consequence of such diversity.

GNU/Linux Matters is one of the smallest and youngest organizations in this world, but we have an uncommon advantage: We are not Free Software purists like the FSF (we are a bit more open-minded, enough to make everyday computer users make the switch to GNU/Linux) nor Open-Source believers (Freedom is what really matters for us). We are also a registered organization, an international team with international scope and we are focused on everyday computer users; I do not know of another organization with these features.

Thus — and I hope not to sound arrogant — I see GNU/Linux Matters as one of the few organizations around capable of making a huge step toward Freedom in computing in the long-term, but *we still have a long road ahead of us* and I want to take advantage of this document to draw up the first pieces of the road map.

Please notice that what is written here does not necessarily reflect the current position of the association. This is mostly a set of ideas I would like to carry out on behalf of GNU/Linux Matters.

## Under the hood

We need to work on many things people will not even notice, which are all essential for us to reach a milestone from my viewpoint.

If you are not aware of the inner workings of the association, you might want to skip to *Visible enhancements*.

### Long-term strategy

We have been planning projects for the short and medium term, but we need to focus on the long term as well: We should build a long-term strategy.

As an starting point, I have collected many ideas in this document but I am definitely missing other useful enhancements.

## Corporate Patronage and Corporate Partnership

I think we should change our current approach on corporate partnerships: Corporate partners should be those companies that provide us with their services for free.

On the other hand, we should look for Corporate Patrons in order to get funds for the inner workings of GNU/Linux Matters, such as hiring those contributors who work part and full time.

I particularly like [the way the FSF deals with them](#) and I think we should do something similar. Please notice that the FSF is also sponsored by [privative software](#) vendors, but they explicitly say “The FSF does not endorse the activities of its corporate patrons”.

### ***Testimonials***

In order to encourage companies to join us as corporate partners, we might write testimonials about their services and publish them on our website.

## Strategic Alliances

Those Non-Governmental Organizations that support/endorse all/some of our projects should be referred to as “Strategic Allied”. This is not something very important, but we have been trying to build a cooperation network with some organizations abroad and I think we should define a *formal structure* for such a network.

See also: [Strategic Alliance](#).

### ***Public statistics***

The statistics of our projects should be public. This might help us to get corporate patrons and encourage individuals to support us by making donations, as they would realize that we are sponsoring worthwhile projects.

## XSL Developer

We need someone who masters XSLT and XHTML, so that we can focus on the contents of our projects, among other more important things. We might edit some files related to the look of our projects from time to time, but this should not be part of our day-to-day duties (also, it should be a one-time job).

We might ask a Web Design company to become a Corporate Partner by providing us with these services for free, [if no volunteer comes up](#).

## Visible enhancements

We must sponsor more aggressive projects in order to effectively fight

against privative software. We must be a threat to Freedom-depriving software vendors. *We must defend Freedom in computing as a human right.*

## **We should endorse lifenotreadonly.net**

[LifesNotReadOnly.net](http://LifesNotReadOnly.net) is by far one the best resources related to what we do and we should endorse it, as long as Olivier accepts, of course. Its disclaimer is enough for us to cover our back, I think: *"The authors of this website do not promote or encourage unauthorized copying of media. This page intends to make you reflect upon the policies of media corporations and/or your government. Behave responsibly"*.

This web site deserves notoriety and we should support it, in my opinion. It's not enough to spread the word about it: We also have to endorse it because people who disagree with us could argue "who is this guy to tell people so? yet another *pirate?*"; if it's endorsed by an organization, they will see that it's a serious project (I know it is, but some people might not).

## **LinuxPreloaded.com**

We should encourage hardware stores to sell GNU/Linux pre-installed like we were open-source believers, this is, focusing on benefits other than freedom, since these companies will never do something to defend freedom (they obviously only care about money). We can also use Dell as a case study.

If you look at it coldly, you will see that it would not be against our believe, as we pretend to bring free software to computer users.

We might take advantage of this project to make a profit: We would only list companies that really sell Linux pre-installed; to list foreign companies, they would send us a presentation video of their facilities and some Linux-preloaded computers for sale. We would classify these stores as "normal" (free listing) and "partners" (three types of partners: bronze, silver and gold, depending on how much they pay); they more they pay, the more visible their advertisement will be.

## **UndeclaredRight.info: Free Computing Environment as a Human Right**

We need to make people understand that [a free computing environment is a human right](http://a free computing environment is a human right) and get support from organizations that defend human rights. Amnesty International's campaign [irrepressible.info](http://irrepressible.info) is related to this situation, so we should make AI see this as a human right in order to get their support; this will not be easy, but we should make a try.

We should publish a manifesto on [UndeclaredRight.info](http://UndeclaredRight.info), before getting in touch with these organizations.

## **Unconstrained.info**

We should directly deal with constrained hardware, constrained education,

constrained communication and constrained formats. We can do this via [unconstrained.info](http://unconstrained.info).

### ***Unconstrained Hardware***

When I wrote The Future Of GetGNULinux.org, I proposed the creation of yet another Hardware Compatibility List; later I realized this was a bad idea. Now I propose the creation of a system which classifies a given hardware as constrained or unconstrained, so that we could know which hardware we might recommend and which people should never buy.

What I want is an enhanced version of [FSF's Hardware Devices that Support GNU/Linux](#):

- A community-maintained project, moderated by GLM.
- Do not limit the hardware to those supported under GNU/Linux. It does not really matter whether they are supported under GNU/Linux, what really matters is whether free driver programmers can make drivers for these devices (if they can, then it is very likely that GNU/Linux supports these devices out-of-the-box).
- There would exist two classification criteria:
  - Constrained or unconstrained, depending on whether the manufacturer enables programmers to make free drivers for their devices.
  - Who supports the free driver(s): The manufacturer or the free software community, or “unsupported” if a given hardware is not supported with free software (yet).

We should only recommend unconstrained hardware, no matter whether it is not supported by free drivers yet (very unlikely).

- We would create a multilingual PHP-based website to run this system.
- We could use <http://hardware.unconstrained.info/> to host this project.
- We should also explain the importance of an unconstrained hardware with a brief article aimed at everyday computer users.
- We will issue a monthly two-page PDF with the list of our recommended devices and those devices people should never buy, as explained here: [http://www.nuxified.org/topic/richard\\_m\\_stallman\\_liked\\_getgnulinux\\_what\\_happened\\_in\\_libremeeting#comment-9034](http://www.nuxified.org/topic/richard_m_stallman_liked_getgnulinux_what_happened_in_libremeeting#comment-9034). GetGNULinux.org would also recommend people to print it out and bring it to their favorite hardware store whenever they are going to buy new hardware.

See also: [The road to hardware free from restrictions](#).

### ***Unconstrained Education***

Today's students are tomorrow's employees, consumers and leaders, so we should fight for a free software aware education: This way, citizens will know that

Freedom in computing really matters.

Education should not rely on Freedom-depriving software, such as Windows or Office: Students must be aware of what means using such a software, just like they are taught that freedom of speech is crucial for any democracy.

To address this problem, we might elaborate more on this and publish a manifesto at [education.unconstrained.info](http://education.unconstrained.info). Such a manifesto would be aimed at students, education leaders and parents. We might also take advantage of this site to spread the word about free educational software.

### ***Unconstrained communication***

Societies must not rely on constrained means like closed protocols and we should explain what's wrong with them, as well as suggest they communicate using open protocols (and tell them how to make the first steps). We might do so at [communication.unconstrained.info](http://communication.unconstrained.info).

### ***Unconstrained formats***

We should also explain [what's wrong with constrained file formats](http://what's_wrong_with_constrained_file_formats) and introduce the free alternatives (we should also tell them how to convert their existing files). We might do so at [formats.unconstrained.info](http://formats.unconstrained.info).

### **Propaganda campaign**

This is not my idea, but [libervisco's](http://libervisco's). Why don't we setup a propaganda campaign and open contests for people to send us their artwork? While we are unable to pay for ads in media for the time being, we can publish resources (movies, for instance) which other organizations/individuals could spread in their country/state/city.

For example, the government of my country (Venezuela) have been supporting the free software movement, it has a good deal of power over the Latin American media and I think they might be willing to spread the word about us.

## **Developing these projects**

At this point you might wonder “when are we supposed to develop these projects if we still have lots of pending tasks?” and my answer is: We do not have to start working on them now. As I already said, this document's aim is to draw up the first pieces of our road map, in the *long* term.

On the other hand, I'll develop those projects that don't get accepted (if any) by myself, unless you made me change my mind later.

## The milestone: Reaching the European Parliament

Once both our organization and our projects are stable (say, within a few years), we would be ready to approach governments. While we'd have to take all governments into account, we should have a main well-defined target; if we don't, it would be hard for us to make an important step forward (*Too many cooks spoil the soup!*).

Then we have to decide what would be our main target:

- USA: This country has a huge influence over nations all over the world, but it is the head office of most freedom-depriving software companies. Also, we have no presence over there.
- Asia: A powerful continent, but at this moment we only reach western countries.
- Latin America: It would be relatively easy to get into these countries because of the support some governments give to free software. However, Latin American countries have little influence over other countries.
- European Union: Our home, where also most of us live in. Where non-free software companies make a huge profit (while the most important ones are from the USA). Where these companies lost the software patents war. This supra-nation has a huge influence over other countries.

At this moment, this is a crazy idea, I know. But if you, like me, believe that [a free computing environment is a human right](#), then it makes a lot of sense to make governments understand this too.