

Open Information Pledge

Using the grassroots

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The 'Grassroots Gap'

Problem

Very few Free Software users / hackers campaign

Solution

A grassroots campaign:

- Identify a problem, push a solution
- Achievable short- and long-term goals
- Achievable tasks for all kinds of activists
- Specific instructions and roles for activists
- Effective coordination and delegation

Two dilemmas for Free Software activists

Barriers to adoption of Free Software

- Software issues
- Data storage and sharing

Barriers to Free Software activism

- Free time, energy, etc.
- Time & energy required to succeed
- What do I do?

The Open Information Pledge

The aim

- Make organisations use open formats
- Create barriers to adoption of restrictive tech.
- Introduce digital rights to the 'masses'

The plan

- Activists lobby organisations they're linked to
- Organisations create policy on open formats
- Possibly an official standard and certification

Open format campaigning

For Free Software

- Improves usefulness of Free Software
- Reduces barriers to Free Software adoption

For the activist

- Easier to explain
- Easier to achieve change
- A stepping stone for Free Software evangelism

How to campaign for open formats?

Accessibility / equal opportunities

- Open for specialist software
- Accessible to cheaper / different software

Long-term strategy

- No vendor lock-in
- More assurance of preservation of data

Ideally

- Build on organisation's existing policy

Example: Reading Uni Students' Union



Reading University Students' Union

R U S U

NEWLY QUALIFIED TEA
REGISTER WITH ALLEGIS EDUCATION FOR RE
Call the Windsor Education Team on: 0178

Good Afternoon

Student Council	Student Council
Homepage	Statement On Equal Opportunities to Digital Media
News	
Group Diary	
Forums	
Report & Plan 2003/2004	
Statement On Equal Opportunities to Digital Media	

Statement on Equal Opportunities to Digital Media

Equal Opportunities within the Student's Union basically means that we will not tolerate any form of discrimination or prejudice of any kind. We also want to create a positive and welcoming atmosphere for all our students, staff and visitors. Student Council is one such place in which this policy is exacted. However, many student councillors do not realise that digital access is just as important as physical access.

- I lobbied my Equal Opportunities Officer
- Policy was written and passed by Student Council
- Training and enforcement is done by myself and the EO Officer

The campaign plan

- Encourage every Free Software user and hacker to lobby an organisation they have links with
- Find politicians (Councillors/MPs/MEPs) who will back the campaign

Possibly

- Create pledge list of organisations that meet our 'standards' (Plain English campaign?)
- Make an official, recognisable standard, endorsed by big players (e.g. major companies, politicians)

Back to the grassroots

- Start lobbying today!
- Work on ways to motivate hackers and Free Software users to take up the campaign

Work that needs doing

- More sample policy documents, letters, etc.
- More success stories
- Working through the ideas of a pledge, and an officially recognised standard

Thank you.

**The future must be open
before it can be Free**