

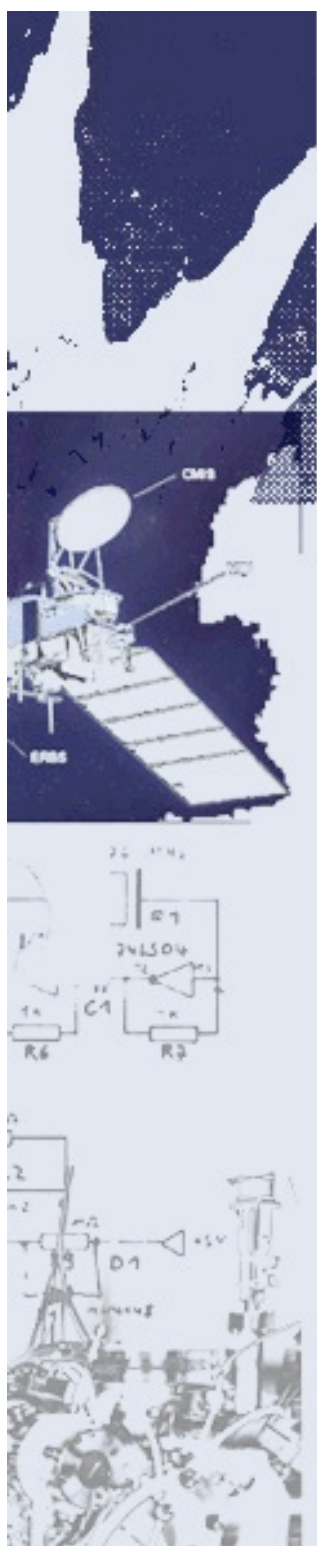
Free Software & Anarchism

Does this compute?

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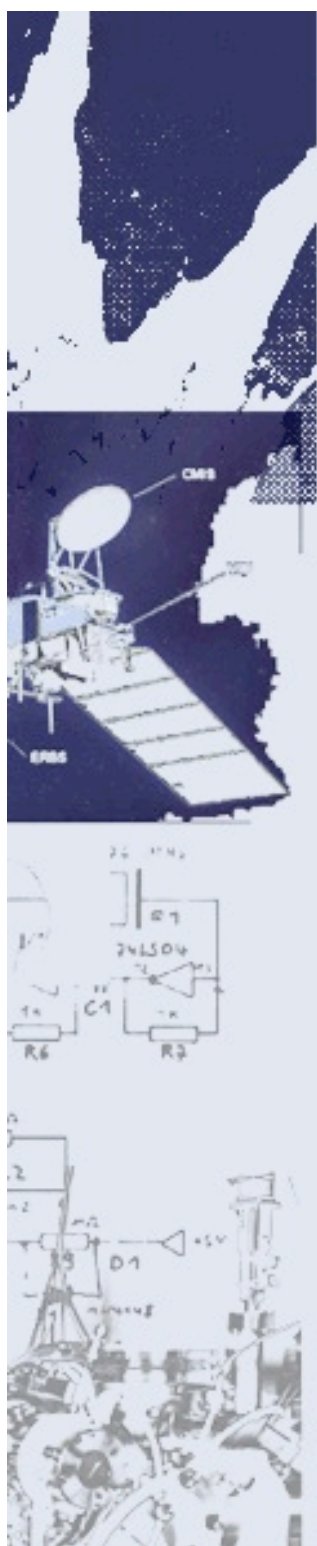
Structure

1. The Connotation: Free Software and Anarchism
2. Anarchism & Anarchical Technology
3. The Case of Free Software
4. A Demonstrative Value
5. Ideas for Anarchical Computing



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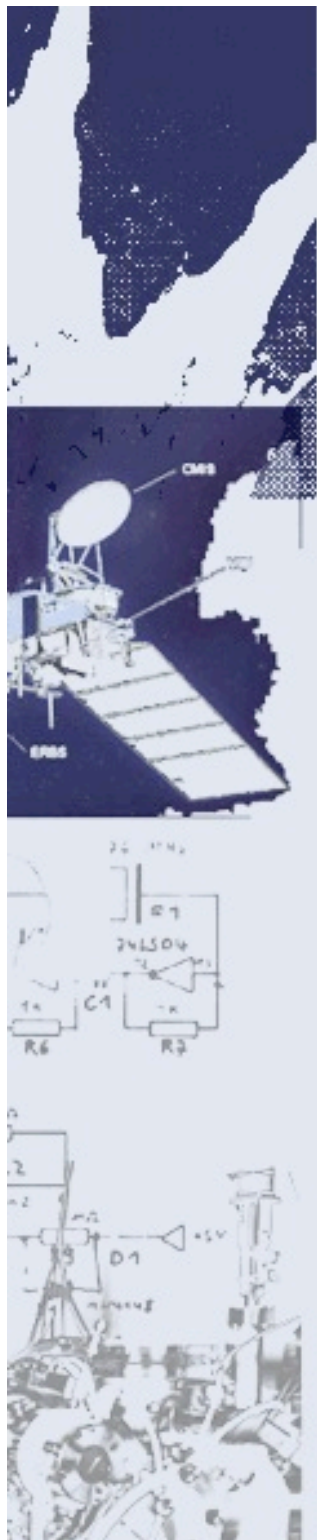
The Connotation

Industrialized Development:

- Corporate interests
- Hierarchically ordered
- By leadership
- Expensive
- Secret

Free Development:

- Users interests
- Not hierarchically ordered
- By consensus
- Cheap
- Open



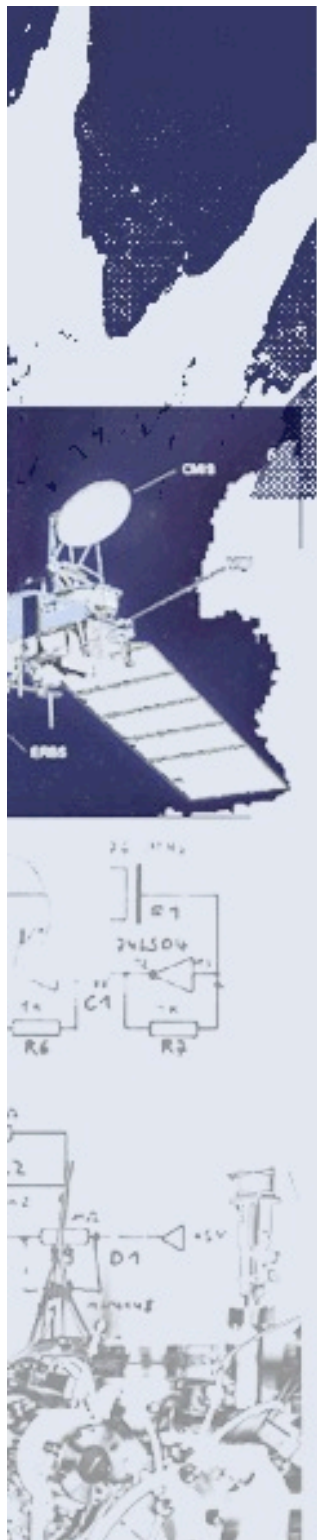
The Connotation

Anarchical elements:

- No leadership or hierarchies
- Consensus-based
- Individual design options
- Open for participation

Negative notions (FUD-initiative/ Microsoft):

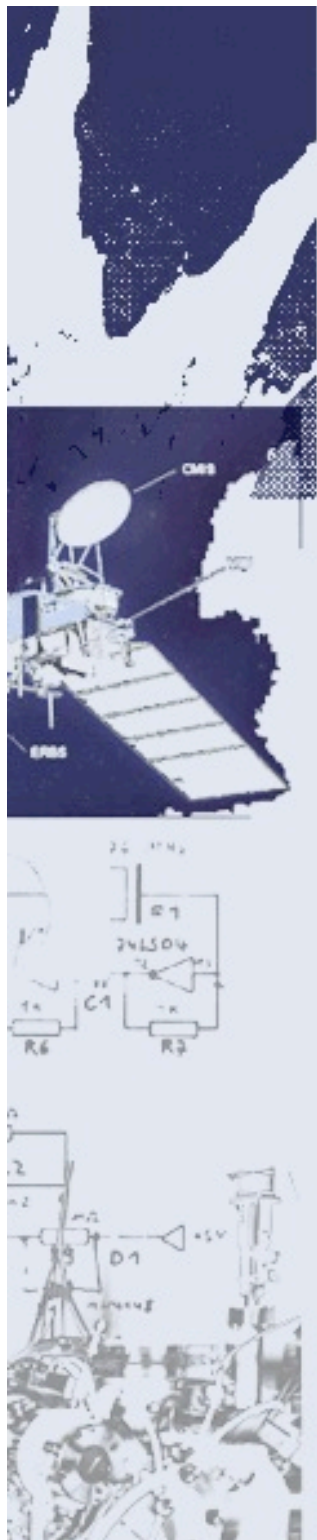
- Orderlessness
- No stability
- No quality



The Connotation

Politicization

- Openness implied:
 - New models of business & production
 - Connections to communities
 - New concepts of ownership & copyright
- Challenges fundamental social structures
- Thus easily extensible to social reform and „revolution“
- Open X-initiatives, Oekonux, institutions

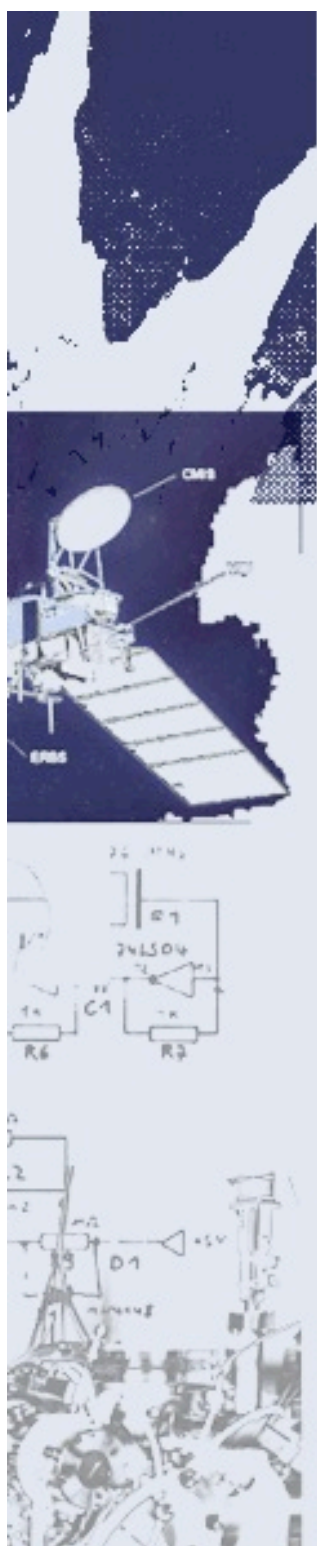


The Connotation

References to anarchy:

Free software development

- „Is a step toward the post-scarcity world“ - Stallman
 - „Counterfeits anarchical methods“ - Milsom
 - „Has anarchists benefits“ - Moglen
 - "Is an anarchist mode of communication" - Vaidhyathan
- ...plus some bad ones

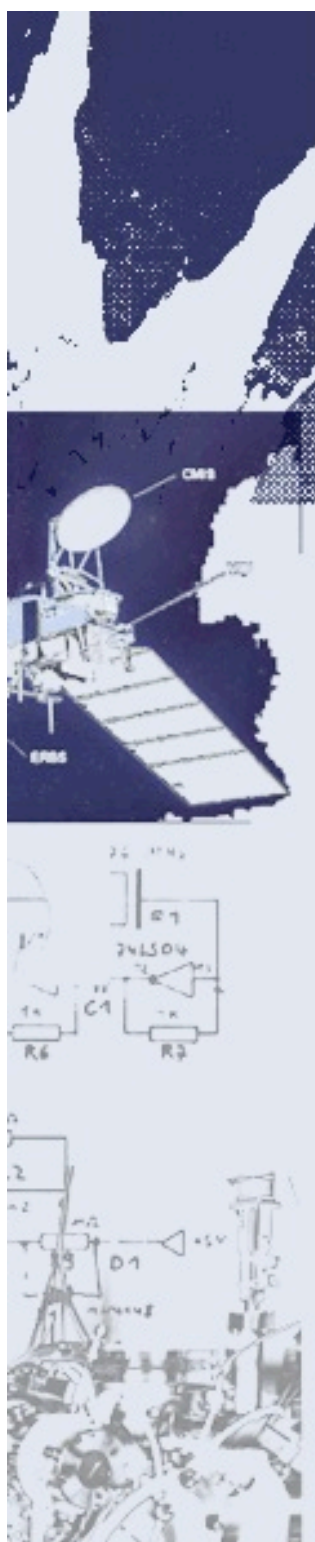


The Connotation

Preliminary criticism of the connotation:

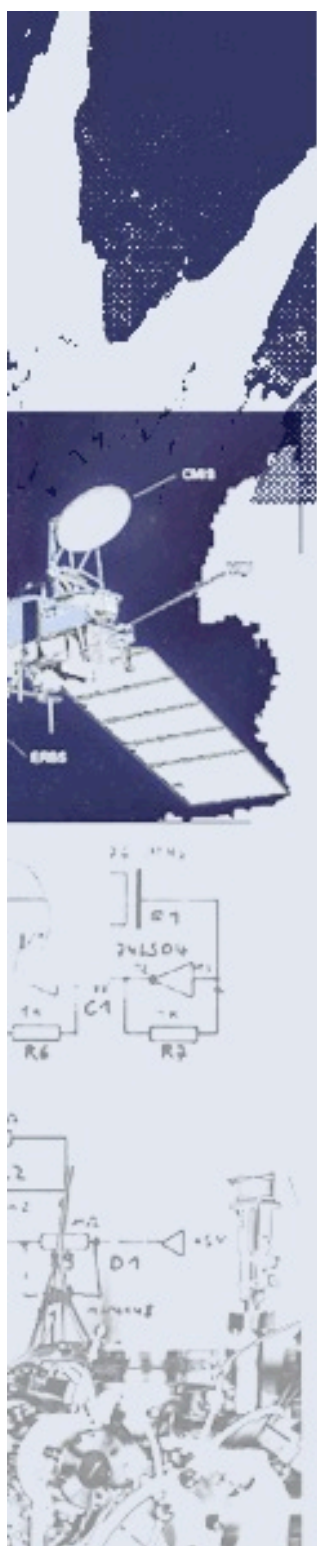
- Not a genuine anarchical program
- No references to anarchical theories
- Rather metaphorical uses so far
- Rather colloquial understanding
- Rather superficial connection

Is Free Software really anarchical?



Structure

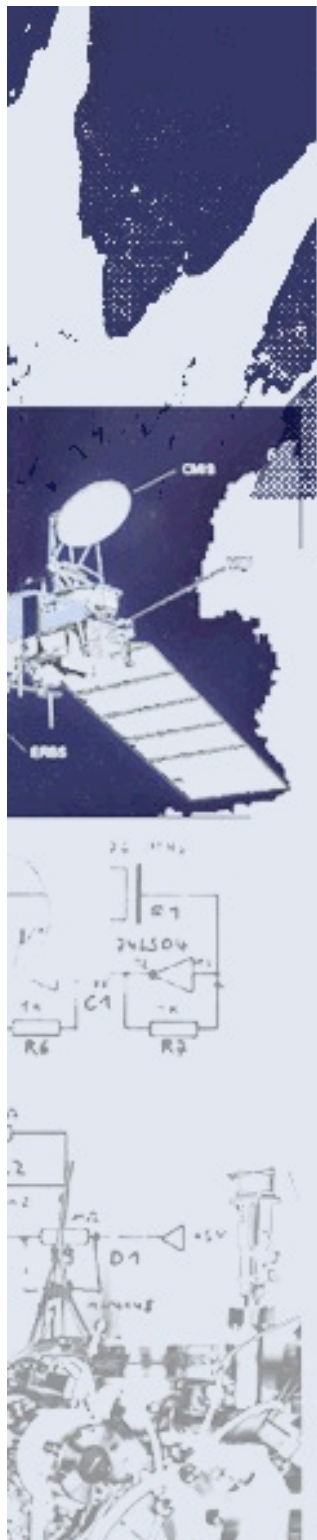
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Anarchical Technology

How can **technology be political**?

- as part of the productive force
- as medialisng power structures
- as technically demanding/
predetermining certain structures for
political/ social actions (inherent
necessities)
- as a conceptual or ideological paradigm
- ...



Anarchical Technology

Politically aware construction of technology:

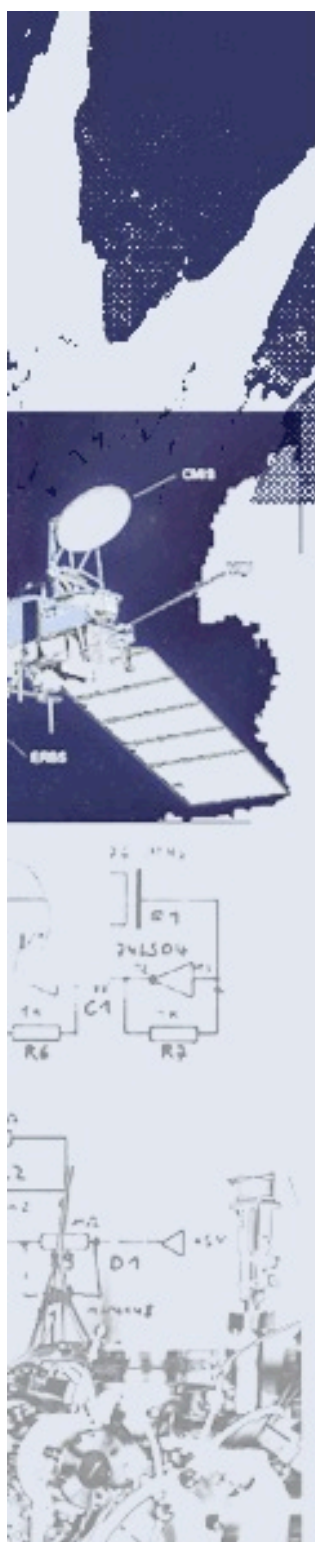
Political
Ideals

construct

Supportive
Technology

Destructive
Technology

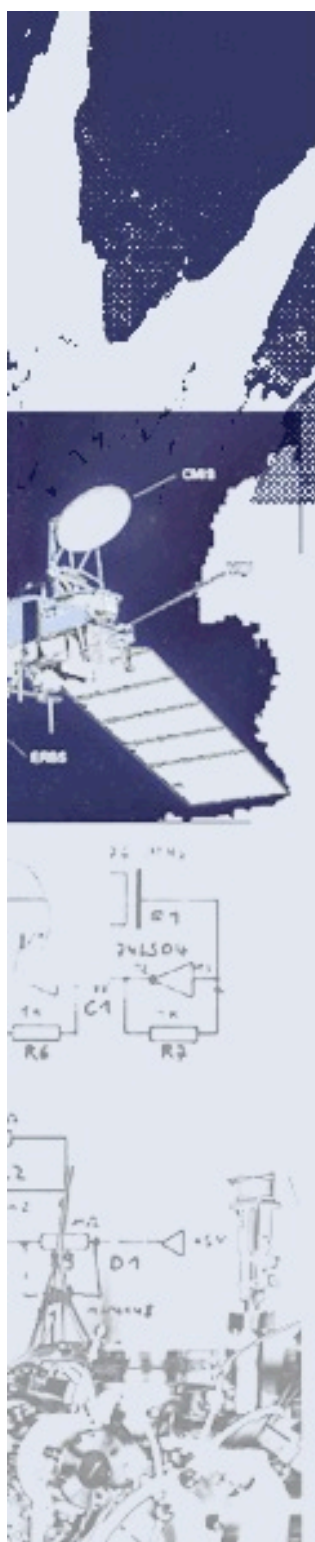
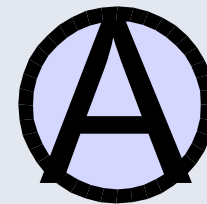
discard



Anarchical Technology

Primary goal of Anarchism:

**Individual liberty which is only limited
by the liberty of others**



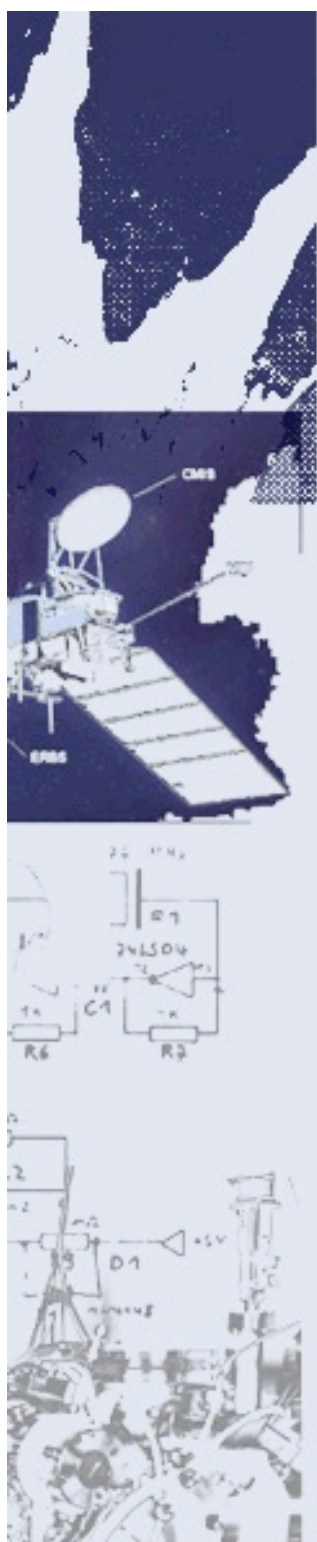
Anarchical Technology

Negative freedom (I. Berlin): Abolition of..

- Authoritarianism & hierarchies of all sorts, implicit or explicit
- Inequalities
- Capitalism, Competition, ...

Positive demands:

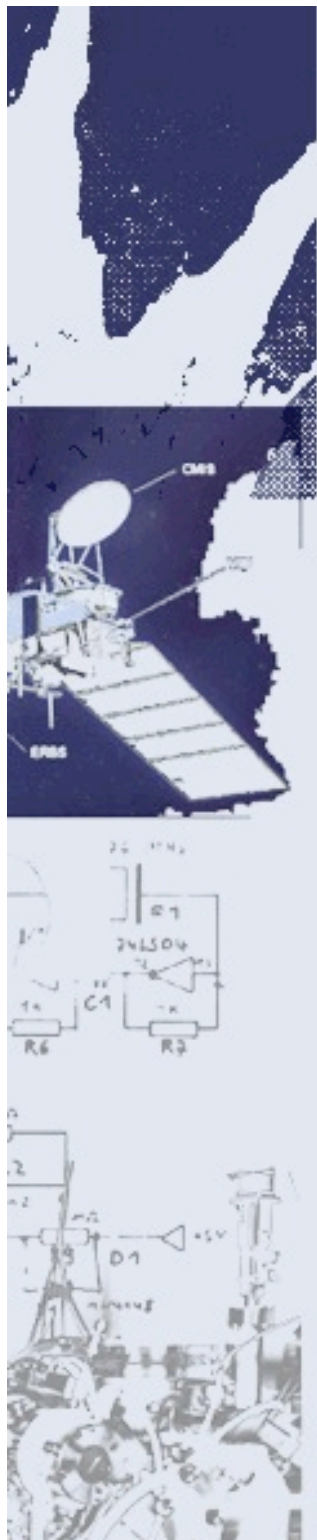
- Self-determination
- Decentralisation
- Communities in free association
- Free agreement



Anarchical Technology

What is an anarchical technology?

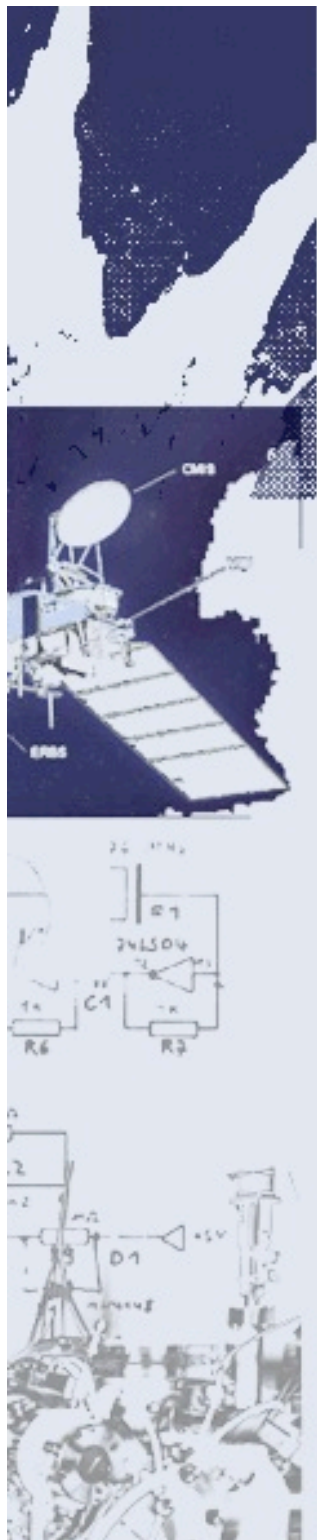
It's a technology which supports the positive anarchical demands while trying to abolish the menaces stated in the negative demands.



Anarchical Technology

Minimal demands:

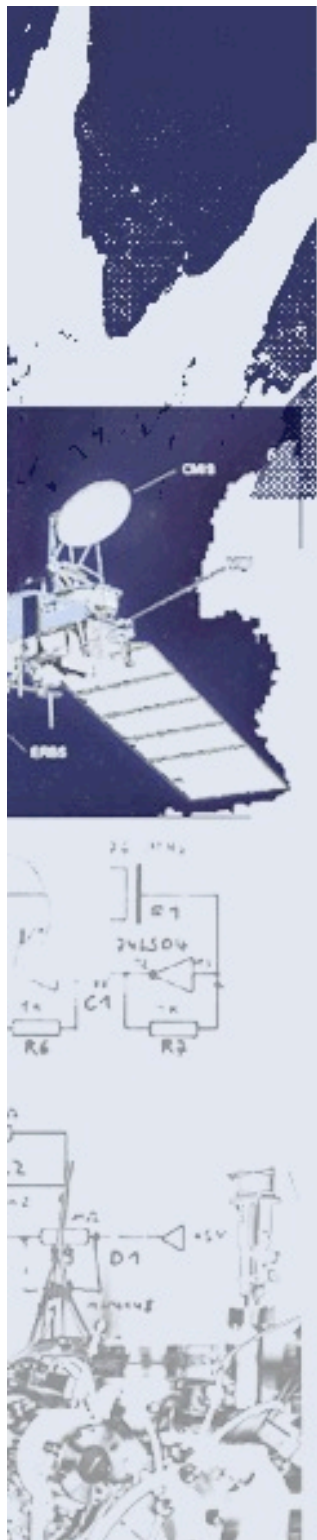
- **Power structures:** not medialisng power principles
- **Size and proportion:** fitted to decentralized, local demands and a few workers
- **Complexity and needed skill:** fitted to little organization, training and maintenance
- **Ressources:** fitted to local ressources wt little energy and infrastructure



Anarchical Technology

Maximal demands:

- **Full automation** and full mechanization of an production
- **Fully sustainable** local production, **renewable** energies and no pollution
- Emergence of „**positive**“ **technologies**
 - which allow people „to further develop their creative and human potentials“ (Bookchin)
 - which proliferate „autonomous and creative intercourse among persons“ (Illich)



Anarchical Technology

Negative example:

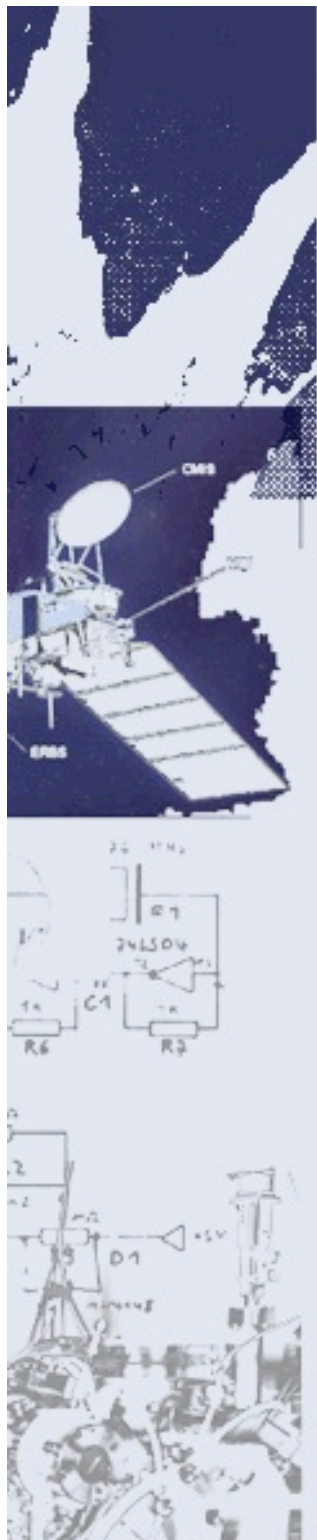
A large steel factory compound...

- many workers
- hierarchical order, decisionmakers, specialists
- only one product
- sophisticated resources, energy and infrastructure
- a big market

Positive example:

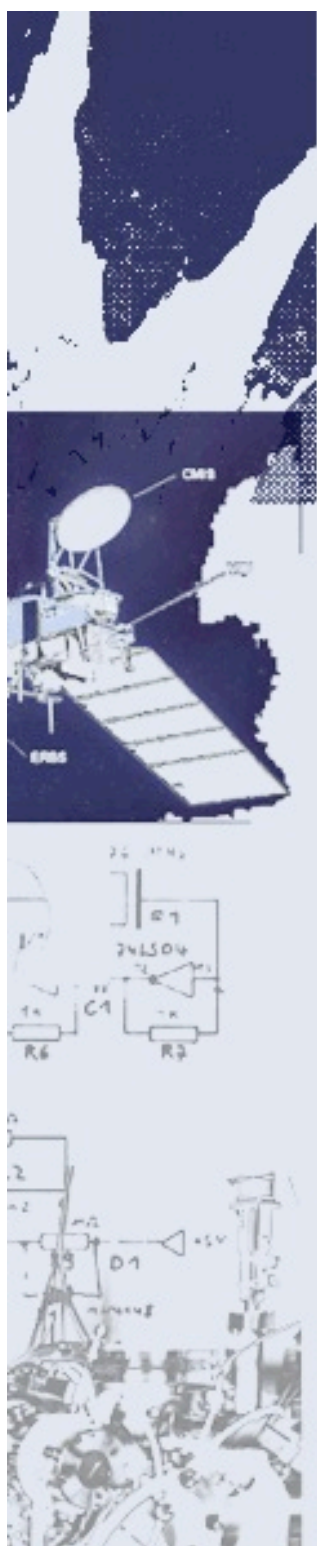
A sun furnace...

- just a few workers
- only basic organization
- no special skills to operate
- a variety of products
- little resources, energy and infrastructure
- works for local demands



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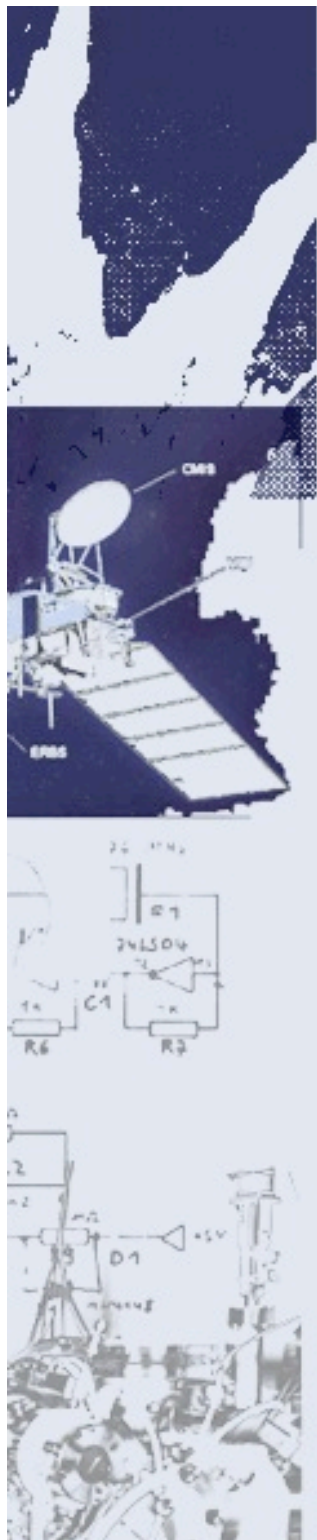
The Case of Free Software

Free software **as a technology**:

- Is a component of **computers**

Computer **production** demands:

- Division of labour
- Hierarchies
- Global resource infrastructures
- High energies
- Big markets



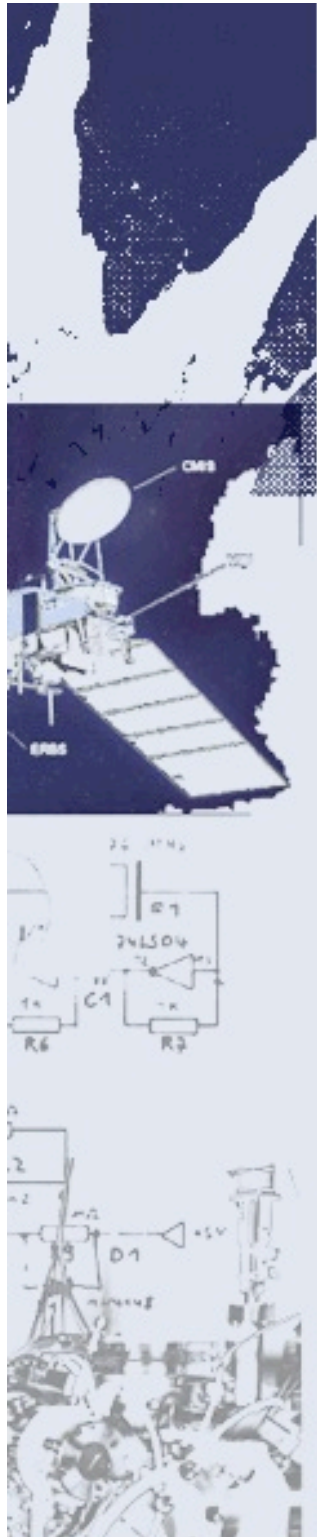
The Case of Free Software

Use presupposes:

- Money
- Energy, Infrastructure
- Specialists for maintenance

Other characteristics:

- Predetermined in its possible uses
- Often medializes power (The lost war?)
- Proliferating social and ideological paradigms regarding hierarchy, authority, .. (i.e. information - experts)

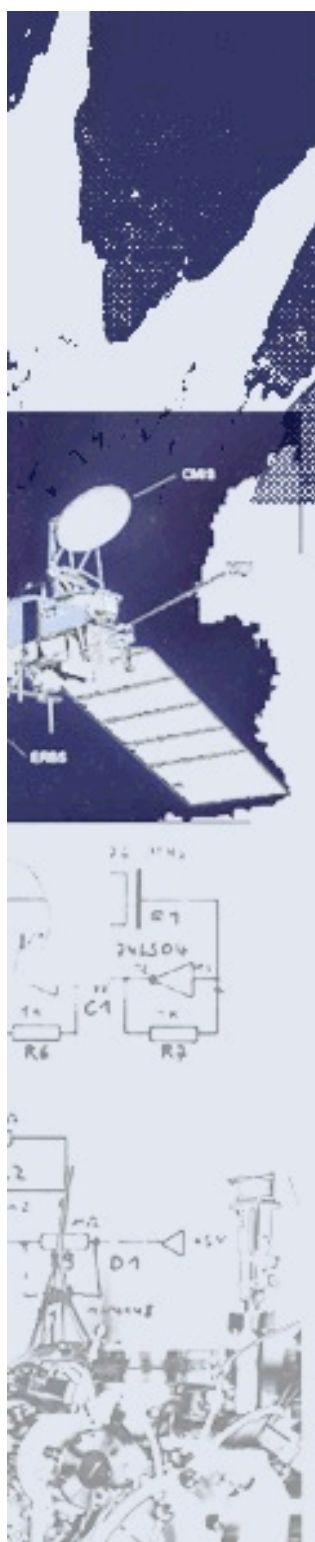


The Case of Free Software

Free Software as a technological design method:

Is partly anarchical because:

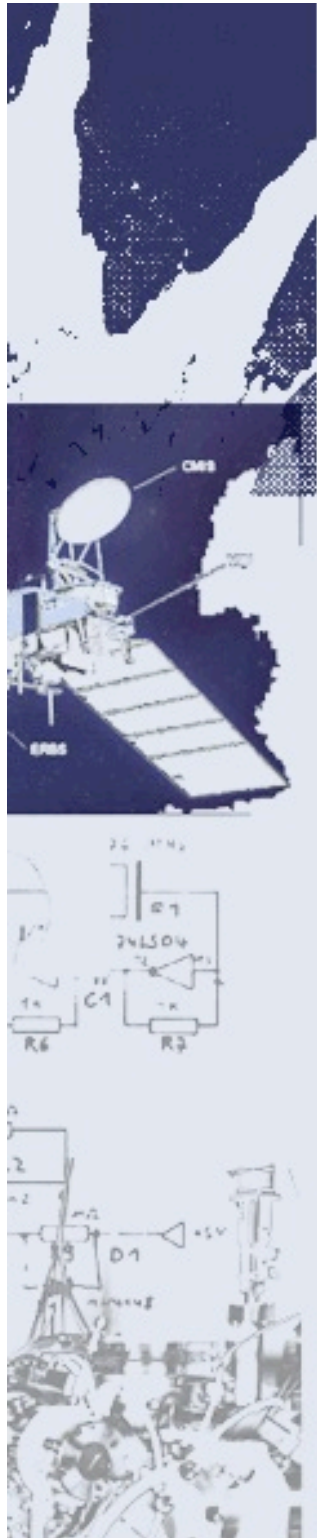
- Consensus based
- Unguided (except for internal logic)
- Individually variable
- Open
- (Non-profit)



The Case of Free Software

But freedom is **enframed** by:

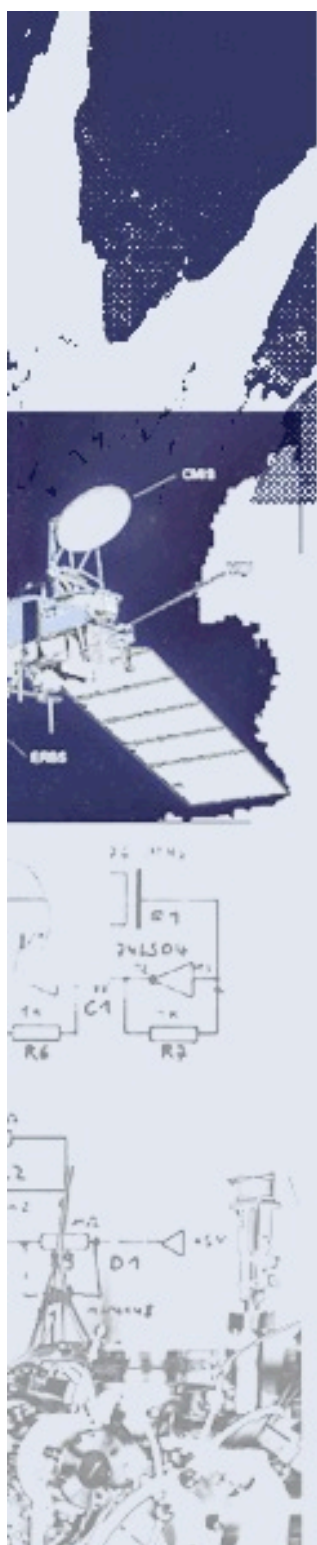
- Rules (implicit Do's 'n' Dont's, Copyleft: GPL, CreativeCommons, ..)
- Often implicit hierarchical structures
- Requires specialist knowledge
- Often capitalist measurements
- Software as a technology



The Case of Free Software

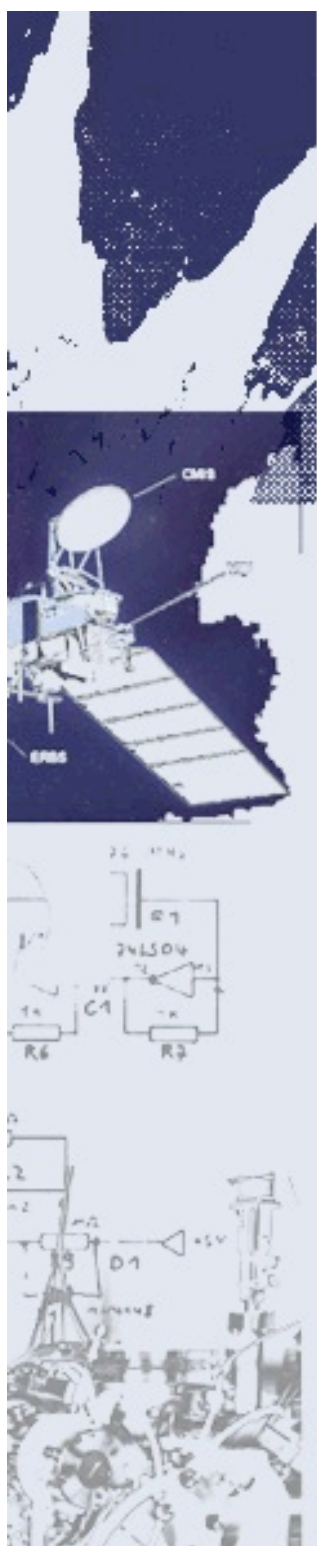
Free Software is not a genuine anarchical technology!

- As a technology: it happens only in computers which need **extensive capitalistic production** methods, are still **luxury commodities** and often **medialize power**
- As a design method: it is enframed by **rules** and **implicit hierarchies** and only accessible by **specialists**



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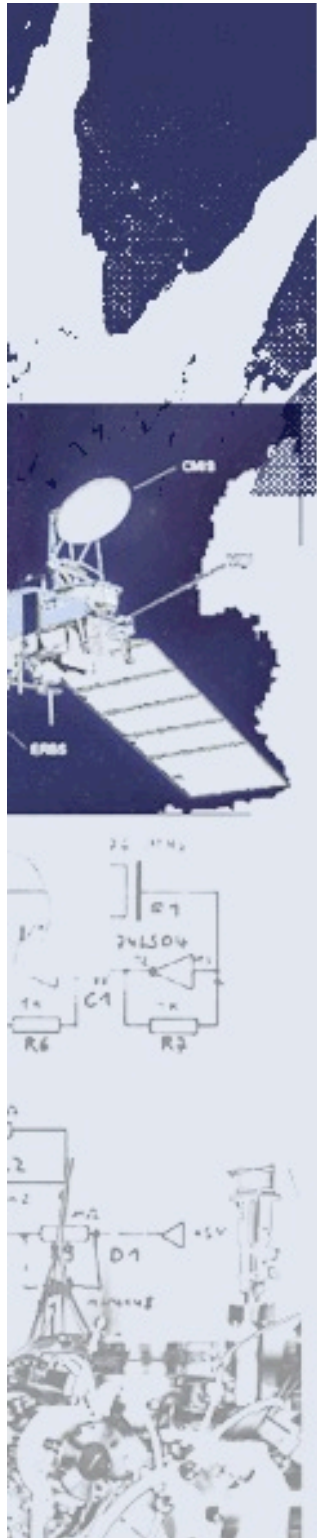
A Demonstrative Value

Capitalists & authoritarianists argue:

„Effective production & development need hierarchical structures, competition and financial stimulus“

Free Software has demonstrated the opposite:

Quality and productivity do not need interest in profit, competition or authoritative structures!



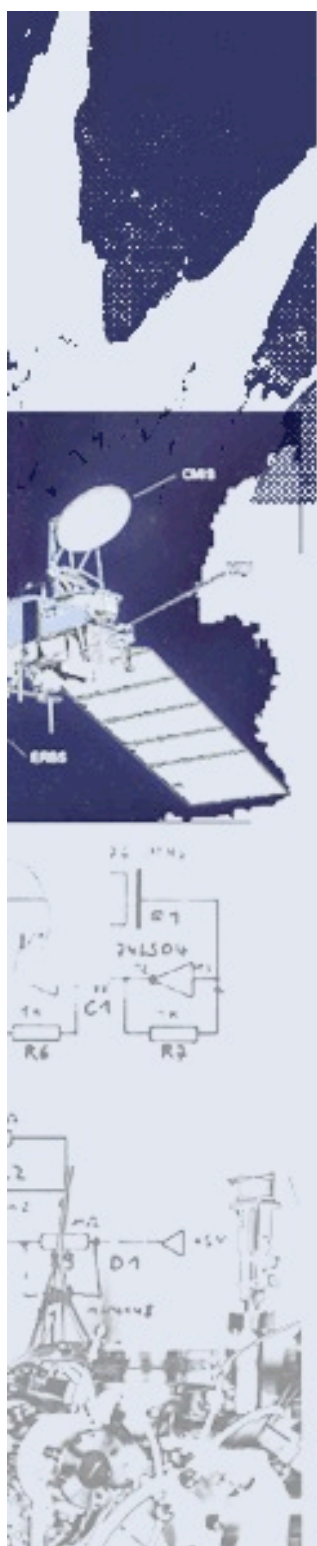
A Demonstrative Value

Free Software as a case study against the alleged connection of production/development and profit and authority

Supported **claim**:

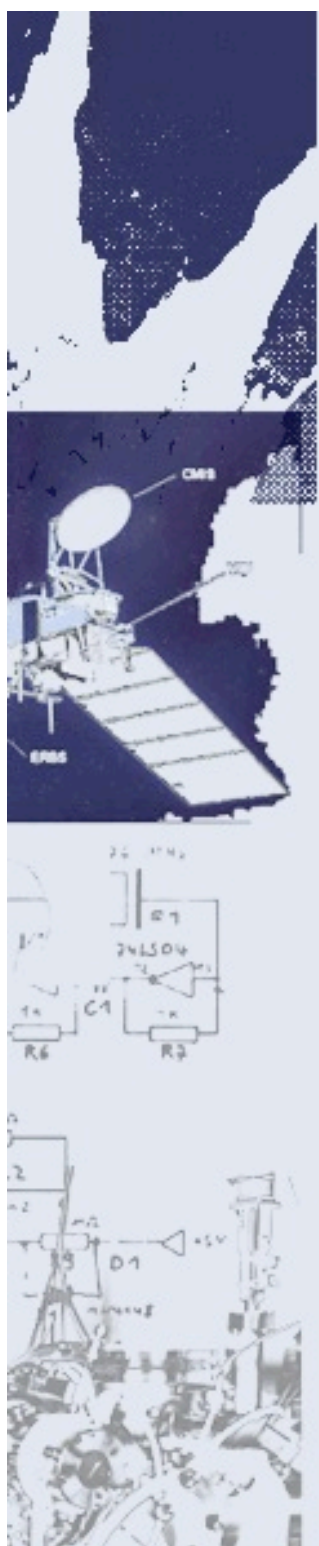
A non-capitalistic, non-hierarchical society is productive, probably even more so.

Free software is **politically valuable as a case study**, but not political itself!



Structure

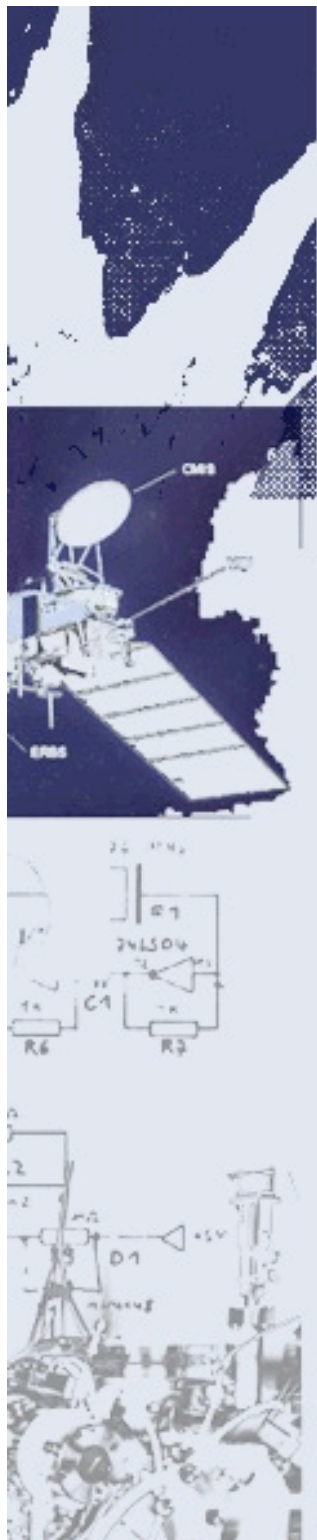
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Ideas for Anarchical Computing

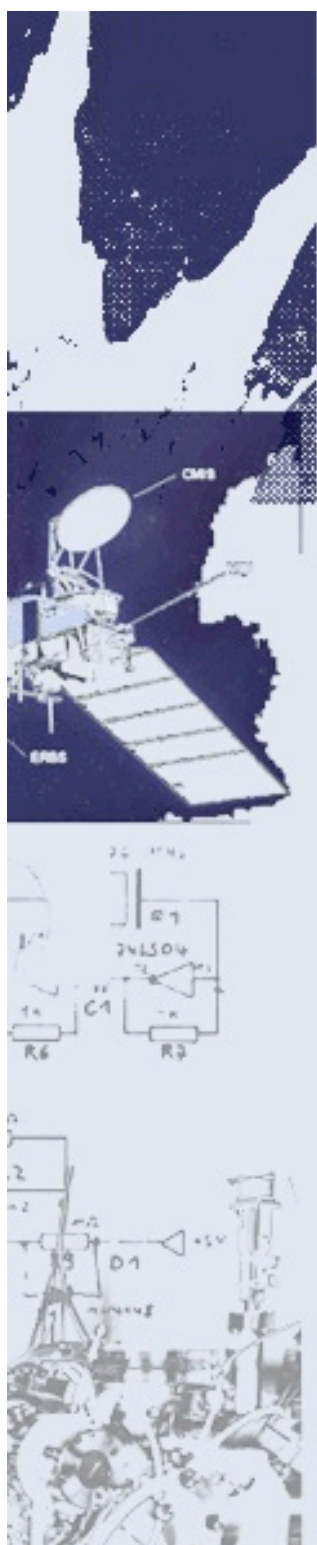
Other ideas can be developed out of the demands for anarchical technology:

- Further liberate free software by **abandoning rules & implicit hierarchies** and by..
- Making programs & programming **a lot easier** so **everyone** can participate (un-expertise)
- Writing **free machine software** which works on specific production machines to free communities from company dependence



Ideas for Anarchical Computing

- Designing **free** (= patent free) **hardware** which embodies anarchical principles to promote anarchical communities
- Designing **sabotage** software and devices enabling people to sabotage surrounding technologies they do not approve of (Hacking for Everyone)



Ideas for Anarchical Computing

Opening up the choice to sabotage:

- Slightly helps people to control inherent necessities in political and social contexts
- Allows people to de-medialize power structures around them
- Gives people more choices towards technological determinism
- Has strong and substantial demonstrative value as social protest against technological determinism

