

# Financing Volunteer Free Software Projects Problems and Strategies

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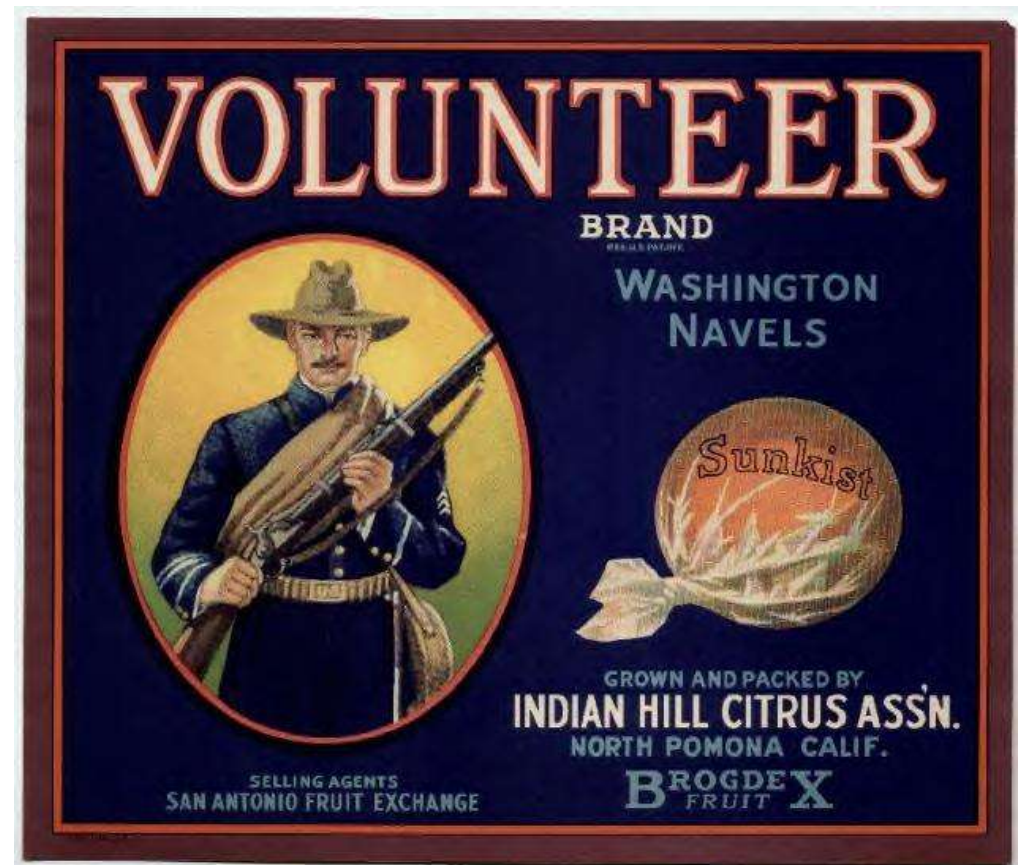
<http://mako.yukidoke.org>

**Debian Project  
Software in the Public Interest**

# Overview

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- Volunteerism is great!
- Funding volunteer-based organizations is problematic
- Solving these problems
  - No-Risk solutions
  - Low-Risk solutions
  - Strategic Risk Taking



# Volunteer Organizations are Great!

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- What I mean by “Volunteer Organization”
- Why volunteer organizations are great:
  - “Free” vs “Freed” / “Open Source” vs “Open Sourced”
  - Institutional independence
  - Limited resources



# Dangers of Funding Volunteers

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“The love of money is the root of all evil.”

*New Testament St. Paul, in 1 Timothy, 6:10*

- Paid labor “crowds out” volunteers
- Transparency decreases
- The nature of the product changes



*When the volunteer nature goes, so do all the benefits*

# Dangers of Funding Volunteers (Examples)

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- Lessons from athletic Norweigans

- Lessons from less athletic hackers
  - The X Consortium
  - Mozilla



# No-Risk Solutions

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# No-Risk Solutions

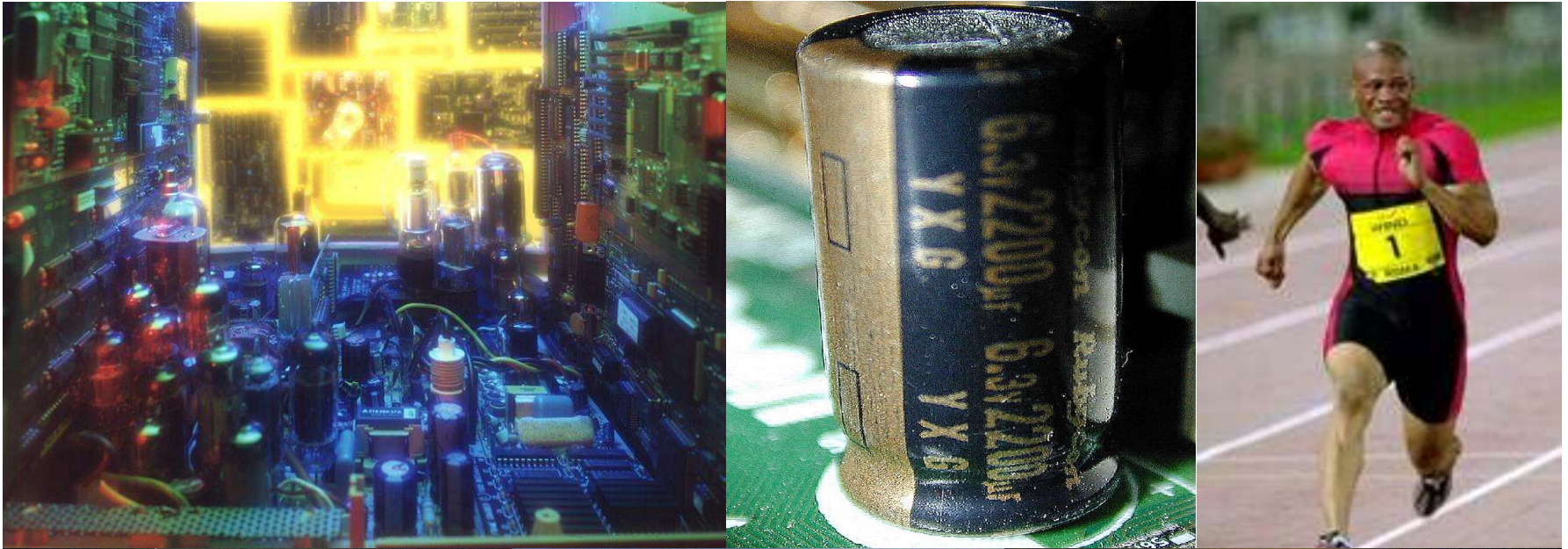
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# Low-Risk Solutions





# Strategic Risks



# Transparency

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Fig 10.1: Photograph of Transparency

# Outside Organizations

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Progeny



i n v e n t



# Summary^H^H^H Messages to Funders

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- Many benefits of the free development model are tied to volunteers
- Think hard before you pay coders
- Always stay critical, stay creative, and stay transparent

