

The Freedom Failure Of Open Source

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URL: <https://polar-sun.xyz/index.php?topic=4.0>

The age verification of operating systems in California and Brazil is a failure to defend the ethos of the freedom of users and free/open source software. Computing is a fundamental technology in the present age, something that should be as free to use as a paper, pen, and calculator. All are the medium of the advancement, or dissolution, of thought. These items are the mediums of expressed thought and when the freedom to use them is limited so is the expression of thought. As expression withers so does the thought.

Where was the tech media to warn users and the community? The behemoth Red Hat? Octopus Debian also with vast resources was silent. The process to pass the legislation is not hidden or secret in any way, it is out in the open and public as free and open source software is openly distributed and developed. I heard about it from one source, and even the big corporations like Red Hat and SUSE seemed to have been caught by surprise. Absurd. All the money and attention was elsewhere...

I did a search on Slashdot and no warning, no discussion, until after the legislation passed. Ars Technica has an article from [2007](#) saying that social networking sites having age verification won't cure. As one quote pointed out it gives a false sense of security, and reverting back to negligent behaviour parents will think their kids are safe because of age verification. I have a question; who stores age verification data and how is it transmitted to the organization/company that stores this personal information? How many hands does it pass through? How does anyone know that the ID and selfies will not be used by the criminals? Such a database would be a prime target to be breached and there surely will be breaches considering how many breaches there has been through the years and the sensitivity of the data from past breaches. Imagine the perverts rubbing their hands together at all the pics and information once compromised will be sold on the dark net.

Ars Technica from my quick search has two articles of Texas requiring age verification from [Google and Apple](#) requiring age verification on their stores. Texas is now being [sued](#) with an argument of. "imposes a broad censorship regime on the entire universe of mobile apps". Agreed. I expected with a Slashdot search for there to be discussions

beforehand. I was disappointed. For someone who evangelised the GPL in the early 2000s I feel something like Stallman when the community and special interests betrayed him. I wonder how the porn industry got the Soviet UK to [abandon](#) age verification for their addiction hubs back in 2019.

Discord is backing down from user backlash of them trying the age verification trick of censorship. Government doesn't have to. There is enough cud chewers out there the government will keep mindlessly repeating "safety" over and over which will condition the cud chewers to keep in the field and eating the grass.

The point though is that age verification breaks many of the licenses. It limits the ability to view, modify, and distribute the source freely. The free Internet is only possible because of this ability to anonymously and freely to use information. Age verification limits and restricts the freedom to learn, modify, and use software given as a gift free to the world. All the technology people take for granted exploded into commodity and infrastructure status precisely because there was a lack of restrictions as a barrier to it's modification and distribution. A gift should be appreciated and respected, it is hard wired into most people to do so and also to feel good giving gifts. It is a let down for the free/open source community, and corporations to be blind sided by such a thing. Despite all the talk of rights where was the sentinels? All this AI garbage and nobody used it to protect freedom?

By censoring who can use an operating system you censor their ability to learn about computing. This is the biggest effect in relation to open in open source. The high octane fuel that brang it into prominence was the curiosity and liberty to learn without permission and control. Imagine having to be age verified to write down a note on a napkin because incompetent control freaks with no talent or ability of their own were jealous of yours.

Disturbing times and the fight to keep what has been built keeps getting incrementally harder. What has been a great gift is now being used as a hammer to beat down what made it. Liberty requires constant vigilance and is a constant struggle. Now the vigilance has been neglected the struggle becomes harder.