

What Is Open Source? And Why Should Your Company Pay ISC for Open Source Support?



Put simply, open source software is any software that is issued under an approved open source license. Most current ISC software is licensed under the [Mozilla Public License 2.0](#), and ISC is an affiliate of the Open Source Initiative. The MPL 2.0 license allows users to freely download and modify the code, as long as any modifications are shared publicly. All of ISC's software licenses are described at <https://www.isc.org/licenses/>.

Are For-Profit Companies Looking Out for Your Best Interests?

We believe that open source in general, and ISC's software in particular, protects the Internet from being overtaken by businesses or governments who may not have the world's interests at heart. It's essential for individuals and organizations to have options for their critical Internet functions that don't require them to purchase services from vendors that are looking to profit from their weakness.

ISC has no stockholders who are pressuring for big ROI numbers; we are a 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated solely to the interests of the Internet community.

Open source software offers the best of both worlds: high-quality, rigorously vetted code with professional support for your mission-critical Internet infrastructure, but at a lower cost – both in terms of your money and your privacy – than commercial vendors. Shouldn't you check us out?

“Free” Isn't Really Free

For-profit entities don't provide “free” software and services out of the goodness of their hearts; if you're not paying money for the service, then you're paying with your personal and corporate data.

As a non-profit, ISC provides its BIND 9, Kea DHCP, and Stork open source software for free to anyone who wants it. We support ourselves financially by selling support contracts to organizations and agencies who require professional assistance ensuring that their systems are fully operational at all times. We also offer specialized premium software to add value for our paying customers.

When Everyone Contributes, Everyone Wins

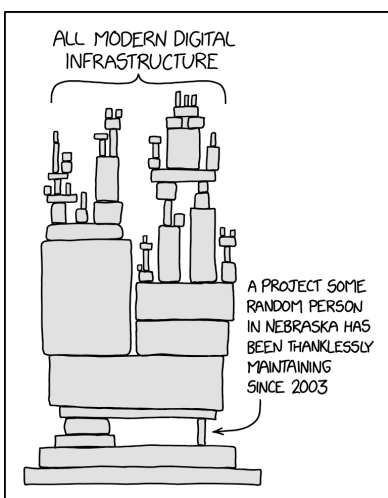
As an open source software provider, ISC doesn't hide its code behind proprietary walls. Our source code is freely available to anyone with a GitLab account, and we encourage code contributions from the entire Internet community. Any submitted code changes are reviewed by ISC staff, with many other community members offering feedback and testing. This partnership between ISC and the larger community ensures that our software is rigorously vetted.

Open source also demonstrates that we have nothing to hide. Having our software openly exposed to public scrutiny helps ensure that our code is high-quality and meets all RFC standards. Users of our software are free to examine the code to verify that it meets their requirements, and are allowed to modify and redistribute it themselves within our licensing restrictions.

But Open Source Development Still Costs Money

ISC is not funded by “the government” or some tech giant with deep pockets, and we have no endowment to cover our facility and staff expenses. We maintain our operations by selling professional support contracts for our open source software. Your organization can secure its critical Internet infrastructure AND help keep open source alive by becoming an ISC support subscriber.

<https://www.isc.org/contact>



We've all seen [this comic](#). The traditional view of open source is of a solitary guy working in his basement at night, programming software for the love of the challenge. But open source is so much more: it's created, supported, and maintained by dedicated professionals working for the good of the Internet, who want their work to be available to anyone and everyone who needs it.

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Why Should My Company Pay for Support for “Free” Software?

It's true: you don't have to pay for ISC's BIND 9, Kea DHCP, and Stork software. It is freely available for download from our website at <https://www.isc.org>.

But even though the software is available for free, here's what your organization gets when you purchase professional support from ISC:

- **Our engineers' time.** We operate free, open, user mailing lists where anyone can ask questions about using our software, and many generous members of the community are happy to respond. However, that assistance is on a best-effort basis and is available only when it's convenient for the other users. If your DNS and DHCP services are mission-critical, then you want to have a support team that's available whenever you need them.
- **Privacy.** To get support on a user mailing list, you'll need to share your detailed configurations with the group. Do you trust a public list with that information? With ISC support, you'll know that your data is protected and secure.
- **Reassurance.** There is a lot of information on the Internet, and some of it is useful. But to be sure that you're making the right decisions for your BIND, Kea, and/or Stork installation, you want to verify the details with the experts. ISC support customers can request reviews of their configuration files.
- **Priority attention.** ISC's GitLab instances are open, and anyone is free to submit feature requests. However, we prioritize our limited time and resources by giving preferential treatment to requests from our support customers.
- **A helping hand.** Many network administrators are expected to “do more with less” these days, and may find themselves administering software they're not completely familiar with. ISC's friendly, professional support staff are always happy to answer detailed questions about proper operations to keep your network running smoothly.
- **Additional functionality.** ISC support customers get access to subscriber-only software that adds features not available in the open source.

Contact us at <https://www.isc.org/contact> for more information!