

2010 Free Software Awards announced

BOSTON, Massachusetts, USA -- Tuesday, March 22nd, 2011 -- Free Software Foundation president Richard M. Stallman announced the winners of the FSF's annual free software awards at a ceremony on Saturday, March 19th, held during the LibrePlanet 2011 conference at Bunker Hill Community College.

Two awards were given: the Award for the Advancement of Free Software, and the Award for Projects of Social Benefit.

The Award for the Advancement of Free Software is given annually to an individual who has made a great contribution to the progress and development of free software, through activities that accord with the spirit of free software.

This year, it was given to Rob Savoye. Savoye is a long-time free software hacker, who has worked on GNU and other free software for over 20 years. He has contributed to dozens of projects including GCC, GDB, DejaGnu, Newlib, Libgloss, Cygwin, eCos, Expect, multiple major GNU/Linux distributions, and One Laptop Per Child. Savoye has led the effort to produce a free software Flash player, Gnash. This work has enabled free software users to avoid dependency on a pervasive piece of proprietary software. Rob is also CTO and founder of Open Media Now, a nonprofit dedicated to producing a freely licensed media infrastructure.

Savoye joins a distinguished list of previous winners:

- 2009 John Gilmore
- 2008 Wietse Venema
- 2007 Harald Welte
- 2006 Ted Ts'o
- 2005 Andrew Tridgell
- 2004 Theo de Raadt
- 2003 Alan Cox
- 2002 Lawrence Lessig
- 2001 Guido van Rossum
- 2000 Brian Paul
- 1999 Miguel de Icaza
- 1998 Larry Wall

The Award for Projects of Social Benefit recognizes a project that intentionally and significantly benefits society through collaboration to accomplish an important social task.

This year, the award went to the Tor Project. Using free software, Tor has enabled roughly 36 million people around the world to experience freedom of access and expression on the Internet while keeping them in control of their privacy and anonymity. Its network has proved pivotal in dissident movements in both Iran and more recently Egypt.

Tor Project executive director Andrew Lewman was present to accept the award on the project's behalf.

Tor joins an impressive list of previous winners:

- 2009 Internet Archive
- 2008 Creative Commons
- 2007 Groklaw
- 2006 Sahana Disaster Management System
- 2005 Wikipedia

Stallman and the awards committee also gave special acknowledgment to the work of Adrian Hands, who passed away on February 3rd of this year. Adrian suffered from ALS, and was unable to use a keyboard -- but using a Morse code device and deep dedication, he spent some of the last days of his life writing code to improve the usability of GNOME for himself and others.

This year's award committee was: Suresh Ramasubramanian, Peter H. Salus, Wietse Venema, Raj Mathur, Hong Feng, Andrew Tridgell, Jonas Oberg, Vernor Vinge, Richard Stallman, Fernanda G. Weiden and Harald Welte.

About the Free Software Foundation

The Free Software Foundation, founded in 1985, is dedicated to promoting computer users' right to use, study, copy, modify, and redistribute computer programs. The FSF promotes the development and use of free (as in freedom) software -- particularly the GNU operating system and its GNU/Linux variants -- and free documentation for free software. The FSF also helps to spread awareness of the ethical and political issues of freedom in the use of software, and its Web sites, located at fsf.org and gnu.org, are an important source of information about GNU/Linux. Donations to support the FSF's work can be made at <http://donate.fsf.org>. Its headquarters are in Boston, MA, USA.

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