

Debate over the future of Linux platform heating up

By *srlinuxx*

Created 27/01/2006 - 10:46pm

Submitted by srlinuxx on Friday 27th of January 2006 10:46:57 PM Filed under [Linux](#) [1]

Officials at Linspire, the San Diego-based operating system company which uses Linux, said free software advocate Richard Stallman's movement to get Linux inventor Linus Torvalds to change the platform's open source licensing program to GPL3, thus making it impossible to play programs protected with digital rights management, or DRM, would set Linux back in an industry increasingly coinciding with entertainment.

Linspire Chief Technical Officer Tom Welch explained that most music and movies available for legal download on computers now is DRM protected to prevent piracy.

Linux does not currently support DRM, but changing to the GLP3 would prevent it from having the option of ever being able to, Welch said, which from a consumer standpoint puts them at a disadvantage. He said Stallman's plan of making free downloads available on Linux, thus boosting the platform as well as the idea of free software, is many years off and maybe impossible due to the Microsoft and Apple's current dominance over the market.

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