

Free Culture Manifesto

From FreeCulture.org

The mission of the Free Culture movement is to build a bottom-up, participatory structure to society and culture, rather than a top-down, closed, proprietary structure. Through the democratizing power of digital technology and the internet, we can place the tools of creation and distribution, communication and collaboration, teaching and learning into the hands of the common person -- and with a truly active, connected, informed citizenry, injustice and oppression will slowly but surely vanish from the earth.

We believe that culture is a two-way affair, about participation, not merely consumption. We will not be content to sit passively at the end of a one-way media tube and buy things until we look like the people on *Friends*. With the Internet and other advances, the technology exists for a new paradigm of creation, one where anyone can be an artist, and anyone can succeed, based not on their industry connections, but on their merit.

We refuse to accept a future of digital feudalism where we do not actually own the products we buy, but we are merely granted limited uses of them as long as we pay the rent. We must halt and reverse the recent radical expansion of "intellectual property rights", which threaten to reach the point where they trump any and all other rights of the individual and society.

The freedom to build upon the past is necessary for creativity and innovation to thrive. We will use and promote our cultural heritage in the public domain. We will make, share, adapt, and promote Open Content. We will listen to Free Music, look at Free Art, watch Free Film, and read Free Books. All the while, we will discuss, annotate, improve, improvise, remix, mutate, and throw yet more ingredients into the Free Culture soup.

We will fight to make everyone understand the value of our common wealth, evangelizing for Linux and the open-source model. We will resist repressive legislation which threatens our civil liberties and stifles innovation, such as the Digital Millennium Copyright Act and the proposed Induce Act. We will organize to prevent Microsoft and others from pushing through hardware-level monitoring devices that will prevent users from having control of their own machines and their own data.

We won't allow the RIAA and the MPAA to cling to obsolete modes of distribution through bad legislation and market dominance. We will be active participants in a free culture of connectivity and production, made possible as it never was before by the Internet and digital technology, and we will fight to prevent this new potential from being locked down by corporate and legislative control. If we allow the bottom-up, participatory structure of the Internet to be twisted into a glorified cable TV service -- if we allow the established paradigm of creation and distribution to reassert itself -- then the window of opportunity opened by the Internet will have been closed, and we will have lost something beautiful, revolutionary, and irretrievable.

The future is in our hands; we must build a technological and cultural movement to defend the digital commons.

Version 1.2

This document was adapted from the Swarthmore Coalition for the Digital Commons (<http://scdc.sccs.swarthmore.edu>) manifesto. Edits after 1.0 are provisional until adopted by the Free Culture core.

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