



software freedom
conservancy

Did you know? (FAST FACTS)

... that nearly every electronics product smarter than a toaster contains software, and usually, that software includes Linux or other software under copyleft licenses—such as the **General Public License (GPL)**?

... that companies who build electronics products can surreptitiously and arbitrarily disable the software, or simply stop sending updates, turning the products nonfunctional and completely useless at their whim? In other words, did you know that these devices are built for planned premature obsolescence and that companies often accomplish that by **violating the GPL**, a free and open source (FOSS) license that should prevent that outcome?

... that you, as the consumer, have specific rights to modify, improve, repair and fix the software in your Linux-based products?

... the rights guaranteed by the GPL (the license of Linux and a lot of other software) don't just allow you to fix and repair the software, but **also allow you** to go to any knowledgeable individual or organization (volunteer or business) when the company that sold you the device fails to fix it?

... that Vizio was previously sued for its invasion of privacy of its consumers? ([source](#))

... that your Vizio TV contains software that assures your right to repair (or hire anyone you want to repair) the base operating system, called Smartcast (the software on Vizio's TVs)?

... that Software Freedom Conservancy is the organization stepping up to take companies to court to demand the rights of the public from Vizio and others who fail to assure consumer's rights under the GPL?

... that what makes this litigation unique and historic in terms of defending consumer rights is the fact that it is the first case that focuses on the rights of individual consumers as third-party beneficiaries of the GPL.

Glossary

See also full
Glossary of Terms.

General Public License (GPL)

A copyleft license that ensures end users the freedom to run, study, share, and modify the software. Often referred to as “the GPL.”

FOSS

Acronym for free and open source software (FOSS). See *software freedom*.

software freedom

The freedom of a user to run, study, (re)distribute, and (re)install (modified) versions of a piece of software.

More generally, it is the idea that we are entitled to rights when using software and there should be equal protections for privacy and redistribution. The rights should treat everyone equally—big businesses and individual consumers and users alike.

copyleft / copyleft licensing

A kind of software licensing that leverages the restrictions of copyright, but with the intent to promote sharing (using copyright licensing to freely use and repair software). Software programs are copylefted when they utilize software with a copyleft license. These copyleft licenses are unique in that they seek to put large corporations, small companies, consumers, and hobbyists all on equal footing. The intention is for this to be achieved by granting everyone the exact same rights, permissions, and privileges to modify, improve, and/or include the software in their products.