

Free And Open Source Software (Use Computer Technology For Happier Living)

Post by “Cassius” of May 14, 2023 at 10:04 PM

This thread might be of limited interest but I discovered tonight that [TauPhi](#) and [Cleveland Okie](#) share an interest with me in Linux and Free Open Source software. We've previously discussed this topic at least in passing in a couple of places, and I may be posting this in the wrong forum (if so we'll move it).

But in the meantime while the iron is hot I wanted to invite Clevelan and Tau and anyone else with an interest in this to add to this thread. For the moment I will just say that all my computers have been Linux for at least ten years, and I find the whole "Free and Open Source" software movement to be something that fits neatly into my ideas that Epicurean philosophy should be spread as freely and openly as possible. The methods used to coordinate volunteer projects in building software (using GIT and similar methods) seems to me to fit hand in glove with methods we can use to coordinate volunteers in propagating Epicurean philosophy. The Epicurean viewpoint is inherently personal and doesn't lend itself to tight central control, and it seems to me that the same methods people have found successful for working together freely on software are a good model to follow in our philosophic work.

Maybe one more example -- I find that two current FOSS software projects -- Obsidian.md and Logseq - lend themselves directly to outlining and organizing the Epicurean material, and I use them most every day.

Ok that's a general intro to the topic but people can get as specific as they want. Apologies to those who are not interested, but this is a good example of a topic that is at least tangentially related to philosophic work, and we invite others with similar specialized interests to do the same in this "Lifestyle and Self-Improvement" section.

Post by “Joshua” of May 15, 2023 at 12:23 AM

It's been cool to see how far open source software has come since I started using PCs. I used OpenOffice (now defunct) in college and the downgrade from Microsoft Office was pretty undeniable. I use LibreOffice now, a successor to OpenOffice, and I can't even imagine wanting to pay for a software license in that area.

I have also used (or attempted to use):

- Linux Mint and Ubuntu (though I'm currently on Windows)
- TeX family typesetting markup languages (primarily LaTeX)
- Audacity audio editing
- OpenShot video editing
- Blender for animation and 3D modeling

But probably the area in which open source software most clearly impacts my life is in the modding communities of the Steam games I play.

Post by “Cassius” of May 15, 2023 at 6:39 AM

Good idea for a list of the open source software we use. The major ones that come to mind that I am currently using:

- Linux (Arch / Garuda)
 - Obsidian.md
 - Logseq
 - Libreoffice (especially Draw)
 - Audacity
 - Openshot and KDElive
 - Nextcloud
 - Thunderbird (email/calendar)
 - and too many other smaller utilities to recall at the moment.
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Post by “Godfrey” of May 15, 2023 at 12:48 PM

[Cassius](#) do you use LibreOffice Draw for your highlighted and underlined text clips that you post? For your other posted graphics? I use other aspects of LibreOffice but haven't tried Draw.

Post by “TauPhi” of May 15, 2023 at 1:00 PM

Cassius makes great points about FOSS (Free and Open Source Software). I'll add few more points to encourage people to give it a go:

-) FOSS gives its users freedom of usage, adjustment and modification that is absent from close source software

-) It's easy to combine different pieces of software to get required results, i.e. get output from program A and give it as input to program B for further processing. It may sound unimpressive and quite alien to people who haven't been exposed to Linux but I promise it opens gateway of limitless possibilities.

-) FOSS does what it was designed to do instead of pretending to do something when in actuality its main purpose is to collect user data, send it to a producer who sells it to the highest bidder.

And here's a list of the software I use most often. A lot of these programs are terminal based but I prefer them to GUI programs because of their extensibility and speed.

Arch Linux - operating system

i3 - windows manager

Neovim - text editor, both for general purpose writing and light coding, combined with Groff software for document formatting

sc-im - spreadsheet editor

Firefox - web browser

Newsboat - RSS reader

MPV - media player

CMUS - music player

Sxiv - image viewer

Zathura - document viewer

Xournalpp - pdf editor

nnn - file browser

Syncthing - synchronization

Post by “Cassius” of May 15, 2023 at 1:18 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

do you use LibreOffice Draw for your highlighted and underlined text clips that you post? For your other posted graphics? I use other aspects of LibreOffice but haven't tried Draw.

Godfrey:

I have never really been able to settle on a paint/draw program or really get comfortable with a graphics editor. I occasionally try GIMP and Inkscape but never take the time to learn it properly. I have found Libreoffice draw to be an easy to use compromise on putting together graphics, but I keep looking for a major graphics program to really take the time to learn.

So as to Libreoffice I don't really use the text and spreadsheet much (I use the Softmaker Office linux programs instead for maximum Microsoft compatibility) but I do use the Libreoffice Draw regularly.

My screen shots with underlined text are done with Ksnip <https://github.com/ksnip/ksnip>

When I want to combine several screenshots or pictures into a larger picture, I take the screenshot with Ksnip and then I paste into Libreoffice draw where I move things around and then add annotations.

Post by “Cassius” of May 15, 2023 at 1:28 PM

[Quote from TauPhi](#)

A lot of these programs are terminal based but I prefer them to GUI programs because of their extensibility and speed.

Well that list shows how hard core you really are, and far advanced ahead of me.

I have heard of most of those and occasionally tried them, but I still use mostly GUI - based programs on an XFCE desktop.

I don't have the occasion to do so much anymore, but I used to like to show my friends how they could better use Linux than windows, so I still mostly use the GUIs and options that look

mostly like Windows so I could work with my friends who will never go full terminal-based.

The one thing that I have not found in native linux is outlining programs, and I am a big outliner. The two I mentioned (logseq and obsidian) are electron apps - which I don't care for - but they work well. In addition to those I still daily use "Ecco Pro" which was abandoned in 1997 but still runs fine in linux/wine.

But I'll repeat here again: I think we have a significant use case in Epicurean philosophy for the use of outlines (which Epicurus pretty much recommends verbatim). I am trying to organize my public domain Epicurean materials into markdown files for use in either an obsidian or logseq database which we could let people download for free so as to get a head start on collecting the sources.

In the meantime, that's how I have made this website:
<https://epicuruscollege.com/coursematerial/>

That's a series of markdown files organized through obsidian and then turned into a website with Mkdocs-Material, which is also a FOSS program for assembling documentation. I am also experimenting with Docusaurus, but I think the Mkdocs-Material system works a little better for turning the markdown files into a website.

Post by “TauPhi” of May 15, 2023 at 1:49 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Well that list shows how hard core you really are, and far advanced ahead of me.

I have heard of most of those and occasionally tried them, but I still use mostly GUI - based programs on an XFCE desktop.

I'm not really that hard core. I just try to use programs which best allow me to achieve what I want. There are areas where I would never use terminal based programs as that would make my life unnecessarily complicated, i.e. all graphics related tasks, web browsing etc.

Post by “Cleveland Okie” of May 17, 2023 at 10:55 PM

One possible correspondence between the use of Linux/open source software and Epicureanism is that Linux illustrates you don't have to have a lot of money to live well. I have used various versions of Linux and in each case I just downloaded it for free.

Linux also make it possible to use cheap, old used computers; an old computer that uses Windows and which is considered so old as to be almost useless can be revived using a "light" version of Linux.

My father passed away last year and I inherited his laptop. I installed Kubuntu on it and turned it into a dual boot Kubuntu/Windows machine. In practice it is Kubuntu that I use almost all of the time. For some reason, I have run into a glitch trying to use Kubuntu for Zoom, so I have had to use the Windows side of things for the "Living for Pleasure" discussions on Zoom. I use Libre Office a bit, but to be honest my computer before this one was a Chromebook and I mostly just use the various Google programs.

In the past I have used other versions of Linux such as CrunchBang, Linux Mint and AntiX, the latter being an example of a light version of Linux I used on an old computer.