The Competitive Advantages

of Free Software

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Summary

- GNU Philosophy

- My Story

- Software as a Life Form

- The Competitive Advantages

- Selection

- Survival

GNU Philosophy

History

- Richard Stallman's good *Ol' Days*

- The printing system

- Non-disclosure agreements

- How to solve this dilemma?

GNU Philosophy

- **G**NU's **N**ot **U**nix

- Free Software

GNU Philosophy

Essential Software Freedoms

- Run for any purpose   (Freedom 0)

- Study and adapt   (Freedom 1)

- Copy and redistribute   (Freedom 2)

- Improve and distribute   (Freedom 3)

GNU Philosophy

GNU General Public License

- If you get the binaries, you can get the sources

- Copyleft: for all, rights Preserved

- No further requirements

Copyleft software remains free

GNU Philosophy

GNU/Linux

- Credit

- Freedom

- Open Source?

My Story

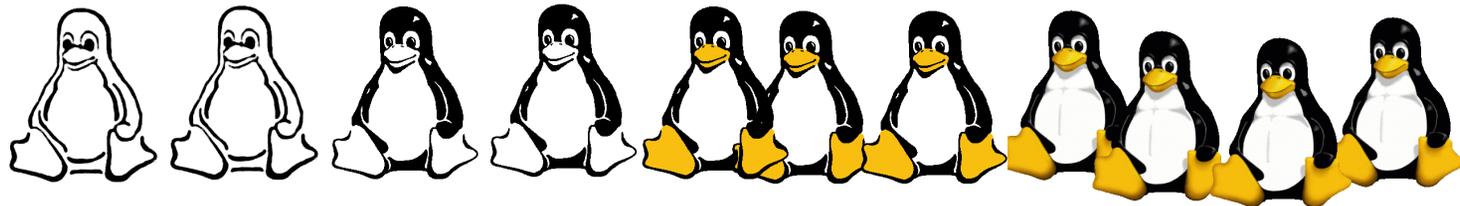Becoming a Free Software

developer

Getting a job at Red Hat

How can this business succeed?

Software as a Life Form

"I think you'll see once open source software colonizes a niche, it will completely dominate it."

Jeremy Allison, *interviewed by ChangeLog*

"[...] dominant forms which spread widely and yield the greatest number of varieties tend to people the world with allied, but modified, descendants; and these will generally succeed in displacing the groups which are their inferiors in the struggle for existence."

Charles Darwin, *On the origin of species*

Software as a Life Form

Species ⟷ Program

Variant ⟷ Release
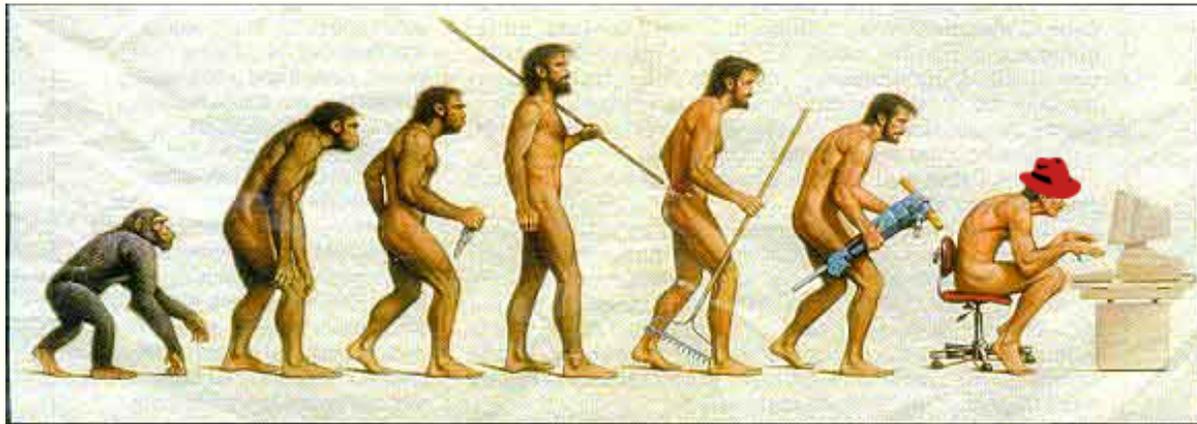
Individual ⟷ Copy

Niche ⟷ Users' requirements

Natural resources ⟷ CPU cycles
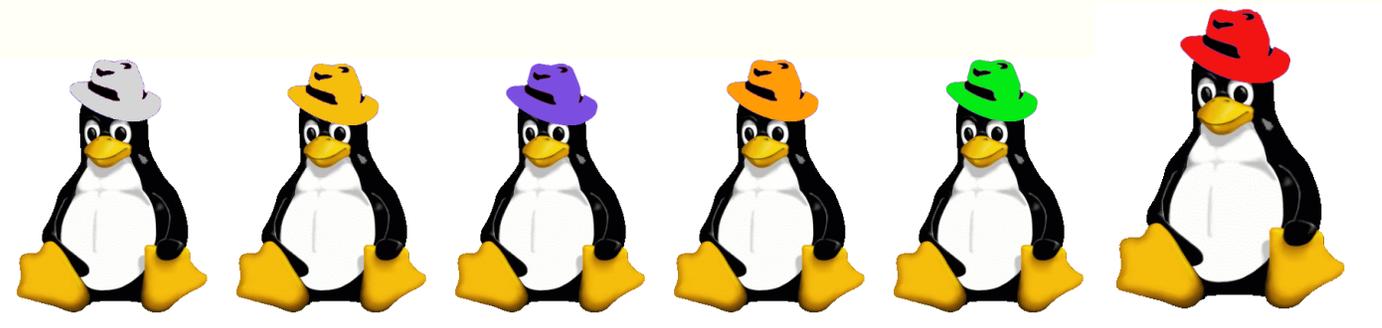
Mother nature ⟷ Developers

The Competitive Advantages

Variation

"[...] variations, however slight and from whatever cause proceeding, if they be in any degree profitable to the individuals of a species, in their infinitely complex relations to other organic beings and to their physical conditions of life, will tend to the preservation of such individuals [...]"

Charles Darwin, *On the origin of species*
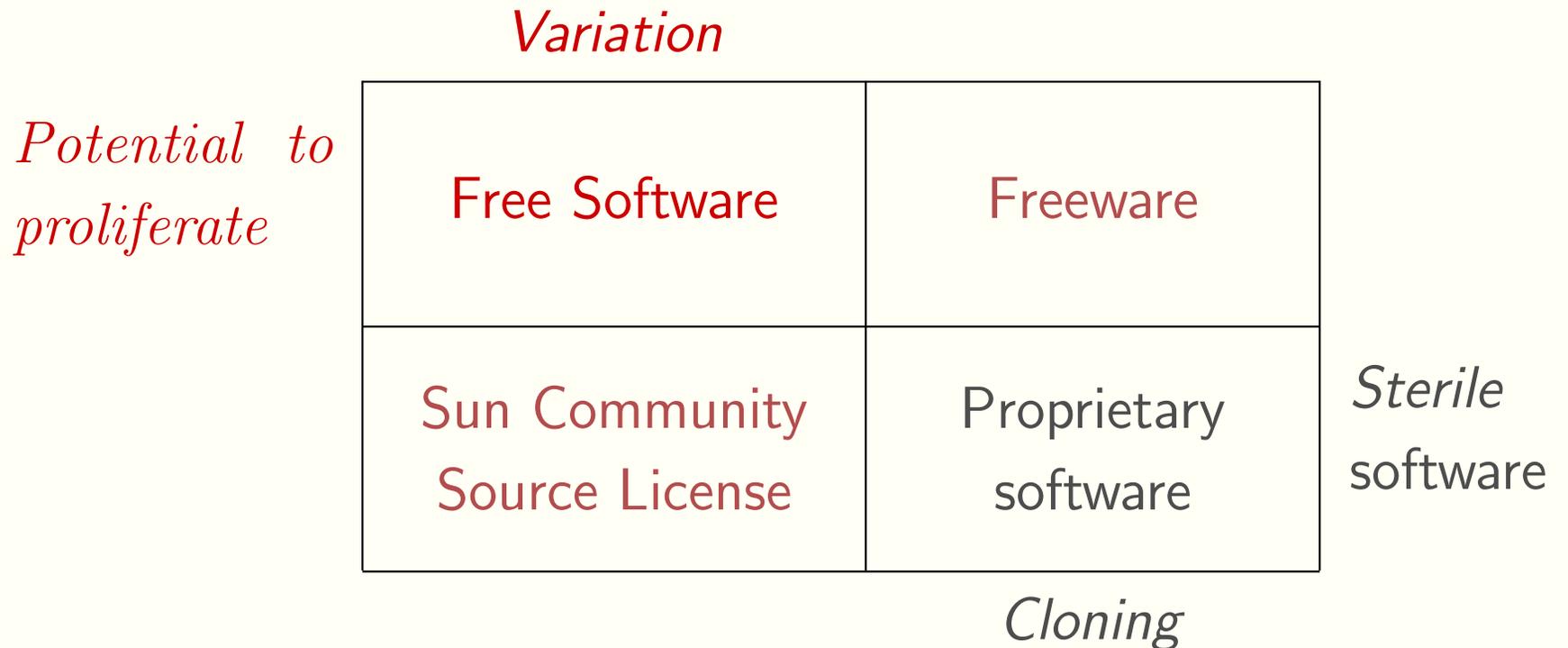
The Competitive Advantages

Reproduction

"A great amount of variability, under which term individual differences are always included, will evidently be favourable [for the production of new forms through Natural Selection]. A large number of individuals, by giving a better chance within any given period for the appearance of profitable variations, will compensate for a lesser amount of variability in each individual, and is, I believe, a highly important element of success."

Charles Darwin, *On the origin of species*

The Competitive Advantages

Variation and Reproduction

Variation

Potential to proliferate

	Variation	Cloning
	Free Software	Freeware
	Sun Community Source License	Proprietary software

Sterile software

Cloning

The Competitive Advantages

Achieving Variation

- User-driven evolution

- Freedom to change

- Contributing back

- Maintenance costs

Selection

"It may metaphorically be said that natural selection is daily and hourly scrutinising, throughout the world, the slightest variations; rejecting those that are bad, preserving and adding up all that are good."

Charles Darwin, *On the origin of species*

- Anonymous CVS

- Changing requirements

- Survival of the fittest

Survival

- Making a living

- Running a company

  − Selling boxes

  + Development

  + Support

- Giving software away

  − Compensation

Free the Software!

http://www.gnu.org/

http://www.fsf.org/

http://www.fsfla.org/

http://www.softwarelivre.org/

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