



**PROMOUVOIR ET DÉFENDRE
LE LOGICIEL LIBRE**

Synthetic moral report 2007

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April in a nutshell

April is the French reference association for the promotion and the defence of Free Software. Since 1996, it is a major player of the democratization and the distribution of Free Software and open standards within the general public, professionals and institutions in the French-speaking community.

In the digital era that is ours, it also aims to inform the public on the dangers of an exclusive appropriation of information and knowledge by private interests.

April communicates with public authorities to defend Free Software and obtain favourable decisions

The goals of April:

- **Promote** Free Software within the general public, professionals, associations and authorities.
- **Raise awareness** of the greater number regarding the stakes of open standards and interoperability.
- **Obtain** political, legal and regulatory decision in favour of knowledge sharing and of the development of Free Software.
- **Facilitate** the sharing of knowledge.
- **Oppose** the projects threatening Free Software and its players.

April in a few figures:

- Over 11 years of action.
- Over 1,800 individual members: users, experts, sympathizers...
- Over 130 structure members: corporations, associations, communities.
- A team of 3 full-time employees.
- Approximately 3,000 hours / year of voluntary work.

The year 2007

From an internal point of view, 2007 was a major year for the association, with a significant increase in the number of members (individual member figures and structure member figures have both been multiplied by four, plus the arrival of the first local authority). That way, we continued our action aiming at prolonging the team of full-time employees. This increase of the number of members also confirms the increase in importance of Free Software.

The year 2007 was most active and most dynamic for the association. The campaign "Candidats.fr" was an outstanding success, both for the French presidential elections and the French parliamentary elections. This campaign will continue in 2008 with the French local elections. Numerous other institutional topics were followed, as the follow-up of the French DADVSI law, the competitiveness zone on Free Software, migration to Free Software on the French Members of Parliament's workstations, the general interoperability repository or bundled selling. The white paper on economic models allowed to stress that Free Software is in itself a market segment. The Free Software Festival was a success all over France.

The vitality of the association is clear from the outside of the association, as demonstrate the relations with the media. The contacts with the journalists are still increasing, numerous interviews were realized and we are now contacted to give information or our opinion. The association is established as a reference to be consulted. April strengthened this year again its status as a reference player in the French-speaking world of Free Software, especially via the initiative "Candidats.fr", its multiple contacts with the media, the success of its membership campaign, the first membership of a local community and, more generally, via its whole activity.

You can find the full moral report in French, long of roughly fifty pages, at the following page: <http://www.april.org/articles/divers/rapport-moral-2007.html>.

Main achievements

- Multiplication by four of the number of members, including companies, associations and two local authorities. As of February 15th 2008, April counts 2,000 members, of which seventy five companies, about sixty associations and two local authorities. Aprils strengthened its network of members and partners and the meshing at the national level.
- The team of April's full-time employees includes: an executive director (since March 2005), a public affairs officer (since October 2006) and an executive assistant (since October 2007).
- Over 3,000 hours of voluntary work in 2007.
- April published a white paper on the economic models of Free Software (written by the working group "companies"), downloaded over 6,000 times.
- April raised the awareness of the French political class thanks to the initiative "Candidats.fr": eight candidates for the French presidential election over twelve

answered a questionnaire and propositions of commitments, and sixty-eight members of parliament signed the Free Software Pact.

- April contributed to the thoughts on the implementation of a public policy promoting interoperability, open standards and Free Software.
- April launched new working groups: “April chats”, “Free association” to raise awareness and to accompany the associations.
- April defended the authors and the users of Free Software: it presented a cancellation request for a decree of the DADVSI law in front of the French State Council [Conseil d'Etat in French]

Working groups

Part of the activity of the association rests on the notion of working groups. They are in charge of implementing the actions that can enter the object of the association. Some working groups are reserved to the members but most are open to non-members. The various working groups can be found on the following page: <http://www.april.org/en/actions-campagnes-groupes-de-travail-0#ToC2>.

Raising awareness

To increase even more the awareness of the general public on Free Software and its stakes, April launched in October 2007 a work group called “Raising awareness”. This work group is dedicated to inventorying, to improving and to completing the supports of communication regarding Free Software.

White paper on the economic models of Free Software

The work group “companies” within April worked on the writing of a white paper on the economic models of Free Software. This document was written by companies members of April. This white paper was published in December 2007. Since the on-line publishing of the white paper, it was downloaded over 6,000 times.

April chats

Launched in March 2007, the “April chats” are interviews or discussions organized regularly, lasting at least one hour and regarding a given subject. Depending on the subject, the minutes are either public or private to members. A dozen of such talks took place in 2007, with various subjects: bundled selling, April and companies, Wikipedia and free contents, history and evolution of April, software patents...

Translation of the GNU philosophy

The work group “Translation of the GNU philosophy” (created in 1997) has as a goal to make known to the French speaking public the ideas of the Free Software Foundation, which April shares in many points. Over two hundred translations are on-line on the gnu.org site. The initial objective of the work group (i.e. the translation of the main documents of the gnu.org site) is nearly reached. However, the original files on gnu.org are regularly modified and the translations must be updated.

Unfair computing

April has been following for a long time the projects on “reliable computing” which is renamed “unfair computing” and their effects on personal freedoms and on the development of Free Software.

Free association

In association with the FPH (Foundation for the Progress of Humankind [Fondation pour le Progrès de l'Homme in French]), April launched the project “Free association” which aims at raising awareness and at accompanying the associations towards Free Software. A site on operational resources was opened in January 2007. Contacts with various players were made in particular with the editorial staff of “la Péniche” which publishes the French magazine “Associations' user manual”, with other regional bodies raising associations' awareness on IT and often supported by local authorities (for instance Ticassos.org in the Nord – Pas de Calais region). A questionnaire to associations on their computing practices is under preparation.

Free Software festival

April launched in 2001 the Free Software festival initiative, which consists in the organization of events promoting Free Software on a nationwide scale, in a festive and friendly atmosphere. Every year, this initiative takes place around March 21st, to accompany the arrival of spring. Around 100 events were organized in 17 French regions by dozens of associations or bodies. For the first time, a collaboration with the Free Software Diary had been organized in 2007, this diary being used to list the events organized within the framework of the Free Software initiative. The media coverage has been important, including the publishing of an article in the French newspaper “*Le Monde*”. For 2008, an objective is to have the public internet accesses (cyber-cafés, multimedia cultural centres, ...) joining the Free Software festival. For that purpose, the Free Software festival receives in 2008 the support of the French Delegation for the uses of the Internet (which depends of the French Secretary of State of Higher Education and Research).

Bundled Selling

April is very implicated on the issue of bundled sale where it intervenes in cooperation with the work group “Détaxe” and the consumer defence associations. The goal is to put an end to the scandal of bundled sale, to return to consumers their freedom of choice and allow a competition to be established on the market of consumer software, especially the one of operating systems. During the discussions on the laws on consumption, Members of Parliament, whom April had met on this subject, presented amendments which denounced the exclusivity agreements between Microsoft and the manufacturers. These amendments aimed both at starting the debate in the French Parliament with the Secretary of State for consumption, Luc Chatel, and at obtaining his official position on this issue. He preferred to deny the reality of the problem, then used the hackneyed argument of the consumer interest. For the first time in a joint way, April, Aful, CLCV and UFC-Que Choisir have asked the DGCCRF on December 2007 that be finally solved this problem which lasts for too many years, and remind that solutions were repeatedly proposed.

Candidats.fr

April launched at the beginning of 2007 the initiative Candidats.fr which objective is to make Free Software a subject of election campaigns. The initiative Candidats.fr was carried during the French presidential and parliamentary election campaigns of 2007, and will be pursued during both local electoral campaigns in 2008.

In order for all to express themselves and choose in full consciousness, April drafted and presented to the candidates of the French 2007 presidential election a questionnaire and a list of concrete propositions. The objective was to allow the candidates to develop their vision and for them to make a commitment on subjects being debated within the community.

Besides, April invited the citizens to support the Candidats.fr initiative, by participating in the debate but also by signing the Free Software declaration of use asking that the rights of developers and users of Free Software are taken into account by the legislator, and that authorities encourage the use, the production and the distribution of Free Software.

The presidential election part of the Candidats.fr initiative was a true success. The subjects were handled in depth by almost all the candidates. This initiative of April was able to contribute to the background discussion on Free Software and the digital liberties.

Eight of twelve candidates for the presidential election, among which both finalists, answered the questionnaire Candidats.fr.

Within the framework of Candidats.fr, April suggested to the citizens to encourages the candidates of the 2007 parliamentary election to sign the Free Software Pact. This pact is a simple document allowing the voters to know which candidate in their district is aware of the staked of Free Software and undertook to promote and to defend the liberties which are associated with it.

520 candidates for the 2007 election signed the Free Software Pact and on 577 elected representatives, 68 have signed the pact.

Other institutional issues

A less visible and yet important part of the action of the association is the “advocacy” (a citizen-initiative related to the general interest), with numerous contacts in various circles (political, economic).

Defence of the four basic liberties of Free Software

April is involved in legislative fights to defend the players of Free Software.

DADVSI

Let us remind that April participated actively from 2002 to 2006 in the efforts of information and fight against the bill “Copyright and Neighbouring Rights in the Information Society” (DADVSI in French), mainly by participating in the actions of the EUCD.INFO initiative.

In the end of December 2006, the government published the decree “relative to the penal repression of some copyright and neighbouring rights infringements”, thus banning any attempt to avoid a technical measure of protection such as DRMs.

This decree aiming both the authors and the users of Free Software, April presented on February 21st 2007 a request in cancellation to the French State Council (Conseil d'Etat in French). The procedure is going on, although the council did not take its decision as of this day.

Public policies

April contributed to the discussions on the implementation of a public policy promoting interoperability, open standards and Free Software.

April contacted numerous Members of Parliament of all political parties. The association was already received by about fifteen elected representatives, with whom it exchanged on Free Software, bundled selling of computers and software, DRM, the Olivennes mission and software patents.

As a result of Candidats.fr, April met the French president's advisor on information and communication technologies and the French Prime Minister's advisor in charge of industrial strategies, small and medium-sized companies and industries, technologies and information society.

These two meetings were an opportunity to discuss the state of the development and the distribution of Free Software in the society and to review the main issues that worry us (DADVSI, DRM, software patents, standardization, bundled selling, so-called trusted computing and the organization of the dialogue on the Internet).

Contacts took place all year round with other structures working on common subjects (for example UFC – Que Choisir).

Internet Cities Label

The local governments which register an internet policy in their mission of public utility are invited every year to participate at the national “Internet City” label. April participated in the creation of the questions for obtaining the “free” tag of the label and was a part of the jury which awarded 24 cities with this “free” tag for the use and the development of Free Software by these cities.

Guide for the use of the Free Software in public administrations

April was one of the proofreaders of the “Practical Guide for the use of Free Software in public administrations” published at the end of 2007 by the French Office of State Modernization (Direction Générale de la Modernisation de l'État in French).

DRIRE Greater Paris Area

April met members of the DRIRE of the Greater Paris Area, who were inquiring about Free Software, mainly to update a file on the publishing of software in the Greater Paris Area. Beside these exchanges on the subject of the software publishing and Free Software, individual meeting with member companies of April were organized. The objective was to meet bodies confronted with the difficulties that companies working in Free Software can encounter in order to have testimonies and ideas from the field which will allow to feed discussions and possibly action plans to support the sector in the Greater Paris Area.

Bill on copyright infringement

The bill fighting copyright infringement was examining by the French Parliament in

September and October 2007. The main problem posed by this bill concerned the deletion of the limitation to the malpractices committed “at a commercial scale”.

April followed the evolution of this bill. Several meetings took place with high-ranking public servants as well as contacts with Members of Parliament. Amongst other things, April published a memo which included an amendment clearly defining the notion of “commercial scale” and a legal study on the discrepancies of the bill with regards to the directive, which exposes the French government to penalties both on the constitutional level and the European Union level.

During the debates in the French Senate, these problematic point of the bill were raised by senators.

Olivennes mission

Denis Olivennes, CEO of Fnac, was put in charge by the French President, via the Minister for Culture, to lead a mission on the development of the offers of cultural possessions and the fight against unauthorized digital copy.

April was invited to hearing by the Olivennes mission on October 12th 2007. The representatives of April demonstrated that DRMs are harmful, that their interoperability is fictitious and that the envisaged measures (gradual retort and filtering) are dead ends.

Interoperability

April took part in the works of AFNOR's standardization committee on the formats of revisable documents relative to the ISO standard regarding Microsoft's OOXML format, competitor of the OpenDocument format (ODF).

Migration of the workstations of the French Members of Parliament

The parliamentary report handed on September 14th 2006 to the Prime Minister was entitled “On equal terms” and dealt with the means to increase France's competitiveness in the world, to give it real tools to prepare for the future, to allow France to be on equal terms with its partners and competitors. The report suggests several actions in favour of Free Software. A portion of the report mentioned the possibility of a workstation with Free Software for the French parliament members. April helped raising the awareness of Bernard Carayon and French parliament members on Free Software, and so it welcomed the migration of their workstations to the Free operating system Ubuntu GNU/Linux. April met the IT department of the French parliament. The discussion focused mainly on the context of the decision to migrate, the possible technical and political difficulties of it and lastly the help could be provided by April and its network of partners.

Electronic vote

Though the topic of electronic voting isn't in the core of the association, April took position when Free Software was involved and because of the democratic issues raised by computer voting. As a member of the Internet Rights Forum [“Forum des Droits sur l'Internet” or “FDI” in French], April was involved in the work-group “electronic vote and modernization of the electoral process”.

Internet Rights Forum

April took part in the work-group on the “public access to the internet” and in the meetings entitled “what presidential program for the internet?” which auditioned representatives of

the candidates for the French presidential election of 2007.

Competitiveness zone for Free Software

April was involved in 2006 in the preliminary works aiming at the creation of a competitiveness zone on Free Software. April had amongst other things stressed the need to unite all the French players of the Free Software ecosystem, to take into account their diversity and to prepare for a governance of the zone that would be suitable for this diversity. We had also suggested an ethic charter mentioning amongst others the problem of software patents. We can be pleased to notice that April's proposal for an ethic charter was followed by the Free Software working group System@tic. There is also talk currently regarding the evolution of the zone's governance, we shall pay close attention on this subject. We will continue to contribute with all of the players, and with no taboo.

Digital administration

April supported all year long the actions aiming to develop the use of the open standard format "Open Document Format" within the French administration, and has raised awareness as soon as possible regarding its advantages. It asked in multiple occasions the quick publication of the decree creating the General Interoperability Referential or GIR ["référentiel général d'interopérabilité" in French]. So as to contribute to the application of the GIR in the local communities, April met the association of the mayors of large French cities in order to study the possibility to inform large cities – and namely their mayors and IT directors – on the stakes regarding Free Software and open standards.

Education

The education part of the association rest mainly on its support and participation to the specialized associations in that domain, such as OFSET or Scideralle. However, April leads actions in that domain. For instance, April is part of the partners of the master's degree "Free Software Engineering" of the Littoral university (ULCO, Calais). Several members of the association have given lectures mainly in the module "environment of free software". The January 2008 release of the "*Science et Vie Junior*" magazine was published with a guide "Internet with no problem". This guide contains amongst other things a presentation of free software, created with the support of April. The association is involved in a work-group of the ASTI on teaching of computing at high school. Part of the questionnaire Candidats.fr rested on the question of teaching of computing and of Free Software in education.

Conferences

April attended or was part of the organization of numerous conferences and of nationwide or international events: "Solutions GNU/Linux", "Paris Capital du Libre", "Forum de l'économie sociale et solidaire", "Rencontres Cyberbase", "Trophées du Libre", "Libre en Fête", "Samedis du Libre", "Journées Libres Clics" in Auch, "Deuxièmes rencontres nationales de l'animation scientifique et technique" in Tours, "Festival de la création numérique" in Romans, conference at the CNAM with the magazine "*La Recherche*", local events on Free Software (Bourges, Caen, Compiègne, Lyon, Montpellier, Saint-Etienne du

Rouvray), "Aquitaine Libre", "Rencontres Mondiales du Logiciel Libre", Free Software stalls at the "Braderie" in Lille, "Salon professionnel des logiciels libres" in Marseille, "École nationale de l'aviation civile" in Toulouse, Free software conference cycle at the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie...

April took part in the organization and the success of the 8th "Rencontres Mondiales du Logiciel Libre".

The association has regularly stalls on various events. These stalls are the opportunity to meet the general public, to distribute documentation and to sell T-shirts.

Communication

A new series of T-shirts was conceived: the special "dangers" series. These T-shirts have been a great success; April has made stickers based on the four dangers that were represented on these T-shirts: bundled selling, so-called "trustful" computing, software patents and DRM. April also produced a bookmark.

April launched in October 2007 the project of creating a Free calendar for 2008. Five hundred copies were printed.

Media

The contacts with the media have maintained themselves at a very satisfactory level: April is clearly perceived as a reference to be consulted. Many interviews, chats, pod-casts have been made (Pc Inpact, 01 net, ZDNet, 20 Minutes, VNU Net, Journal du Net, Le Monde Informatique, Les Echos, Libération, Le Monde, International Herald Tribune, Education infantine, Nouvel Economiste, Wired, Divergence Numérique, Radio Campus, France Culture, France Inter, RFI, LCI,...). The journalists contact us also simply to have our opinion or pieces of information. The association issued two dozens press releases and they have most often been cited or copied in the press.

Development of the association

Full-time employees

The day-to-day news and the various on-going files require more and more professional means of working. In order to develop its actions in favour of Free Software, April organized itself since the end of 2004 to obtain new financial and human means – including mainly full-time employees.

There is a need to set forth adapted means in order for example to fight efficiently on the long term against the financed and permanent lobbying of our opponents. Having increased means and full-time employees in charge of specific topics, allows April to be even more efficient in its actions.

The association hired in March 2005 Frédéric Couchet as executive director. His mission is to ensure the execution of decisions made by the association's board and its general assembly, to ensure the day-to-day management of the association, under the responsibility of the board. Thanks to a financial support from FSF France, April reinforced its team in 2006 to improve even more its defences and promotion of Free Software. Thus Christophe Espern joined April in mid-September 2006 to be responsible of institutional topics and Eva Mathieu joined the team at the beginning of 2006 as executive assistant. Both these positions were financed by FSF France, but with the target to finance them directly through the association. As of October 1st 2007, April deemed necessary to perpetuate the position of executive assistant. Eva Mathieu was therefore hired at this position at that date by April, who finances from now on this position. Alix Cazenave joined the team on October 1st 2007. She is in charge of public affairs. This position will be at first financed by FSF France while an internal financing – through an increase of the number of members. April hopes to do this hiring in the second quarter 2008 as part of the expected increase of the association's activity.

Volunteer members

In 2007, the total number of volunteer work was over 3,000 hours. This indicates that the members have done a considerable work to promote and defend Free Software. The upcoming years are expected to be even more demanding and the outcome of the fights that are currently going on will determine our capacity to mobilize, to act and to adapt. To do that, April needs the support of all.

Goals for 2008

The priority for April remains to promote and defend Free Software, to raise awareness of the general public regarding the stakes of open standards and of political and legal defence of Free Software.

The dangers that Free Software faces in 2007 will still be present in 2008 – such as the possible return of software patents, new European directives, anti-Free Software lobbying from Microsoft.

April chose to remain attentive, to increase the intensity and number of actions aiming at promoting and defending Free Software that it has been leading for over a decade. These actions have made its renown and have incited an increasing number of people, economic players, industries and associations – big and small – to join the association.

On one hand, April will do its best to inform both the government and the parliament, to make the demonstration that Free Software, interoperability, open formats and informational commons are as many assets for France, its citizens and its industry that both government and parliament should promote. On the other hand, it will increase its surveillance to denounce any new assault against Free Software and electronic liberties, to stop such assault whenever possible and to guarantee the security of Free Software development.

2008 shall also be an important local political year with elections at both city level and local-area level. An important work regarding raising awareness still needs to be done and these elections are an excellent opportunity to be seized.

A specific effort will be done to accompany and help associations that wish to use Free Software.

The evolution of April shall also go through a greater openness outside of France towards the French-speaking world (mainly Belgium, Quebec, Switzerland) and through a reinforced presence at the European level, both to better follow the activity of the European Union and to improve communication with the associations and NGOs of other countries that work on the same topics or neighbouring ones.

April needs to develop its network of members, the only way for the association to guarantee recurring financial resources.

The fact that April regroups individuals, teachers, associations, companies, local governments, increases greatly the representativeness of April and adds strength to its contact with its interlocutors. They need to have identified, representative and long-living players facing them. In less than a year, the association has multiplied by four the number of its members, but this is not yet enough.

April's action, thanks to its volunteers members and its team of full-time employees, is valuable to all those who produce or use Free Software. The coming years will be even more active. In order to improve its promotion of Free Software, its raising awareness of the general public regarding open standards and its political and legal defence of Free Software, April needs to increase the number of its members and of its supports, in order to perpetuate the position of its full-time employees and to ensure the financial backing it needs to do its different actions.