IT'S OKAY, GRANDPA - WE'LL FIGURE IT OUT...

FIGURE WHAT OUT? WHAT'S WRONG??

HE CAN'T OPEN SOME OLD FILES ON HIS COMPUTER... THEY CONTAIN ALL OF HIS MEMORIES, HIS BIRTH, AND LOTS OF PICTURES!!

OH, NO -

ARE THE FILES DAMAGED SOMEHOW?

NO, BUT THEY WERE SAVED IN A CLOSED FORMAT AND THE PROGRAMS WE HAVE DON'T SUPPORT IT.

WHY CAN'T WE OPEN THE FILES WITH ANOTHER PROGRAM?

NO, THAT'S THE PROBLEM... COMPANIES USING CLOSED FORMATS KEEP INFORMATION ABOUT IT A SECRET! IT MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR USERS TO OPEN THEIR FILES WITH OTHER PROGRAMS. THEY ARE THEN CHARGED FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF ACCESSING THEIR OWN DATA.

CAN'T HE INSTALL AN OLD VERSION OF THE PROGRAM?

NO, IT'S TOO OLD! THE COMPANY MAKING IT HASN'T BEEN UPDATING THE PROGRAM FOR YEARS. SOFTWARE HAS TO BE MAINTAINED, OTHERWISE THEY STOP WORKING...

YOU PROBABLY ALREADY FACED THE SAME PROBLEM IN OTHER SITUATIONS! REMEMBER BEING FORCED TO BUY OR DOWNLOAD A NEW APPLICATION JUST SO YOU COULD OPEN AN ATTACHMENT THAT YOU NEEDED FOR WORK? I BET SOMETIMES EVEN YOUR FRIENDS WILL SEND YOU DOCUMENTS YOU CAN'T OPEN!

WELL, IF WE WERE ONLY USING TECHNOLOGIES BASED ON OPEN STANDARDS, WE WOULDN'T HAVE THIS PROBLEM!

OPEN STANDARDS ARE CONTROLLED AND MAINTAINED BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS.

THEIR SPECIFICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO ANYONE AND THEY CAN BE IMPLEMENTED IN ANY SOFTWARE!

NO MORE COMPATIBILITY PROBLEMS!

LONG TERM DIGITAL, ARCHIVING OF IMPORTANT DATA! INFORMATION ACCESSIBILITY FOR EVERYONE! COOPERATION!!

DON'T WORRY, GRANDPA. WE'LL GET YOUR DOCUMENTS BACK!

BUT NEXT TIME, CHOOSE OPEN STANDARDS!

You can order this and other leaflets at no charge: lfsfe.org/promo
Open formats, what for?

So that users might read my documents unhindered

Users exchanging reports.

CLOSED FORMAT, IDENTICAL SOFTWARE
Alice uses the software program “Carcera.” She records her report in a closed format (one that does not permit interoperability), then sends it to Bob, who has the same software program. He can read the document, modify it and send it back to Alice.

PROGRAMS WITH CLOSED FORMATS, DIFFERENT SOFTWARE
The following day, Alice sends her report to Albert. He has a different software program, which refuses to open the document. Albert has no other choice than to acquire the Carcera software used by Alice, with the hope it is compatible with its computer.

PROGRAMS WITH OPEN FORMATS, DIFFERENT SOFTWARE
Carole, another user, chooses to record her report in open format (allowing for interoperability) and sends it to David. David can read the document, modify and record it, either by using the same open format software or by using another interoperable software program.

To ensure the longevity of my documents

Alice and Carole use text editors to write, save, and preserve a novel.

CLOSED FORMAT
Alice buys an initial text-editing program, “Carcera.” She saves her novel in a free format (which allows interoperability).

After a few years, Carcera is no longer available. If Alice has not saved a version of the software program, she is no longer able to read her novel. It is lost.

OPEN FORMAT
Carole downloads a Free Software text-editing program, which saves her novel in a free format (which allows interoperability).

A new Free Software program is available. If it is compatible with this format, it can be used to edit and modify the novel Carole archived.

A new text-editing program is now available. Its format is also closed. If vendors have not agreed to make their formats compatible, Alice’s novel is not readable with his software program.

FORMAT OUVERT
This software program becomes obsolete. However Carole will be able to modify her novel with any other software program capable or reading this format.

The availability and longevity of your documents, saved in a closed format, depends on the decisions of software vendors.

In your interest, choose software programs that save your documents in open formats. They are not dependent on any particular software program.