

In 2019, multiple open source companies changed course?is it the right move?

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Created 18/10/2019 - 5:04am

Submitted by Roy Schestowitz on Friday 18th of October 2019 05:04:52 AM Filed under [OSS](#) [1]



Free and open source software enables the world as we know it in 2019. From Web servers to kiosks to the big data algorithms mining your Facebook feed, nearly every computer system you interact with runs, at least in part, on free software. And in the larger tech industry, free software has given rise to a galaxy of startups and enabled the largest software acquisition in the history of the world.

Free software is a gift, a gift that made the world as we know it possible. And from the start, it seemed like an astounding gift to give. So astounding in fact that it initially made businesses unaccustomed to this kind of generosity uncomfortable. These companies weren't unwilling to use free software, it was simply too radical and by extension too political. It had to be renamed: "open source."

Once that happened, open source software took over the world.

Recently, though, there's been a disturbance in the open source force. Within the last year, companies like Redis Labs, MongoDB, and Confluent all changed their software licenses, moving away from open source licenses to more restrictive terms that limit what can be done with the software, making it no longer open source software.

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