Buying new software or stuck with a single vendor?

Quick Guide to Avoiding Vendor Lock-in

Introduction

In this guide you'll find out how companies use certain techniques to lock you into their software and services and how you an avoid it and break free.

Here's what this guide will help you do:

- Spot different strategies that vendors use to limit your choices when buying related software.

- Make software purchasing decisions that keep your options open and give you access to a more competitive marketplace.

- Avoid getting locked into contract renegotiations in large software development projects.

Open Standards vs Proprietary Standards

One of the ways that vendors lock you in is by using proprietary standards so that you can only connect them to their other software and making it harder to integrate systems from other vendors.

Choosing systems with open standards means that each computer system in your business can be purchased in an open marketplace ensuring you get the very best software at competitive prices.

Open vs Source

When you buy proprietary closed source software the vendor owns the rights to the software and you use it under the terms of a license agreement. This means that only they can fix problems or make changes.

With open source and free software you have complete control and can engage any skilled software engineer to make changes and correct problems. This means that you are in control and will no more than the going rate.

Flexible vs Fixed Contracts

Some vendors operate on a fixed-price basis when developing software under contract for their clients. However, this is also fixed in scope and changes require a renegotiation.

When commissioning bespoke software you should avoid long-term fixed scope projects. Details worked out up front are prone to errors and over you will have new and better ideas as development progresses.

Copyright Assignment

In some cases the developer will retain the rights to the software that is developed. This can lead to a lower price but may affect your rights to have another developer modify the software.

If copyright is assigned to you, or is at least licensed under a free and open source license agreement, then you will retain the rights to modify the software yourself or employ any developer to do so.

How we can help

We have considerable experience at building software systems and here's how we can help:

- We build systems using Open Source software and Open Standards, unless you ask us not to.

- We offer flexible contracts with almost no obligation, we never offer long-running fixed contracts.

- Create software systems that you have full rights to change and control, using any software developer you wish.