

GitHub as the Latest Example of Microsoft Entryism in Free/Libre Software

By *Roy Schestowitz*

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"This is in effect the very same trick they did/pulled with Novell and SUSE (where Nat Friedman came from after his Microsoft internship) about a decade ago."



THE recent GitHub takeover, which has not *formally* been approved just yet (although there are no foreseen barriers to it), is definitely bad news; it is a lot of things to Microsoft however. It is *good* news only to Microsoft and GitHub shareholders, who basically sold out many developers without rewarding/compensating them for this unwanted (to them) takeover.

There are many aspects to it: First of all, it helps paint Microsoft as "open source" and it helps Microsoft gain leverage over developers, e.g. their choice process of framework/s and licence/s (Microsoft still dislikes copyleft); by leverage over platform they can suggest Azure, for example, or create bindings to it; they gain leverage over projects tied to governments, including some of our clients at work; Microsoft can vainly tell them, i.e. the governments and their developers: "look, you want FOSS? *We're* FOSS" (so they effectively become their own competitor!). In fact, there's so much more and I could easily name a couple dozen examples, but I know people pursue/need concision here. For an analogy, in politics this concept or strategy is [known as "entrism" or "entryism"](#) [2].

Microsoft also uses patents to blackmail FOSS; there's that element too, albeit many people conveniently choose to forget it. Microsoft is sending patents to patent trolls, then offers "Azure IP Advantage". This is in effect the very same trick they did/pulled with Novell and SUSE (where Nat Friedman came from after his Microsoft internship) about a decade ago.

There are *many* other angles to it, including programming languages, frameworks (e.g. proprietary IDEs like MSVS), code editors and not just bindings to Microsoft as a host and API provider. People, especially developers of software,

generally know how E.E.E. works; the basic precondition/premise is that you gain controls/leverage over that which threatens you (Nokia: Elop, Novell: Mono and lots more examples). So that's kind of a way of getting inside, gradually forming a partnership and then shutting down or sidelining whatever threatens you. Like Xamarin did to RoboVM, in effect killing it under Friedman's leadership. Friedman is going to be the chief of GitHub.

Microsoft can direct the opposition's decisions and its fate. Sadly, they already do this inside the Linux Foundation, where Microsoft staff already has chairs in the Board.

From what I can gather, developers ditching GitHub is becoming a fairly common thing this month. I already see the 1) active 2) large 3) non-Windows ones leaving, but it can take time; some told me they still rely on open bug reports and other 'vendor lockin'; that needs some work before they can migrate; the real alternative is self-hosted git. [?](#)

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[1] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/68>

[2] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entryism>