basic income

and free software

Thomas Koch

www.koch.ro

August 9, 2009

me

- web software developer at ymc.ch
- better world activist in different groups
- www.koch.ro

this talk

basic income (only) from the perspective of a free software developer

what

A basic income is

- sufficient to live on and participate in society,
- granted to all individuals,
- without means test
- or work requirement.

AN OPEN LETTER TO HOBBYISTS[1]

February 3, 1976

> . . . One thing you do do is prevent good software from being written. Who can afford to do professional work for nothing? What hobbyist can put 3-man years into programming, finding all bugs, documenting his product and distribute for free? . . .

Bill Gates, General Partner, Micro-Soft

---

[1] en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_Letter_to_Hobbyists

Hamburg Declaration[2]

> *. . . Numerous providers are using the work of authors, publishers and broadcasters without paying for it. Over the long term, this threatens the production of high-quality content and the existence of independent journalism. . . .*

Berlin, June 26th 2009

---

[2]http://www.epceurope.org/presscentre/archive/International_publishers_demand_new_in

work and income

we couple work and income
income should depend on work
work should be provide income
but . . .

this is the past

work back then

income is what your work and nature gives you
you produce your own food

work has changed

work today

more then enough for everybody
everybody works for everybody

we call it work

- software developers
- journalists
- artists
- scientists

their work can be copied with no effort
if you depend their income on their work, you need draconian law

possible

certainly!
see the FAQs: `www.basicincome.org/bien/aboutbasicincome.html`

status

many initiatives in many countries
first succesful online petition in Germany was on basic income

benefits: free software

Writing software doesn't need to pay your bills.
So you don't need to write unmaintainable code to save your job! [3]

---

[3] http://freeworld.thc.org/root/phun/unmaintain.html

benefits: nature

We need to consume less to save nature.

consume less →people loose jobs → no income!

That's a bug in the system!

benefits: freedom

Freedom to do the things I want to do.

Maybe more important:

Freedom to not being forced to do things I do not want to do.

Freedom to speech.

more benefits

- no need for big pension fonds
- work, study, work, study, work, study
- services become cheaper
- education becomes cheaper!
- time for charity work

further informations

- www.initiative-grundeinkommen.ch
- www.grundeinkommen.de
- www.basicincome.org
- www.vivant.org (France, Belgium)
- www.usbig.net (USA)

picture references

```
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Farmer_plowing.jpg
http://www.flickr.com/photos/43667248@N00/1217187534/
```