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Red Hat pulls Free Software Foundation funding over Richard Stallman's return

'Many contributors have told us they no longer plan to participate in FSF events, and we stand behind them'

Richard Speed Fri 26 Mar 2021 // 17:29 UTC

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The chorus of disapproval over Richard M Stallman, founder and former president of the Free Software Foundation (FSF), **rejoining** the organisation has intensified as Linux giant Red Hat **confirmed** it was pulling funding.

Stallman **announced** he had returned to the FSF's Board of Directors last weekend – news that has not gone down well with all in the community and Red Hat is the latest to register its dismay.

CTO Chris Wright **tweeted** overnight: "I am really outraged by FSF's decision to reinstate RMS. At a moment in time where diversity and inclusion awareness is growing, this is a step backwards."

Describing itself as "appalled" at the return of Stallman to the FSF board of directors "considering the circumstances of Richard Stallman's original resignation in 2019," Red Hat said it decided to act.



Free Software Foundation urged to free itself of Richard Stallman by hundreds of developers and techies

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"We are immediately suspending all Red Hat funding of the FSF and any FSF-hosted events. In addition, many Red Hat contributors have told us they no longer plan to participate in FSF-led or backed events, and we stand behind them," said Red Hat.

A **governance statement** by the FSF earlier this week that related to transparency in the appointing of directors has done nothing to quell Red Hat's ire, which stated bluntly that the announcement did not signify "any meaningful commitment to positive change."

"Fundamental and lasting changes to its governance" would be needed to restore the confidence of the community, said the Linux distro maker.

Browser biz Mozilla also joined the clamouring, signing up to a **petition** calling for the removal of Stallman. "We can't demand better of the internet if we don't demand better of our leaders, colleagues and ourselves," the organisation **tweeted**.

Melissa Di Donato, CEO of veteran Linux maker SUSE, who signed a petition calling for his removal on behalf of her organisation, **tweeted**: "There is a time to speak out and take a stand when abhorrent decisions are made. That time is now."

Other groups such as **Open.UK** and the **Electronic Frontier Foundation** have also expressed disappointment.

The latter stated: "Stallman's re-election sends a wrong and hurtful message to free software movement, as well as those who have left that movement because of Stallman's previous behavior."

Stallman's re-election sends a wrong and hurtful message to free software movement, as well as those who have left that movement because of Stallman's previous behavior

Stallman's resignation in 2019 followed some deeply insensitive remarks he had made downplaying the alleged rape and trafficking of a 17-year-old girl orchestrated by convicted sex offender and pedophile Jeffrey Epstein.

After Epstein's victim said she had been coerced as a teenager to have sex with the now-late MIT professor Marvin Minsky, who would have been 73 at the time of the alleged assault, Stallman suggested Minsky

might somehow not have known she'd been forced to do so. In the **same thread** on MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory listserv, he also referred to Epstein's victims as a "harem." The remarks led to calls for his resignation and increased scrutiny on Stallman's past behavior as well as on other distasteful comments documented on Stallman's personal blog and elsewhere.

Red Hat's step marks an escalation in the war of words over Stallman's return. As both a long-time donor and contributor of code, the IBM-owned company's action might well give the FSF pause for thought in a way that thousands of outraged tweets might not.

FSF president Geoffrey Knauth **stated his intention yesterday** "to resign as an FSF officer, director, and voting member as soon as there is a clear path for new leadership."

The Register asked the FSF for comment on Red Hat's statement. The organisation has yet to respond. @

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Richard Stallman says he has returned to the Free Software Foundation board of directors and won't be resigning again

OVH reveals it's scrubbing servers – to get smoke residue off before rebooting

Quite a few have come back online, but it takes seven hours to restore each rack

Simon Sharwood, APAC Editor Mon 29 Mar 2021 // 08:00 UTC

French cloud operator OVH has revealed how it is cleaning every server it thinks can be returned to service in its fire-affected Strasbourg data centres.

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Vegas, baby! A Register reader gambles his software will beat the manual system

The house always wins. Even in the Casino back office

Richard Speed Mon 29 Mar 2021 // 07:15 UTC

WHO, ME? The weekend has waddled into the distance and Monday is with us once more. Join us for another episode in our Who, Me? series where a reader finds himself with a plum contract and no other bidders. What could go wrong? What indeed.

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Ship stranded in Suez Canal shifts, but not before spawning some choice tech memes

And not just the obvious ones about containers

Simon Sharwood, APAC Editor Mon 29 Mar 2021 // 05:57 UTC

The ship that's blocked the Suez Canal for almost a week has shifted.

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Taiwan to create new mega tech Ministry spanning industry policy, security, comms, and more

Led by proper CompSci boffin who wants to create a software development industry capable of earning billions

Laura Dobberstein Mon 29 Mar 2021 // 04:57 UTC

Taiwanese officials have announced plans to create a new Ministry of Digital Development.

The Cabinet approved the new ministry last week, along with plans for

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Working from home is the future, yet VMware just extended vSphere 6.5 support for a year because remote upgrades are too hard

Death of Flash means vAdmins still have work to do to stay alive even with relaxed new deadline

Simon Sharwood, APAC Editor Mon 29 Mar 2021 // 03:09 UTC

VMware has extended support for vSphere 6.5 and vCenter 6.5 by a year, and says it needs to do so because customers are struggling to upgrade while their teams work from home/live in their offices.

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Linus Torvalds worries kernel 5.12 might be 'one of those releases' that lands a tad late

Driver and networking changes keep coming and io_uring is being noisy

Simon Sharwood, APAC Editor Mon 29 Mar 2021 // 00:03 UTC

Linus Torvalds has expressed concern that work on 5.12 of the Linux kernel is moving at an uncomfortably slow pace.

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Sadly, the catastrophic impact with Apophis asteroid isn't going to happen in 2068

Astronomers are so confident, this once dangerous near-Earth object has now been struck off official risk lists

Katya Quach Sun 28 Mar 2021 // 11:05 UTC

Humanity can breathe a sigh of relief. Asteroid 99942 Apophis, a 340-metre-wide space rock scientists initially believed to be one of the most hazardous near-Earth objects, will not hit our planet in 2068 as feared, after all.

"A 2068 impact is not in the realm of possibility anymore, and our calculations don't show any impact risk for at least the next 100 years,"

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Apple iPad torched this guy's home, lawsuit claims

Lawyers hope to recover repair cost shelled out by insurer

Thomas Claburn in San Francisco Sat 27 Mar 2021 // 14:51 UTC

A defective iPad sparked a house fire this time last year, a lawsuit filed against Apple has claimed.

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Rogue elements: Hades and Loop Hero manage to draw on the same legacy while having very little in common

Let's go round again, maybe we'll turn back the hands of time

Richard Currie Sat 27 Mar 2021 // 09:20 UTC

THE RPG *Greetings, traveller, and welcome back to The Register Plays Games, our monthly gaming column. This edition we are once again sticking with the indie scene as it's genuinely churning out the most interesting stuff as 2021 coughs and splutters along. Two games this time, both based on a "genre" of sorts that is almost as old as gaming itself.*

We briefly explored the term "roguelike" when we stepped into the *Darkest Dungeon* almost two years ago now. It derives from *Rogue*, an ASCII freeware game developed for Unix systems in 1980 that was all

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Salesforce to face trial after software used by Backpage 'to track sex traffickers, pimps, johns on social media'

Cloud giant manages to dismiss only part of lawsuit brought against it

Lindsay Clark Fri 26 Mar 2021 // 21:46 UTC

Salesforce should face trial after its software was allegedly used by Backpage.com to track sex traffickers, pimps, and their johns online, a judge has ruled.

The SaaS CRM giant was accused of a whole host of wrongdoing in a

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