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[Home](#) > [content](#) > The Philosophy of free software

The Philosophy of free software

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People love a good debate. We asked (with tongues in our cheeks) whether Linux was best understood as being Marxist or capitalist.

The comments that followed were a lot of fun, but most were also well thought out and got us thinking about how Linux and the free software movement fit in to some of the wider philosophical, economic, religious and ethical debates that have pre-occupied human beings over the centuries.

Seeing as even Linus Torvalds has been engaging in such idle speculation, as was shown in his summertime interview with the BBC, we thought it would be fun to continue the conversation.

We're going to take a sideways look at Linux and free software by exploring it through the guise of several of these ongoing debates, taking a look at a few theories and seeing how they might be applied to our favourite operating system.

[rest here](#) [2]

[OSS](#)

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