

# Tech Tudor

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2019

## 📌 The Ongoing Witch Hunt Against Dr. Richard Stallman, Some Considerations on Leadership and Free Speech

Since last few days, a ruthless tribal witch-hunt is going on in social media against Dr. Richard Stallman, the founder of Free Software Foundation (FSF) who was morally shamed into resigning as the head of that organization yesterday.



As usual, the media has done a great job of taking his words out of context and scrambling them into a wonderful headline! At the end of the day, he is being targeted for simply having an opinion (however unpopular) in a free country. Freedom of speech (FoS) which has traditionally been a basic human right is being more and more subject to terms and conditions!

After **Guido Van Rossum** and **Linus Torvalds** in the last few years, this is the third case of a renowned public figure in FOSS who is systematically targeted by angry social media mobs for having personal opinions about anything and being forced to quit from positions of power.

Coming to the topic of *leadership*, what message does the open source community want to send to people in positions of power? On one hand, there are popular right wing leaders like President Donald Trump and Kavanaugh who are quite unperturbed by even actual accusations of sexual misconduct, forget having opinions about it! If these netizens had done a similar campaign against Trump, do you think he would have resigned? Nah, Trump has got a much thicker skin than that. So, what message are we sending to power? The message is that start growing a thicker skin and be insensitive to what people are saying about you, otherwise we will keep on morally shaming you into quitting like we did to Guido, Torvalds and now Stallman!

Someone has rightly said that a republic or nation gets the exact leader which they deserve. If netizens think that they should deserve good leaders who care about people's freedoms & rights, and are sensitive and empathetic about their subjects, then they should stop these smear campaigns against them and cut them some slack if they happened to make an unpopular or politically incorrect opinion sometimes. Otherwise, you'll only end up with the "strong", thick-skinned and insensitive leaders because only those can survive in the conditions and environment you are throwing at them!

And trust me, this is coming from a dude who doesn't agree with many of Stallman's political stances. I don't like that he supports Bernie Sanders blindly on everything, I don't like his biased and negative views about Ramayana and Hinduism, but today I'm more concerned about his right to freedom of speech than anything else.

People need to understand that the world isn't black and white, you can agree on some matters and disagree on others, everyone isn't a perfect human being here. But if you start running smear campaigns for their every little opinion and keep targeting them for that, then don't complain if a Trump gets elected in the next elections!

Labels: [linux](#), [open source](#)

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