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[Richard Stallman is Not the Bad Guy](#)

Posted in [Free/Libre Software](#), [FUD](#), [Microsoft](#), [Mono](#), [Novell](#) at 4:03 am by Dr. Roy Schestowitz



Richard Stallman (younger days)

Summary: *Richard Stallman is smeared for pretty much saying it like it is*

Miguel de Icaza and his online friend Jason Perlow (they occasionally spoke before) seem to be on some sort of subtle attack on Richard Stallman. Perlow wrote a trollish post for ZDNet [[1](#), [2](#)] and de Icaza now portrays himself as a poor victim who is only looking for love. There is little reference (or none) to what led to [Stallman's remarks about de Icaza](#) and the [very rational, factual explanation of why Mono means trouble](#). As Sam Varghese [puts it](#), Stallman merely “comes under attack again”. Apparently, Stallman is not permitted to defend Free software [from Microsoft](#).

It appears to be open season for launching attacks on the head of the Free Software Foundation, Richard Matthew Stallman, the man who is in large measure responsible for the status that free and open source software enjoys today.

The latest attack on Stallman is a lengthy post by ZDNet blogger Jason Perlow and is based on remarks that Stallman is said to have made during the Free Software Day celebrations in Boston.

Other people followed these attacks on Stallman, but some are [Freedom-apathetic](#) ([power preceding Freedom](#)). A lot of them have always disliked Stallman in the first place. In his new blog, Bruce Byfield puts it [politely](#), but others are [obviously trying to dethrone Stallman](#), calling it [dogmatism](#) (missing [the whole point about Mono](#), which is a fundamental risk to Free software, not reason for “dogmatism”), [et cetera et cetera](#).

At Identi.ca, Stallman received [the support of people](#), one of whom writes: “I know what @RMS thinks, because I read the blog post quoting the tweet that quoted a person who was there. And I am outraged!”

Truth be told, here is how [another person put it](#): “#RMS is pretty bad as a diplomatic, alt[h]ough he’s a visionary indeed. I hope people can understand the message by above the way”

Here is [another take](#) from a blog post:

RMS tends to call a spade a spade and he does not accept fluff as substance. M\$’s posturing as being open to FLOSS is absurd. No matter how many millions they contribute to FLOSS, they are not a friend of FLOSS-loving people. Repeatedly they have shown a willingness to buy out the competition rather than to out-compete. RMS is not a great diplomat but neither is he often wrong.

Free software supporters [still do not want Mono](#). It was [never particularly popular](#), to say the least. The same goes for Moonlight.

Now that Silverlight comes to Linux (Moblin, at least initially [[1](#), [2](#)]), people wonder what Moonlight was made for at all. Microsoft explains it [like this](#):

According to a blog entry from Microsoft’s Silverlight team, the initiative will complement their work with Novell’s open source port of Silverlight for Linux, Moonlight.

Jason from Mono-Nono has [another explanation](#):

Novell shocked to be undermined. Everyone else points and laughs.

So, the news is out that Microsoft is bringing real Silverlight to Moblin. This is not Moonlight, this is the real-deal Silverlight 3 in a joint effort with Intel for Atom-based platforms.

A very interesting development.

[...]

Note Microsoft claims “we” (meaning Novell and Microsoft) are building Moonlight. Microsoft says Moonlight is a Microsoft project.

I whole-heartedly agree that it is a “clear extension” of Microsoft’s current efforts. That is phase 2, after all.

In another [new post](#), Jason explains once again the motivations behind Microsoft’s CodePlex Foundation [[1](#), [2](#), [3](#)]:

Microsoft man Sam Ramji reveals some of the Codeplex Foundation’s motivations.

In responding to the devastating criticism of the Codeplex Foundation’s fundamentally flawed organization and the high skepticism of its motives, Mr. Ramji revealed a bit of the true motives behind the Codeplex Foundation:

Look at projects related to Mono, you also can look at NUnit, NHibernate, we really feel optimistic that the Foundation could help them gain a higher level of credibility in the open source community. They feel they have been lacking that strong moral support.

Break that down and chew on it a bit!

Mr. Ramji is saying you know those Microsoft-approved “Open Source” projects like Mono? And you know how the Open Source community keeps rejecting them? Well Microsoft is going to create our own playing field and support them!

[...]

Microsoft is not new at leveraging its considerable resources into creating a rubber-stamp pre-approved situation, especially when the real and existing community doesn't want anything to do with Microsoft's offerings – <cough> OOXML</cough> – and the CodePlex Foundation is just another example of that.

The very idea that Microsoft can even set up an independent Open Source foundation is absolutely ludicrous. Pick any absurd analogy you like: Yankees fans setting up a Red Sox Appreciation Society, the Klan setting up a Civil Rights commission, Nickleback fans setting up a music appreciation group, whatever.

Here is [another new report about Sam Ramji and Microsoft's CodePlex Foundation](#):

Microsoft's CodePlex Foundation leader soaks in stinging critique

In response to criticism from a leading expert on forming consortia, the interim president of Microsoft's CodePlex Foundation, Sam Ramji, says the open source group is in a "beta" phase for its first 100 days and is welcoming all forms of evaluation and critique of its bylaws and governance model.

One KDE developer offers [this reminder](#) of why Microsoft's supposed "openness" is still an unfulfilled promise.

But there are MS Access proprietary file formats (mdb, accdb) that remain to be secret. These are not planned to be replaced by XML formats (what would be overkill in databases). I guess there was no pressure to open the formats, what looks like an overlook in EU and the USA (correct me if there's another reason like patents). If you google for that, it is hard to find even a single mention of file format specifications in the above meaning, and even explanations from MS employees or backers show that they do not fully realize one thinf: MSA formats are not covered by the process of said "opening of the legacy formats".

How timely a reminder of how "open" Microsoft truly is.

In conclusion, rather than attacking Stallman, people ought to learn *why* he reacted as he did. It is a matter of self defense — he is defending our freedom. ■

"Value your freedom or you will lose it, teaches history. "Don't bother us with politics," respond those who don't want to learn."

—Richard Stallman

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