FACiL, pour l'appropriation collective de l'informatique libre

A call to all candidates of December 8th

The Free Software Pledge for job creation in Quebec

Montreal, November 12th 2008 - FACIL, a non-profit organization devoted to the promotion of Free Software, is taking the opportunity provided by the current election to invite all candidates to favour the use of free software in Quebec public administration.

« Free software is software that can be used, studied, and modified without restriction, and which can be copied and redistributed in modified or unmodified form either without restriction, or with minimal restrictions only to ensure that further recipients can also do these things. »[1]

The opportunities for savings on IT costs are very significant; take for example the case of office software. The free software suite OpenOffice.org can adequately replace Microsoft's Office suite. When we know that the latter costs several hundred dollars per workstation and that there are more than 100 000 workstations in Quebec's various ministries and public bodies, we can see right away that the scale of potential savings is in the millions of dollars. In this period of economic crisis, it is curious that our governments are not following the lead of numerous European countries that are in the process of transitioning to OpenOffice.[2] With the knowledge that there is Free Software capable of replacing almost all software used in government today, we are actually talking about hundreds of millions of dollars in savings.

Not only that, free software creates economic activity in Quebec and it could generate much more, since such software, like all software, requires data integration, support, and training. The source code of these programs being public, it would be easy for local companies to offer the State all of these services. We could create a large number of quality local jobs. The use of free software thus permits the lowering of IT costs as well as the creation of employment.

It is from this perspective that FACIL has decided to propose the Free Software Pledge to all candidates in this election. In signing the Pledge, the candidate comfirms that s/he understands the importance of Free Software and, most importantly, that s/he will endeavour to promote its use in public administration.

Please find the text of the Pledge as well as the letter and documentation that has been emailed to each of the candidates on the following website:

http://facil.qc.ca/en/FreeSoftwarePledge

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1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_software>, accessed November 10 2008.
2 France, Germany, and Denmark, among numerous others. See
   <http://wiki.services.openoffice.org/wiki/Major_OpenOffice.org_Deployments>.