

# Proprietary File Formats conflict with Equal Opportunities

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In applying for jobs and contract opportunities, the first hurdle is the request for a CV in a proprietary document format. ASCII text, the utmost basic of file formats, defeats many stupid employers and recruitment agencies. Whilst this is useful to help weed out working for companies with stupid people in them, it doesn't help in actually getting work.

The approach which has actually had far greater success, however, in getting companies to change their policy of using proprietary document formats is to explain clearly that the "online application form" contravenes "Equal Opportunities" legislation. This article describes the approaches taken and the success stories, one at a time, by which the proprietary document format practices have been successfully changed.

## Principles don't Cut It

I get contacted by or I contact about one recruitment agency a month. Every single one of them has failed the "My Principles Are More Important To Me Than Your Job" test, except one (and I didn't get the job). So, over the six or so years in which I've deployed this "Free Software Principles" technique, in which I've tried pointing people at the Sylvester Response, there simply hasn't been any traction because these people don't have any incentive to change.

Put simply: when I tell them they're placing a significant burden onto me by expecting me to use proprietary file-formats, it makes me look like a complete f\*\*\*\*\*g t\*\*\*t.

However, eventually, by varying what it was that I said (and I had enough practice) I eventually began to get results.

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