Why Tux Machines Occasionally Adds Editorial Comments

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Created *31/12/2019 - 4:07am*
Submitted by Roy Schestowitz on Tuesday 31st of December 2019 04:07:17 AM Filed under Just talk [1]
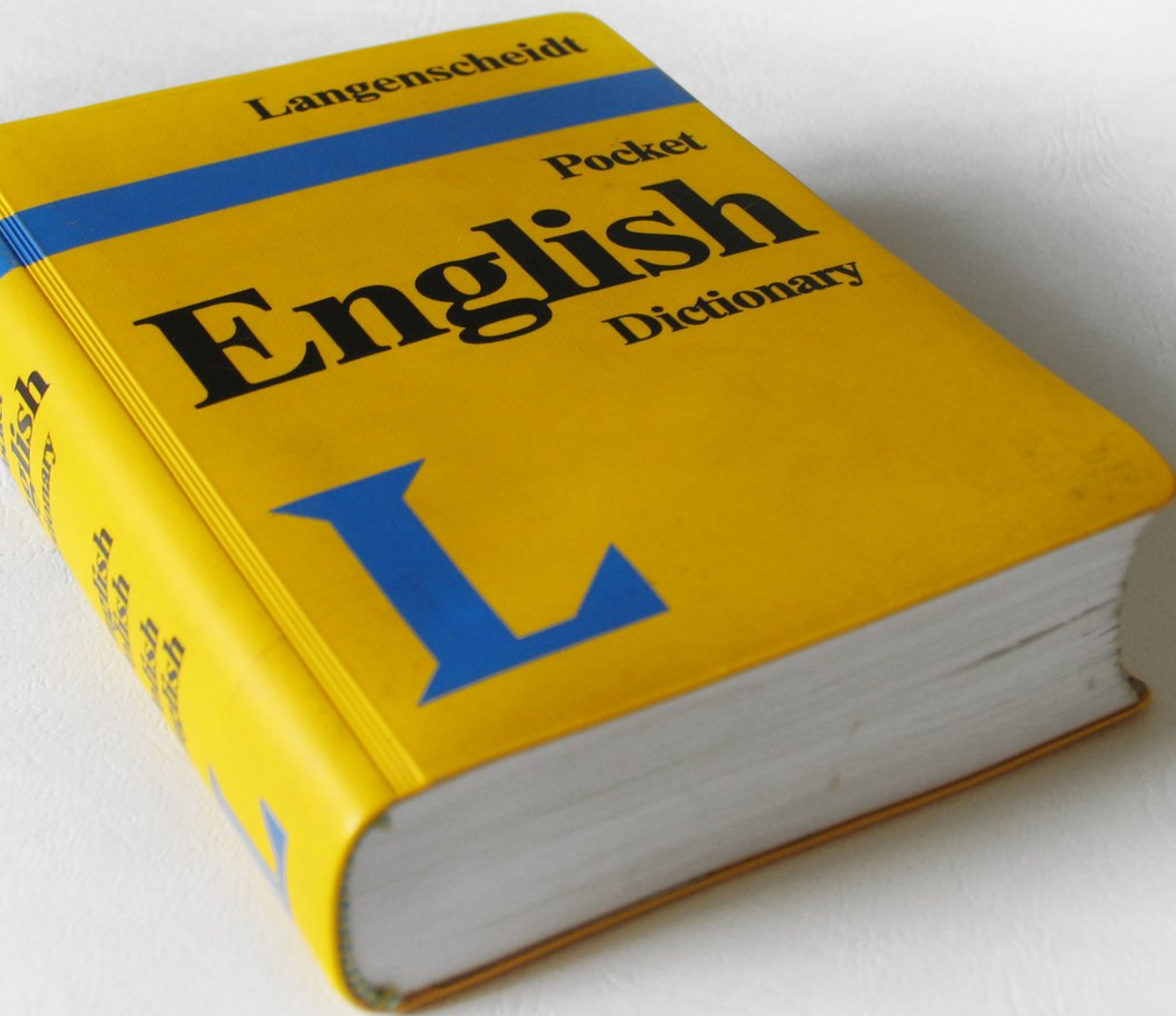
Summary
: Editorial remarks (or Editor's comments, "Ed" for short) play a role in highlighting potential inaccuracies -- and manipulations of the mind -- when those aren't so shallow and aren't abundantly obvious

Recently, and as lately as a few hours ago, Richard Stallman exchanged some messages and we might meet again in a few months (he is traveling to the UK). Stallman and I share a concern about neglect of truth and history; for instance, many GNU programs are nowadays dubbed "LINUX COMMANDS" (I saw one example of that just 2 hours ago) and people sometimes lose sight of the important goals, focusing on brands instead of philosophy, political aspects and so on.

"Sometimes we link to something which isn't entirely accurate or can be misleading."

I would like to take this moment, on the last day of this year, to explain where we stand on issues pertaining to software freedom. A few times in the past one reader bemoaned my editorial comments (marked "Ed"), which typically bemoan something about the cited article/s. Sometimes we link to something which isn't entirely accurate or can be misleading. One example of that is openwashing. Another rather common and increasingly ubiquitous example concerns Microsoft "loving" Linux (it actually loves *Windows*).

We live in a world with Public Relations and marketing agencies. They exist to mislead; they shape perceptions -- that's their business model! To blindly link to just anything online without commentary or curation would likely lead us astray. Truth does matter. Facts need to be checked. This is what *Tux Machines* strives to achieve; throwing the word "LINUX" into something like Google News would expose one to loads of cruft, irrelevant stuff, plagiarism, pure spam and sometimes intentional lies. With no human operator or editor just about anything can be dunked into search results, owing to SEO manipulation and mishandling of indexes. I've seen that for *well* over a decade. Automation just doesn't work; someone who understands the problem domain needs to assess things for quality and accuracy.

"To be fair, comments are open, so readers can respond."

My adult life (since age 18 or so when I became a GNU/Linux user) involved very hard work and lifelong activism for software freedom. Not everyone agrees with me and if sometimes I may say something readers disagree with (e.g. in editorial comments), then it's likely because I try to be realistic, not jingoistic. Moreover, no two individuals will agree on everything 100% of the time. That's inevitable. So some readers might dislike these editorial comments. To be fair, comments are open, so readers can respond.

At the moment, the way I *personally* see it, Free software is under a number of attacks. There are different *types* of attacks. I think Free software will endure regardless. On a more positive note, Free software is nowadays used everywhere, it's just not being called that ("Open Source" is the term corporate media prefers) and it has been leveraged as a low-cost 'cushion' for DRM, surveillance, militarism etc. Think of companies like Facebook and Netflix (GNU and Linux at their back ends). Is this what we strive for? Closed systems that are merely built upon Freedom-respecting stacks?

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Software freedom is a huge objective in a world where almost everything becomes digital (only more so over time). I think it's up to us to somehow guide the world's software towards *ethical* uses, without necessarily *imposing* how it's used, and that is perhaps a future challenge for the Free Software Movement. It's a monumental challenge because politics can be a massive terrain to navigate. Over at *Techrights* I mostly focus on issues such as patents (laws), with emphasis on the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO [2]), the European Patent Office (EPO [3]) granting software patents in Europe [4] and so on. Patents on algorithms are one kind of barrier (among many) impeding Free software adoption. ?

Just talk

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