

The Latin American Free Software Movement

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GOSCON08
GOVERNMENT OPEN SOURCE CONFERENCE

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Latin American Free

Software Movement News:

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A Brief History of Latin American Governments

Venezuela

- Birthplace of Bolívarian revolution against European colonialism (1821)
- Military dictatorships: 1908 – 1935 (Gómez), 1952 – 1958 (Jiménez)
- Oil corruption & Carlos Andres Pérez (1989 – caracazos, 1992 attempted coup)
- 1998: Hugo Chávez, Fifth Republic Movement, 2002 coup, 2004 referendum

Brazil

- Uniquely part of Portuguese Empire, Rio de Janeiro capital (1808 - 1815)
- Brazilian monarchy (1822 – 1889), slave revolts, Republican military coup
- Reign of Getúlio Vargas (1930 – 1954), military dictatorship (1964 – 1985)
- 2002: election of Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva, CUT union federation, PT

Chile

- Official independence from Spain in 1818; Spain entirely out by 1826
- Dictator Carlos Ibáñez (1925, 1927 – 1931), 20 years of constitutional rule
- 1970: election of Salvador Allende
- 9/ 11/ 73 military coup -> Pinochet dictatorship
- Democratic elections in 1989, Michelle Bachelet latest winner (2006)

Nicaragua

- Gained full independence after Spanish colonialism in 1838
- Military occupation by U.S. Marines from 1909 – 1933
- Ruled by Somoza family: 1936 – 1979, execution of ABC reporter Bill Stewart
- Sandinistas & democracy, civil war against the *contras*, 2006 Ortega victory

Argentina

- Declaration of independence in 1816; official recognition by UK in 1825
- Numerous military dictatorships: 1930, 1943, 1955, 1966, 1976
- Dirty War & Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, democratic transition under IMF
- 2001 economic crisis & government collapse; Nestor & Cristina Kirchner era

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Why is the history of Latin American governments relevant to open source?

- Relevance of Socio-Political History
 - on Latin American Government
 - Adoption of Open Source Software:

- Strong civil society (WSF / FSM)
- National security common sense
- Economic common sense
- Internet generation's reactions
- Spirit of open access & knowledge
- Progressive state policy -> open source

“It's not the matter of the technology itself, but the co-operation, working together beyond the boundaries of my organization and that I don't need to have the brand of my organization on every product [...] This is the logic that free software shows us as a great organizational innovation.” - Marcos Mazoni (2008)

“We focus on more than technological metrics, sometimes it isn't about which product does more. This difference of creating things together, sharing and non-competition is the big change that comes with the free software philosophy.”
- Marcos Mazoni (2008)

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CONSEGI 2008: International Congress of Society & Electronic Government (Brasília)

- CONSEGI 2008 (Brasília, Brazil):
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 - First international congress of government officials from Latin America (but also including India, South Africa & other countries outside of the region) to share knowledge, network with each other and collaborate on projects
 - Established collective support of the Open Document Format (ODF), the file format used by OpenOffice, Google and a number of other open source platforms
 - Signing of a letter expressing disappointment about the ISO's decision regarding the standardization of Office Open XML, criticizing them for their “inability to follow [their] own rules.”
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The CONSEGI Declaration was signed by Brazil, South Africa, Venezuela, Cuba and Paraguay. CONSEGI will now become an annual event. Around 2,000 people were in attendance at this inaugural event. CONSEGI was organized by the Brazilian federal government and SERPRO, the hemisphere's largest state-owned IT firm.

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• BRAZIL & SOFTWARE LIVRE

- Brazil recognized as leader within developing world as one of the first developing nations to decree migration to free software by President “Lula” da Silva
- *Inclusão Digital* – an attempt to bridge the digital divide by conducting trainings, building computers labs and using free software to increase computer literacy. From the poorest urban neighborhoods to the furthest reaches of the Amazon, this program is succeeding in that goal.
- *Government Migrations* – by presidential decree, all government and state-owned firms must migrate to open source software. Appointment of SERPRO's director, Marcos Mazoni, demonstrates continued commitment to this goal.
- *GE5AC* – Over 3,500 satellite internet access telecenters for schools, community internet labs, indigenous & peasant communities
- *Free Software in Education* – 52,000 computer labs across the country, serving 52 million students - 29,000 of these labs will be deployed by end of 2008. 2,000 schools in Paraná are using OpenOffice and the government is moving from a private telephone company to VOIP using free software.
- *FLS2* – Every year, the largest free software conference in Latin America is held in Porto Alegre. Also, LATINWARE will occur in November in Itaipu (Brazil/Paraguay energy collaboration) at Foz do Iguacu



Government/Community Software Initiatives:

Expresso is built on PHPGroupware and is a government-sponsored community endeavor.

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• ECUADOR & SOFTWARE LIBRE

- Rafael Correa won the presidential campaign in Ecuador in 2006 and became president in 2007, with a background in economics and having served as economy & finance minister under his predecessor, President Alfredo Palacio.
- The Association of Free Software of Ecuador (in particular, Rafael Bonifaz) reached out to the new president to arrange a meeting between him and free software advocate, Richard Stallman. In a meeting that was supposed to only last 20 minutes, President Correa spoke with Stallman for well over an hour-and-a-half about free software. Since then, President Correa has been one of the most vocal supporters of government use of free software.
- **Decreto 1014**: This presidential decree followed the Brazil model, mandating a switch to open source software by government agencies in Ecuador.
- Gained fame amongst the free software community by establishing a YouTube channel in which he explained the benefits of open software

Presidente Rafael Correa. Invita a usar Software Libre



- <http://www.asle.ec/>
 - Asociación de Software Libre del Ecuador

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• VENEZUELA & SOFTWARE LIBRE

- President Hugo Chávez has also implemented a wide array of computer literacy and access policies, based entirely on free software, including a mandate to migrate government systems to free software.
- *National Security*: Open source began in Venezuela in 2002, when traditional elite owners of PDVSA decided to shut down the company rather than accept the changes implemented by the President, the legal head of PDVSA. SAIC, a proprietary software company, changed all passwords and set up remote control of PDVSA's systems to sabotage (and maintain control) of the company.
- Former head of open source migration in Venezuela, Juan Carlos, said that President Chávez was committed to “open sourcing everything – from the software that runs oil rigs to the software that makes traffic lights work to the software used in schools.”
- Venezuela's free software program is unique in that it has an explicit focus on “open source knowledge”. CENDITEL organizes country-wide to emphasize sharing of knowledge of all kinds.
- Optic fiber throughout the country for universal access



*Third graders Fabiana Aguilar, left, and Angel Rojas, attend a computer class at a Bolivarian school in Caracas, Wednesday, Jan. 17, 2007. The school's computer lab, updated with Linux operating systems was sponsored by the state owned oil company Petroleos de Venezuela S.A. (PDVSA).
(Associated Press)*

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• SOFTWARE LIBRE / AMÉRICA LATINA

• ARGENTINA:

- Community initiatives are pushing for more government adoption of free software, although most initiatives are community- and business-based.
- SOLAR - <http://www.solar.org.ar/>
- The Argentine government has launched “Digital Agenda,” which will forge government IT policy and it is seeking input from the free software community - <http://www.agendadigital.ar/>
- Rosario City's Munix program is a municipal program to adopt free software within the city's government.
- ANSES, the National Social Security, migrated to free software last year and shaved 2 million pesos off their budget (USD \$700k).
- AFIP, the “IRS” of Argentina, has also recently migrated to open source software.

• PARAGUAY:

- Representatives from Paraguay attended CONSEGI to formally announce that they are beginning a government migration to free software, following in the footsteps of Brazil, Ecuador, Cuba, etc.

• CUBA:

- Cuba has been an early adopter of open source software and is using it throughout the country in government offices and schools. They are particularly interested in open sourcing device drivers for medical equipment that might not be available to them because of the embargo against their country. Cuba's university system was slow to adopt open source but announced



• CHILE:

- Chile's government has been slow to follow the lead of other Latin American countries but open source is widely used throughout the private sector in Chile.

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• BOLIVIA:

- As a close ally of Venezuela & Ecuador, Bolivia is beginning to adopt open source policies.

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NORTHXSOUTH



- North by South: A Business Model Based on the Latin American Free Software Movement
- - Core management team in San Francisco (technology manager, project/product manager + 2 other staff members)
 - Developers network throughout Latin America – includes all skill sets required to produce software from idea through to production
 - Geographically-distributed labor force; burn rate is limited because we only pay people when we are being paid by a client
 - We benefit from the free software movement but we also support the free software movement by providing flexible, high-paying “gigs” to free software developers

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RESOURCES & URLS

- free Software foundation - Latin America
<http://www.fsfla.org/>
- International Forum of Free Software
<http://fisl.softwarelivre.org/>
- Brazil's free Software Portal
<http://www.softwarelivre.gov.br/>
- Brazil's OpenOffice Suite: BrOffice
<http://www.broffice.org/>
- Solis free Software Co-operative
<http://www.solis.coop.br/>
- FLSOL free Software Install fest / Latin America
<http://www.installfest.net/>



- free Software in Latin America (English)