

Why You Should Care to Self Host

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1 It is time to care.

Recently GitHub began their annual charade of caring about “open source”. While this is a convenient allusion to the reality of this company not caring about ethics in software, it is also a reminder to be wary of services like GitHub and what they offer. There is a blatant appeal to “open source” consumerism behind these projects, and as with all forms of computing sacrificing your ethics for convenience is a dance with the devil. What are you risking by hosting your project webpage with Git* static web hosting?

This phenomena is another component of the social cooling of our technosphere. We are acting as willful components to a hierarchy of ideals and propaganda set forth upon us by these corporations, and we act obediently every time. Not only is this “Hacktober” predicted to be one of the the largest in scale; GitHub, Digital Ocean, Intel and co. are set to receive massive payouts from this event. In return for their “charitable” sponsorship, Digital Ocean will generate account memberships utilizing a “credit” of “free” service. Github will acquire more business in private and public spaces, and inundate another generation of young programmers into behaving as walking billboards, and so the cycle continues into next year.

I have long been disgusted with Digital Ocean and their not-at-all subtle appeal to consumerism. Additionally, their pricing model is such a disaster. If you are using Digital Ocean, just know that you are probably not coming anywhere close to what you pay for each month in terms of resource usage. You are kindly lining the pockets of the executives in that company, who are in turn using it to be “charitable” in flagrant marketing promotions.

There are multiple morals to these truths: 1) We would not need such “charity” from large corporations if not for capitalism perpetuating massive inequality at large scale, 2) We should not allow companies like GitHub to socially engineer what acceptable programming paradigms are. Programming is a beautifully social experience, but social cooling is a phenomenon that is actively corroding our experiences. 3) Stop using these services. Do not host your website on GitHub or GitLab, and consider more ethical options.

2 I am a hypocrite.

Currently this website, and my other domain <https://orcircd.org> are being hosted on Digital Ocean architecture. There are better options out there. If you can, lease reasonable space within your budget to a more experienced set of system and server administrators, perhaps in a local server space. If you are hosting heavy architecture and internet resources, have you ever calculated the cost of using co-location (an investment, for sure) and seeing it can return a wider margin of finances back to you? For the remainder, consider getting a VPS with <https://www.linode.com/>. Perhaps you don’t need a VPS at all because you host just simple static pages? Great! With <https://www.nearlyfreespeech.net/> you can get almost a year’s worth of static webpage hosting with PHP and whatever other crap you need for less than \$3/year.

This website is going to be moved away from Digital Ocean in the coming months. I can not continue to stand idly by while they continue to abuse my sensibilities. Digital Ocean has given me a perceived reputation of poor customer service, absurd limitations on their VPS, awkward DNS configurations, and extremely consumerist business-model which works for them and them alone.

3 Self-Host!

Please consider expanding your horizons. Take the time to learn how to setup an Apache or Nginx webserver. Learn how to do so securely. Learn how to

use GNU/Linux or a *BSD! Figure out what DNS records are and why they are important. In a world with amass of resources, there is no limitation on your ability to learn the best practices of system administration. It is quite easy, and fun!

When we move away from centralized and companies hyperfocused on driving profits, we take away their ability to control us and our infrastructure so easily. If you don't like the sentiment this leaves, or gives you a bitter taste do something to improve it. Technology is one of the last methods of exiting the domain of global exploitation, but only if we struggle to behave ethically.

If you can self-host your own web server, then try setting up cgit. If you can do that, have you tried a mail server? Have you looked at what CGI is? If you were told that those things are "hard", have you looked as to why that perception is? Often times, those who say it is hard are the same people who decided to use static pages from GitHub/GitLab to host their website. We can all do more here to make self-hosting a better community.

Unquestionably, there are server administration tasks and skill that have complexity. But those complexities will only be smoothed out when we all agree to move in a direction of least resistance, instead of sweeping the problem under the rug.

4 Companies/Services with Ethics.

There are examples of companies and services which I value for their ingenuity, sincerity, and progressive mindset when it comes to web technology. While I do not believe capitalism can ever provide us ethical solutions, there are some companies which do offer a more ethically responsible experience.

Here is an incomplete list, please send me an email if you see an addition to be fit.

- <https://sourcehut.org/> - A suite of free/libre, and open source composable tools for software development.
- <https://posteo.de/> - Secure, free software-compatible email hosting. *[Note: Does not support custom domains.]*
- <https://www.nearlyfreespeech.net/> - Cheap, and customizable website hosting on BSD.
- <http://sdf.org/> - Gratis UNIX-style SSH hosting.

- <https://tilde.team/> - Gratis suite of webservices.
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Have a response?

Responses and discussion pertaining to any of the blog entries on my website are welcome! Start a discussion on the mailing list by sending an email to `~brettgilio/blog-discussion@lists.sr.ht`.

Errata:

- *<2020-10-01 Thu 18:19>* Correct some grammar. Add some services to list.