

A Serious Bio

Richard Matthew Stallman is a software developer and software freedom activist. Born in █████, he attended Harvard starting in 1970 and graduated in 1974 with a Bachelor of Arts in physics. From September 1974 to June 1975 he was a graduate student in physics at MIT.

He worked at the Artificial Intelligence Lab at MIT from 1971 to 1984, learning operating system development by doing it, except for the year he was a graduate student. He wrote the first extensible Emacs text editor there in 1976, and developed the AI technique of dependency-directed backtracking, also known as truth maintenance.

In 1983 Stallman announced the project to develop the GNU operating system, a Unix-like operating system meant to be entirely free software, and has been the project's leader ever since. With that announcement he also launched the Free Software Movement.

Stallman began working on this project on January 5, 1984, resigning from MIT employment in order to do so. In October 1985 he started the Free Software Foundation, of which he is president as a full-time volunteer.

The GNU/Linux system, which is a variant of GNU that also uses the kernel Linux developed by Linus Torvalds, are used in tens or hundreds of millions of computers, and are now preinstalled in computers available in retail stores. However, the distributors of these systems often disregard the ideas of freedom which make free software important, and even include nonfree software in those systems.

That is why, since the mid-1990s, Stallman has spent most of his time in political advocacy for free software, and spreading the ethical ideas of the movement, as well as campaigning against both software patents and dangerous extension of copyright laws. Before that, Stallman developed a number of widely used software components of the GNU system, the GNU Compiler Collection, the GNU symbolic debugger (gdb), GNU Emacs, and various other programs for the GNU operating system.

Stallman pioneered the concept of copyleft, and is the main author of the GNU General Public License, the most widely used free software license, which implements copyleft.

Stallman gives speeches frequently about free software and related topics. Common speech titles include "The GNU Operating System and the Free Software movement", "The Dangers of Software Patents", and "Copyright and Community in the Age of the Computer Networks". A fourth common topic consists of explaining the changes in version 3 of the GNU General Public License, which was released in June 2007. Another topic is "A Free Digital Society", which treats several different threats to the freedom of computer users today.

In 1999, Stallman called for development of a free on-line encyclopedia through the means of inviting the public to contribute articles.

Free Software, Free Society is Stallman's book of essays. Free as in Freedom provides further biographical information.

He has received the following awards:

- 1986: Honorary life time membership in the Chalmers Computer Society

- 1990: MacArthur Foundation Fellowship
- 1990: The Association for Computing Machinery's Grace Murray Hopper Award "For pioneering work in the development of the extensible editor EMACS (Editing Macros)."
- 1996: Doctorate honoris causa from Sweden's Royal Institute of Technology
- 1998: Electronic Frontier Foundation's Pioneer award
- 1999: Yuri Rubinsky Memorial Award
- 2001: The Takeda Techno-Entrepreneurship Award for Social/Economic Well-Being
- 2001: Doctorate honoris causa from the University of Glasgow
- 2002: United States National Academy of Engineering membership
- 2003: Doctorate honoris causa from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel
- 2003: Honorary professorship from the Universidad Nacional de Ingeniería del Perú
- 2004: Doctorate honoris causa from the Universidad Nacional de Salta, in Argentina
- 2004: Honorary professorship from the Universidad Tecnológica del Perú
- 2005: Fondazione Pistoletto prize
- 2007: Honorary professorship from the Universidad Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, in Peru
- 2007: First Premio Internacional Extremadura al Conocimiento Libre
- 2007: Doctorate honoris causa from the Universidad de Los Angeles de Chimbote, in Peru
- 2007: Doctorate honoris causa from the University of Pavia
- 2008: Doctorate honoris causa from the Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, in Peru
- 2009: Doctor of Science honoris causa from Lakehead University in Canada
- 2011: Doctorate honoris causa from the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, in Argentina
- 2012: Honorary professorship from the Universidad César Vallejo de Trujillo, in Peru
- 2012: Doctorate honoris causa from the Universidad Latinoamericana Cima de Tacna, in Peru
- 2012: Doctorate honoris causa from the Universidad José Faustino Sanchez Carrió, in Peru
- 2013: Inducted into the [Internet Hall of Fame](#)