Libre!

the reboot!

The zine on free software for young people

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Made using all free software. No AI was used in making this magazine.

For corrections, comments and ad sales, please contact the author at carmen@missionlibre.org.

Hello!

Hello and welcome! I'm Carmen-Lisandrette, your host (or maybe humble servant!) and the person behind Mission:Libre. It's great to have you with us!

Let me tell you a little about myself. Back in '05, I was just like you: a teenager newly interested in free software. I was really excited to learn about it, but I was disappointed by how hard it was for someone as young and shy as I was to join in.

Getting older has its downsides -- I miss having joints that don't creak, thankyouverymuch -- but it does make you realise you have to work for the things you care about. Now I'm grown up, it's a good time to build things to help others out. Mission:Libre is something I would have loved to have when when I was your age. I hope you'll find it inviting and fun.

I've adored free software ever since I first heard about it during that magical summer break in 2005. I hope you'll grow to love it just as much as I do. Free software has brought things out in me I didn't know I had. Who knows what amazing talent it will help you find?

- Carmen-Lisandrette

Welcome to free software!

Welcome to the world of free software. We're glad you're here! You've just started a lifelong journey of discovery, of challenging (while protecting) yourself and others to take control over your technology, and of having fun while doing that.

– Zoë Kooyman

Zoë Kooyman is executive director of the Free Software Foundation

Hello gentlepeople,

I'm so happy you're interested in free software.
Controlling our own computing is essential.
Computing I do in my mind shouldn't be under anyone else's control, and computing I do with computers shouldn't either.
When asked to do computing using software I'm not allowed to control, I'm horrified, as I'd be with brain implants for others to control my thoughts. I hope you do too. Help us pursue software freedom for all!

– Alexandre Oliva

Alexandre Oliva is a Brazillian free software activist and GNU contributor

By contributing to Free Software, you take an active role in shaping our society. Whether you program, translate, design, test, and promote Free Software or help others using it, you thereby shape a future in which technology empowers people – not controls them. I am sure you will find solutions to problems the current generations have no answers for and shape a world in which technology respects people and protects democracy.

– Matthias Kirschner

Matthias Kirschner is president of Free Software Foundation Europe

Welcome! Software freedom gives you the power to shape computing so it serves people, not the other way around. Every contribution, big or small, matters. Learn, share, and don't be afraid to ask questions. The journey is rewarding, and you're not alone – I'm glad you're here. The movement needs your voice, your ideas, and your passion.

– Jason Self

Jason Self is a free software advocate

11 things you can do right now to free your digital life

#1: Use your phone less and your computer more

There's a lot more free software for "regular" computers -- desktops and laptops. Getting into the habit of doing what you can away from your phone means you'll have a much easier time switching to free software later.

No judgement here, but if your parents have been on your case about you spending too much time on your phone you'll make them happier, too.

#2: Try free software that works on Windows and macOS

Even if you can't switch to GNU/Linux right now, there's lots of free software that works on Windows or macOS. You might have used free software without even realising it!

Popular programs that run on Windows or macOS include LibreOffice (libreoffice.org), the GIMP (gimp.org), Krita (krita.org), VLC (videolan.org) and Ardour (ardour.org).

#3: Talk about free software with your friends

You can help make change just by spreading the word! Don't be shy about sharing what you know with other people. If one of your friends asks you're not using some platform or why you use a free program, explain why. Who knows who you might inspire!

#4: Explore the Free Software Directory

The Free Software Directory is a guide to thousands of programs to do nearly anything -- all free as in freedom! Clear your schedule and go lose yourself in it at https://directory.fsf.org/.

#5: Make a poster for your school about free software

Making an eye-catching poster is a great way to tell people about free software. Ask your school librarian or teachers if you can put one up in a place lots of people visit!

I'd love to see your posters, especially if they go up. Send a picture to carmen@missionlibre.org!

#6: Write a letter about non-free software at school

You're probably being made to use non-free software at school. Wouldn't it be great if you could use free software instead?

Many school teachers and principals have never heard about free software. If you write them a letter, you could be the one to tell them about it!

I have to be clear: writing a letter won't make them change straight away. But it will at least let them know something else is possible.

#7: Get your data out of the cloud

Some people like to say "the cloud is just someone else's computer!" They're right -- when you save your files somewhere other than your own device, you can no longer be sure it will never be deleted or no one else can see it! Unfortunately, non-free software often makes you save your files online.

There are lots of helpful guides online showing you how to save your data to your own device. Good phrases to search are 'program save data to phone' or 'program save data locally'. (If you're under 13, ask your parents for help!)

#8: Teach your younger siblings about free software

If this were a perfect world, everyone would grow up being taught that sharing software is the right thing to do. That world doesn't exist (yet), but you can at least help your younger brother or sister learn about free software.

They might like Ada and Zangemann, a fun picture book about free software. Why not read it to them? You can find more about it at fsfe.org/activities/ada-zangemann/

If they like making art, install TuxPaint for them (tuxpaint.org). GCompris (gcompris.org) is a fun way to learn maths, science and reading.

#9: Notice how computers affect the world around you

Computers are everywhere, obviously. But have you thought about just how much they affect everything you do?

As you're going about your life, take a minute to notice how computers fit into your day. When do we use them? Who makes the rules about how they're used? Who might benefit or be harmed?

#10: Ditch Spotify and other streaming "services"

Streaming "services" suck. They might promise you an infinite ocean of music and movies, but it all comes with one awful catch.

To control how you use the music and movies streaming services like Spotify, Netflix or Hulu use something called DRM, short for digital rights management. DRM exists to stop you from doing what you want with stuff on your computer. If DRM is going to work, you can't be allowed to have full control of your devices: you are the enemy.

If you can, buy your music and movies in a form you can hold in your hand. Once you've bought something in a physical format, you'll own it forever. You'll be able to lend it to friends and play it on whatever you want.

#11: Keep your personal stuff off your school computer

Use your school computer as little as possible and never use it for personal stuff.

In many countries, schools use software to keep a close eye on you and look for signs you might be doing something dangerous or "anti-social". In some cases, art students and student journalists have been harassed for what they've had on their school computers.

The best computer to do things on is your personal one.

Learn more about how students in Kansas found themselves victims of school surveillance here: https://kansasreflector.com/2024/07/28/spyware-turned-this-kansas-high-school-into-a-red-zone-of-dystopian-surveillance/

Make art and music with free software!

If you like to paint, draw, sing or make movies free software has you covered. Here's some of the best free programs for getting creative!

Krita

Krita (krita.org) is an amazing program for painting on your computer! Using a graphics tablet that plugs into your computers, you can use Krita's brushes to simulate lots of different paint types, from oils to watercolours.

See it in action by checking out David Revoy's Pepper&Carrot (pepperandcarrot.com), a cute comic about a teen witch and her cat.

LMMS

Make some noise with LMMS (lmms.io), a free digital audio workstation! A digital audio workstation is a program which gives you tools to record and edit sound. LMMS is geared towards making music with loops -- think dance music and hip-hop beats.

You can even make music with nothing but your computer's keyboard and mouse! LMMS comes with heaps of digital instruments you can use to compose music by writing notes on screen.

Scribus

Libre! looks pretty good, don'tcha think? That's thanks to Scribus (scribus.net), a free program for putting together books and pamphlets.

If you've got an idea you want to tell the world about, or you just want to add a little extra pizazz to a school project, Scribus can help you make documents that really stand out!

Ardour

If you're a singer or play an instrument, check out Ardour (ardour.org). Ardour is a digital audio workstation like LMMS, but it's more useful for working with sound recorded from life.

Ardour makes it easy to record and edit your performances. You can drag and drop audio around and apply effects with just a few clicks of the mouse.

GNU Solfège

Every musician needs to train their ears to understand what's happening in the music they hear.

GNU Solfège (gnu.org/software/solfege) can help. Among other things, it can teach you how to tell if a note is in tune, name chords by ear and write down music you hear. A little time working through the quizzes will make you so much better at music.

Darktable

Darktable (darktable.org) is an image editor made specially for photos. It can help you retouch and correct problems with your pictures or bring out parts of your photo for artistic reasons. Darktable also has tools which can help you organise a large number of photos, like when you've come back from a long holiday.

KdenLive

Ever wanted to make your own movie? KdenLive (kdenlive.org) is what you're after.

KdenLive gives you the tools to take your uncut footage and turn it into a finished film, from cutting scenes together to adding effects and finishing touches.

Blender

With Blender (blender.org), you can make 3D models and animations, whether that's for a game, an piece of art or a movie.

Blender is used in real movies like Flow, an Oscar-winning animated film about a cat and her friends trying to survive in a post-apocalyptic world. You can watch more films made in Blender at studio.blender.org/films/.

Your Ad Here

Young people in free software are daring, creative and socially conscious.

They're the leaders-to-be of tomorrow's technology industry.

But is your brand able to reach them?

Sponsoring Mission:Libre doesn't just help ensure free software will thrive for generations to come. It makes your brand well-positioned to build relationships with this important but hard-to-reach group -- before the rest!

Want to find out how Mission:Libre can help you?
carmen@missionlibre.org

You can program!

When I was 13, programming wasn't really something they taught at school -- OK, maybe they bored us for a single period with a lesson about making 'hello, world' appear on screen, but that was it. If you wanted to know anything more, you were on our own.

These days, things have changed completely. In fact, you've probably already had a go at writing lots of programs in class.

Maybe you're interested in learning more. If you still haven't learned anything about programming in school, maybe you want to give it a shot on your own. Either way, you're in for a great time. Programming is useful and fun. Let's have a look at some reasons you might want to learn programming and how to start.

Why you should program

1. You want to know more about how computers work

Every program you've ever used is an intricate little machine that contains the ideas of thousands of people. Writing your own programs can show you what goes into the software you use every day.

2. You want to make useful programs.

You don't have to be a great programmer to write code to solve problems. Even a tiny program can be very useful. There's definitely some annoying problem you have that you could write code to fix!

3. You want to help others.

A little program you write can be used by thousands of people -- if you release it as free software! Learning how to program can also teach you a lot about what computers can and can't do and help you think critically about how computers work in society. You can share what you've learnt with other people and help them understand too!

Where to start?

Good first choices for "real" programming languages to learn are Python (python.org) and Racket (racket-lang.org). For learning the basics, Scratch (scratch.mit.edu) is also very good.

How to learn

Find friends to learn with

Learning is easier when you have friends to bounce ideas off. Your school or library might have a programming club. If they use free software, you should join in. Mission:Libre also runs clubs where you can learn programming with other people. Go to missionlibre.org/join-missionlibre to sign up!

Practice, practice, practice

Programming is a bit like playing an instrument or making art. If you want to be good at it, you need to get used to solving problems creatively. The only way to do that is through practice!

Take it slow

It can feel like there's just too much to learn, right?

Learning takes time. Be patient with yourself and don't feel pressured into learning more at one time than you're able.

Hit up your local library

Your library will have tonnes of books on programming. Ask a librarian to help you find a bunch of different ones and read as many of them as you can. If one book is bad at explaining something, another will be better.

Experiment and break things

Books can only take you so far, so take what you learn and play around!

Don't be afraid to break things -- it will tell you a lot about how it all works. Try to do things wrong from time to time and see what happens!

Dont sweat the small stuff

Programming books can be scary. They're big, heavy and long.

But I have good news: most of what's in there is just for you to look up later!

As you learn, try to focus on the big picture instead of worrying about the little things. With time, you'll learn those without even trying.

Help! I'm stuck!

Programming can be frustrating. Here's a short checklist of things you can do when you get stuck:

- ☐ I've taken a moment to make sure I'm calm.
- ☐ I've made sure there aren't any typos.
- ☐ I've checked what I've written against a book or someone else's code.
- ☐ I've tried following the program line-by-line on paper.
- ☐ I've searched the internet for any error messages that come up.
- ☐ I've tried explaining how the program works to someone else.

How to solve a tricky programming problem

Play with it **`Draw it`** **Answer it in the <u>wrong</u> way**

Think about how it's similar or different to other problems

Brainstorm as many possible solutions as you can, no matter how stupid

Break the problem into smaller parts

Acknowledgements

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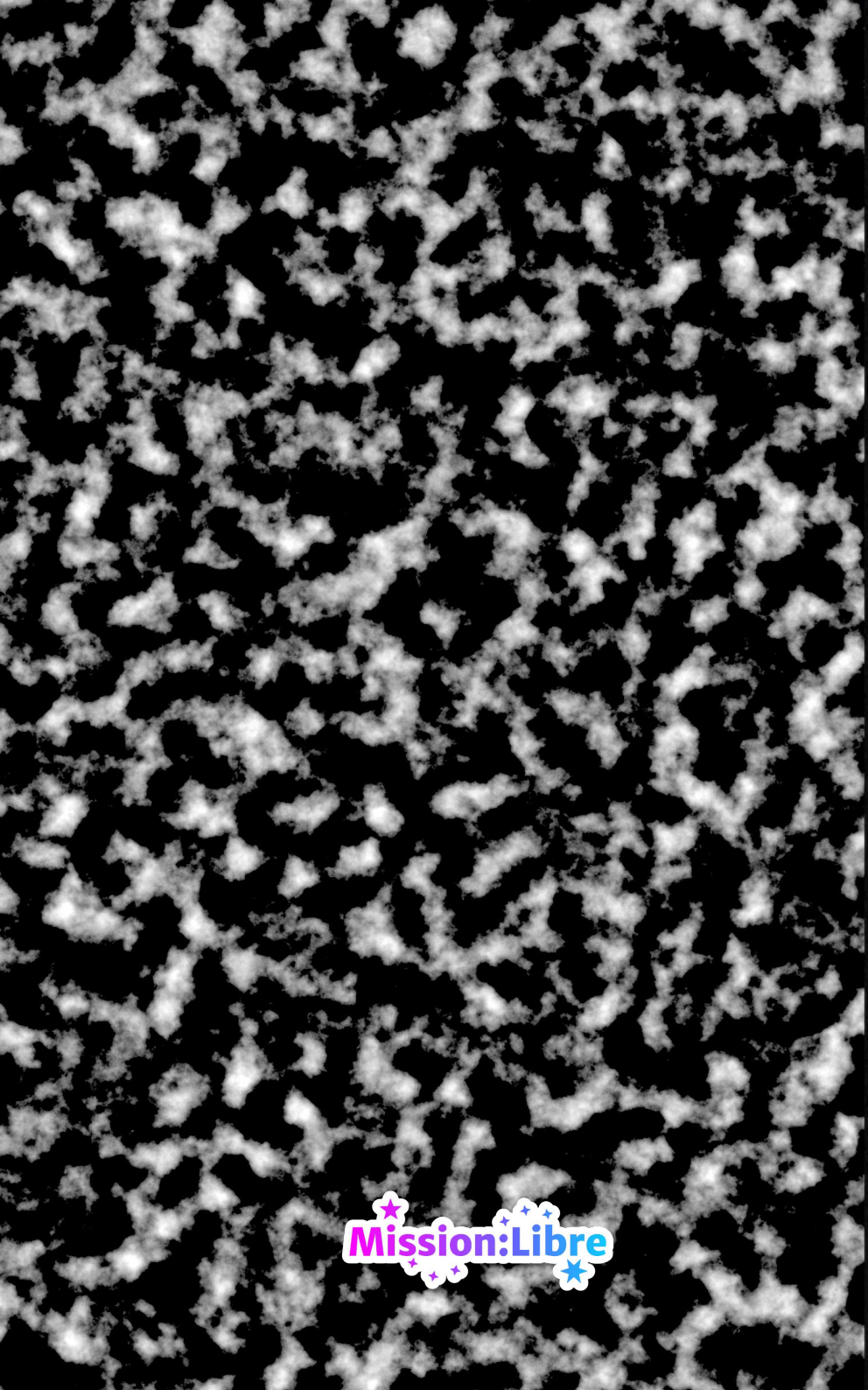
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