



# FSFW

Hochschulgruppe für  
Freie Software und  
Freies Wissen Dresden

## „Fund-Raising for Free Software - Thinking Big“

(Carsten Knoll)

# Overview



- ▶ Who we are and what we do
- ▶ Theses about free software for desktop usage
- ▶ Analysis of existing business models
- ▶ Idea: Combination-Model – Selling Support Certificates
- ▶ How to proceed? → Discussion

# FSFW: Who are we?



- ▶ University group for Free Software and Free Knowledge (founded 2014)
- ▶ Projects:
  - ▶ Linux-Install-Party, Linux-Presentation-Day
  - ▶ Encryption competition
  - ▶ Monthly [Help desk](#) (L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, Libre-Office, ...)
  - ▶ Publications: [Programmpapier](#), [Blogposts](#)
  - ▶ Workshops ([git](#), [python](#), [EMail encryption](#))
  - ▶ Weekly lecture (Ringvorlesung):  
„Free Software and Free Knowledge as Profession“
  - ▶ UniStick: 8GB with useful  
Free Software for university students

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# FSFW: Why do we do this?



→ **By Conviction**

▶ **Conviction 1:**

Free and Open Source Software is (mostly) the better choice (technical/non-technical Arguments).

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### ▶ **Conviction 2:**

Scientific contents *financed with public money* (authors, reviewers) should not be sold to *public* libraries for *ridiculous prices* by journal publishers.



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**Nicht:  
Es muss etwas  
geschehen,  
sondern:  
Ich muss etwas  
tun.**

Hans Scholl, „Weiße Rose“

WISSEN SCHAFFT  
EXZELLENZ



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Not:

“Somthing has to happen!”

But instead:

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**GUWAG!**

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# Gründet Hochschulgruppen für Freie Software und Freies Wissen!



## Warum?

- Hohe Dichte an Interessierten
- Zukünftige Lehr- u. Führungskräfte
- Zugang zu Räumen, ...

Mehr Infos: [fsfw-dresden.de/fork](https://fsfw-dresden.de/fork)



**Following thoughts are also available as a blogpost:**

<https://fsfw-dresden.de/funding-foss>



# Theses about Free Software for Desktop Usage



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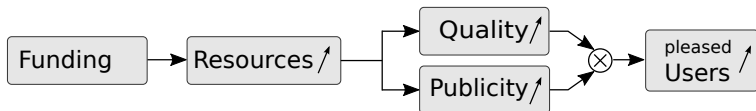


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Why does the concept of “Free Software” work at all?

People dedicate time and effort to FOSS-projects

- ▶ driven by enthusiasm
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- ▶ for money (raised by some existing FOSS business model)

# Analysis of Existing FOSS Business Models

# Existing FOSS Business Models

Wikipedia: 18 business models





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Remainder:

1. Selling of branded merchandise
2. Selling of certificates and trademark use
3. Partnership with funding organizations
4. Bounty driven development
5. Crowdfunding/reverse-bounty model
6. Advertising-supported software
7. Voluntary donations

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Established examples of “irrational spending”

- ▶ Brand awareness and status consumption
- ▶ Future-oriented self-interest

# Combination Model



# Combination Model (Overview)



Project A

User 1

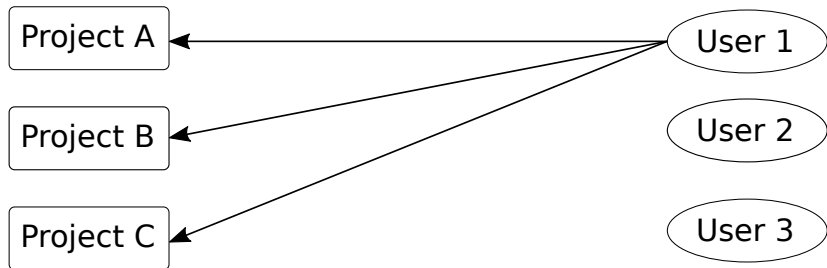
User 2

Project C

User 3

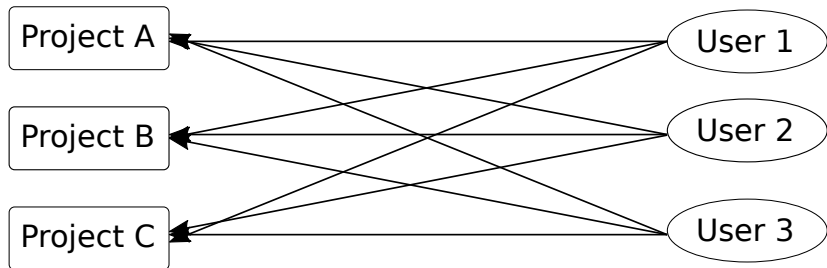
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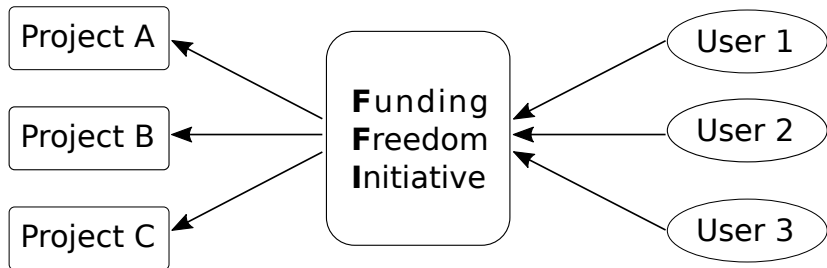
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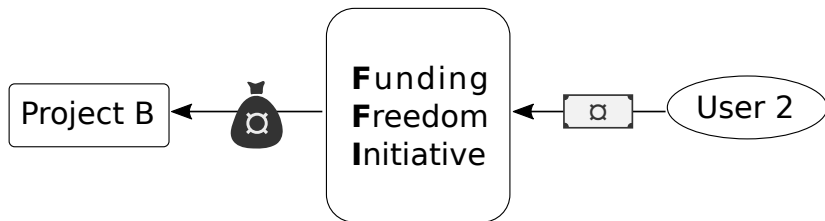
- ▶ Current situation:  $n$ -to- $m$  relationship → bad effort-benefit ratio

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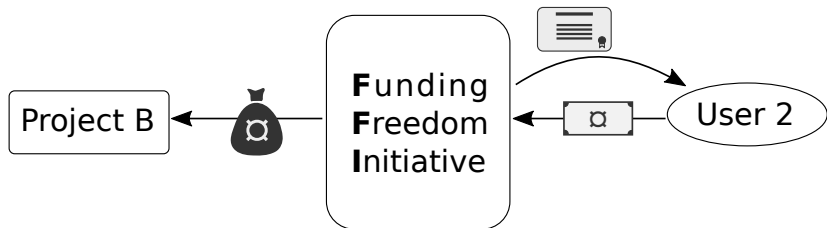
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Working title: “Funding Freedom Initiative” (FFI)

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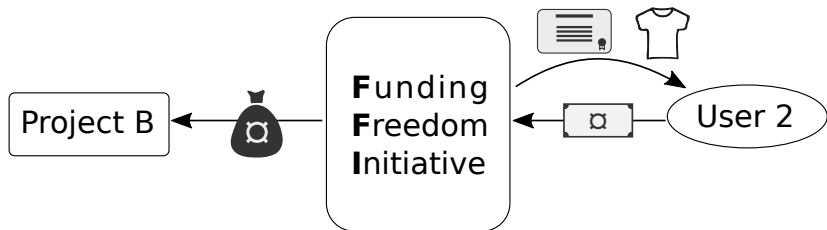
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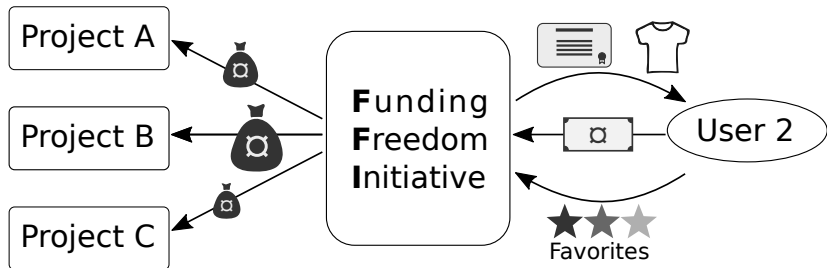
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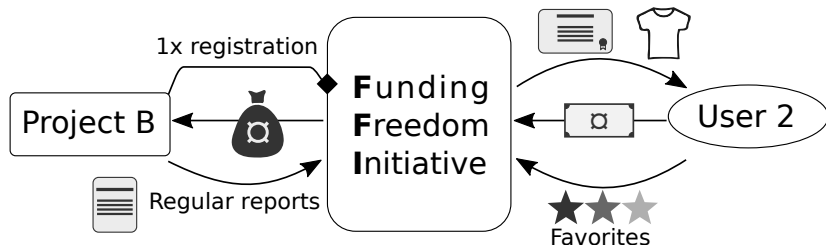
# Combination Model (Overview)



- ▶ Users *buy* “Free Software Support Certificates” for e. g. 0.1 EUR/day (and optionally get high quality merchandise material)
- ▶ Users (optionally) state their preferred projects  
→ Funds can be distributed accordingly



# Combination Model (Overview)



- ▶ Interested projects register once and regularly publish activity reports

# Why should people spend money on this?



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Role model:

think•go climate conscious

atmosfair



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Imagine picture of 35C3 t-shirt queue here.

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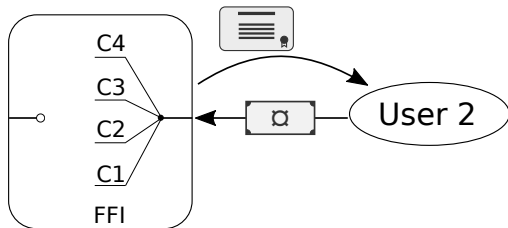


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(Might be controversial → up to discussion)

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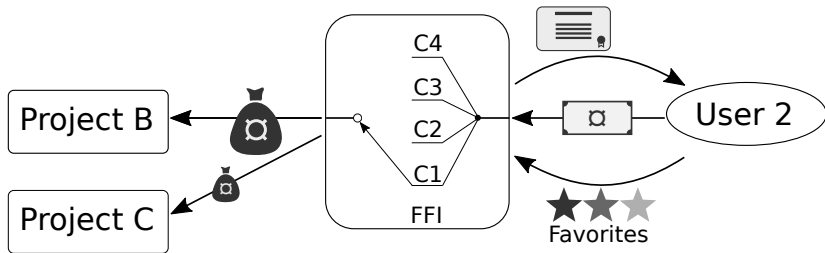


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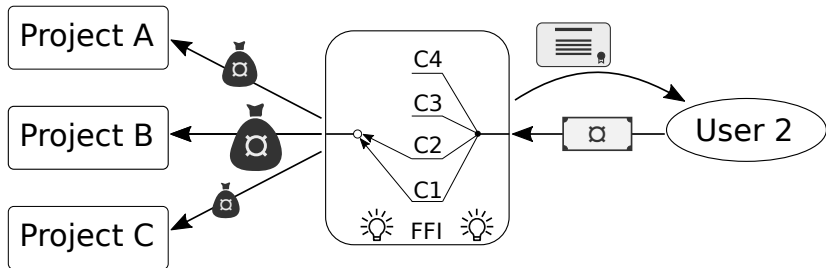
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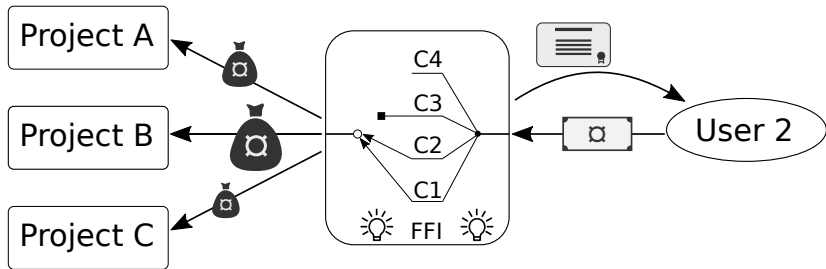
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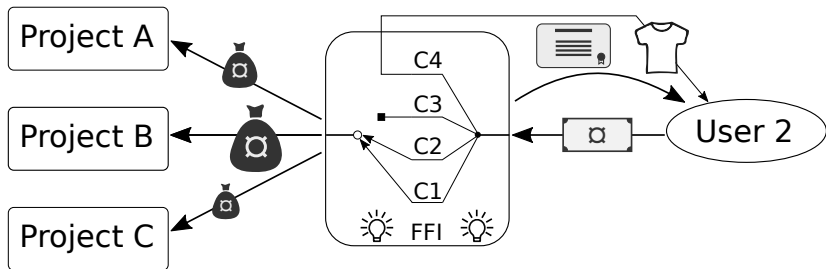
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- ▶ C4 (extra): material cost (merchandise)

# How can embezzlement be prevented?



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→ **More details: see [blog post](#)**

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- ▶ *“Thanks to the money we were able to integrate two employees from our usability team to the project, each with 20% full time. Additionally, a student assistant has updated the documentary.”*

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- ▶ *“In the last quarter, issues were mainly addressed that were highly valued by donors. Details: see release notes.”* (reverse bounty model)



# Potential points of criticisms



- ▶ There are already similar attempts (e. g. [patreon.com](https://www.patreon.com), [liberapay.com](https://liberapay.com)).
- ▶ A critical mass is needed.
- ▶ Commercialization harms the FOSS development.
- ▶ Registration and payment process are too time-consuming.
- ▶ The concept relies too much on trust and voluntariness → risk of low acceptance.
- ▶ The central role of the FFI could, in the long term, lead to an unwanted dependence of certain projects on the FFI.
- ▶ Positive feedback loops could lead to a crowding-out effect of smaller projects and thus reduce the diversity of active projects.
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→ **Possible counterarguments: see [blog post](#)**

# Potential positive effects



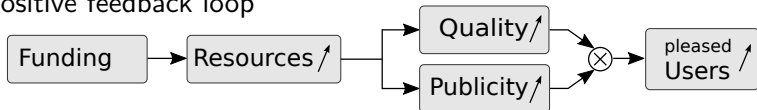
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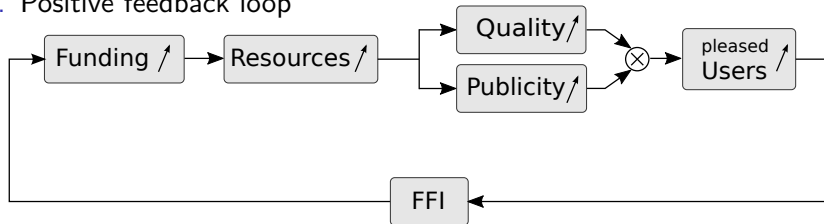
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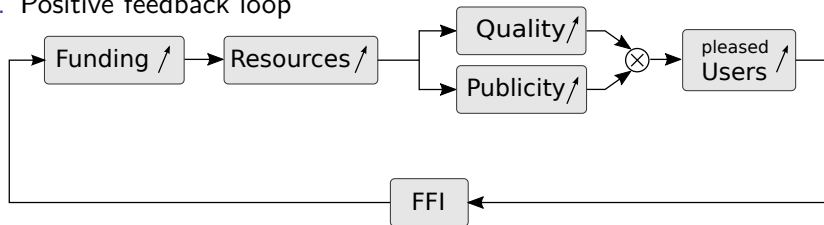
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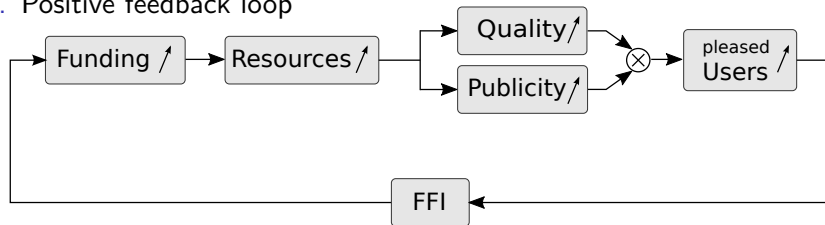


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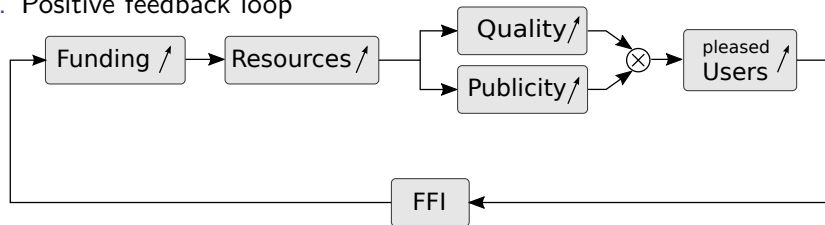


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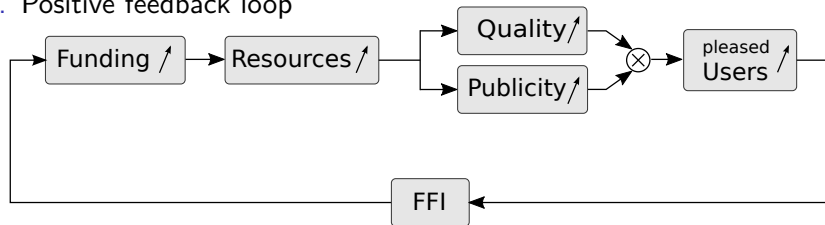




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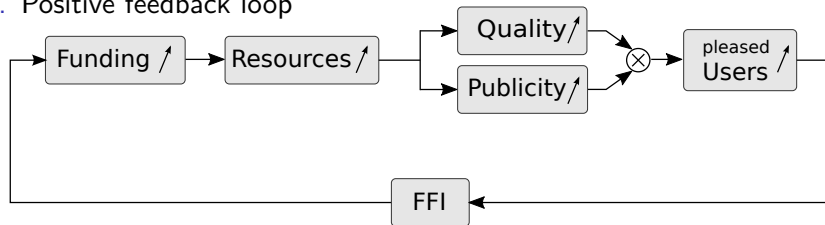
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→  $\approx$  **1000 (global) full time positions**



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→  $\approx$  **1000 (global) full time positions !!!**

# Concluding theses

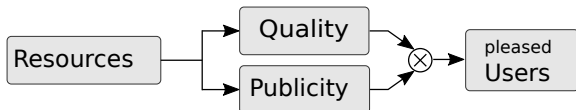


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## Concluding theses



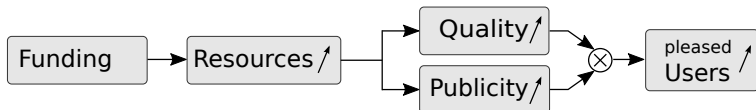
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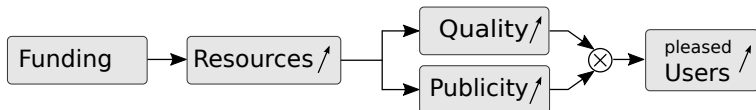
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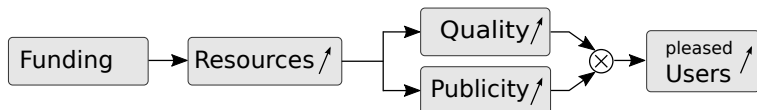
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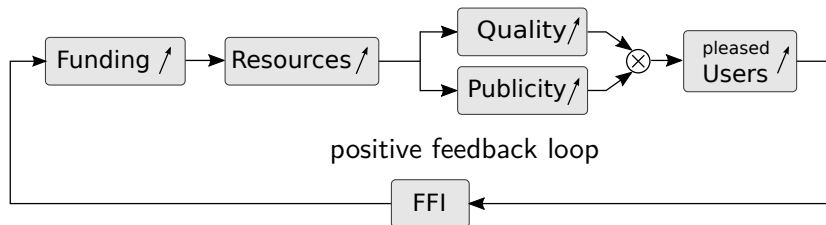
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2. Publicity and quality need to improve
3. Funding can provide the necessary resources
4. There exists a huge funding potential
5. Currently, this potential is poorly used
6. Proposal: organization (“FFI”) to collect and distribute money



# How to continue?



## Discussion of the general concept

- ▶ Realistic?
- ▶ Existing approaches?
- ▶ Opinion from “flagship projects”?



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- ▶ Specify concept details
- ▶ Integration with packaging services?
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## Want to keep track or get involved?

- [fsfw-dresden.de/funding-foss](https://fsfw-dresden.de/funding-foss)
- [kontakt@fsfw-dresden.de](mailto:kontakt@fsfw-dresden.de)



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## Update (after the talk):

- ▶ After the talk a 2h discussion took place
- ▶ Some people exchanged mail addresses
- ▶ The FSFE dedicated a discussion platform for that:  
<https://community.fsfe.org/c/activities/funding-foss>
- ▶ Ideas and comments are welcome in [this pad](#)

