Twitter Thread by phil jones (he/him - ele)



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@interstar

I think Stallman's politics is left and libertarian (where libertarian is "extreme liberal"). The intuition most of us had originally is that with enough freedom, the good drives out the bad. As you know, I think we might be discovering that that is "wrong" in some sense ... \1

@6loss But it's still a viable and attractive intuition.

And, yes, the GPL etc. is built on that. So freedom is more important than trying to constrain people to do good.
\2

@6loss Furthermore ... pragmatically, this appeal to pure freedom clearly engages and recruits more people than if Stallman had tried to use GPL to enforce his own wider political views. You have "right-libertarians" (ESR, or Lessig) on-board with GPL. \3

@6loss Finally, I think there is a question whether you could legally codify and enforce restrictions on use. GPL is all about hacking existing copyright law and its definition of "derivative". Because derivation is a well established legal idea, that bit is "easy". \4

@6loss Obviously other things like CC or GPL Affero start putting more restrictions (Eg. non-commercial, or "can't use the software on a server without sharing") which push the envelope a bit. I'm sure others have tried to put restrictions eg. "can't use for military" into licenses \5

@6loss Whether those have ever been tested in court, I'm not sure.

I'm inclined to think that this is right. You try to undermine copyright through the legal GPL, and address other politics / morals through community practice, codes of conduct, culture rather than enforcing \6

@6loss That feels right to me ... but I admit maybe that's my libertarian bias showing through.

What I think certain is that law isn't a viable substitute for politics and community. If people want to be racist, a license in the blogging software can't / won't stop them \7

@6loss OTOH, I do think that platforms like Twitter and FB can and should enforce standards in their users, and chucking people off for dangerous disinformation or hate speech is fine. Just as a pub has the right to chuck out an aggressive drunken customer. \8

@6loss But that's based on a different principle. If you create a communal space, you have rights and responsibilities to keep that space healthy.

In summary, GPL is actively against imposing restrictions on particular uses. And I think that's fine. That's how it should be. \9

@6loss But that's because of the kind of thing the GPL is and software is.

People running platforms / communities can and should worry about the codes of practice, netiquette, policing abusive behaviour and the political fight against fascism.

That's where it should happen \10

@6loss Most importantly, EVERYTHING we face today was predicted in https://t.co/BahETpOqcf and everyone should go back, read, and think seriously about that. You cannot separate tech. from politics. \end

@6loss @threadreaderapp unroll