

Packages - Freedom Issue #2848

[xdg-utils] recommends using nonfree browsers

2020-07-25 06:59 PM - jos

Status: not-a-bug	% Done: 0%
Priority: bug	
Assignee:	
Category:	
Description The man page of xdg-settings(part of the package xdg-utils) recommends using nonfree software, namely the firefox and chrome. I think the examples should be modified or deleted.	

History

#1 - 2020-07-25 09:41 PM - bill-auger

this area looks very grey to me - those are only examples of how the program can be used - such examples are rarely intended to be used verbatim; but usually to show which bits one would replace, in order to do what one actually wants to do - in this case, that is to replace the reference to the *.desktop files, with one that you do have and want to set as the default handler

"recommends" would be the key word per the FSDG - it is something of a leap to go from a demonstration to a recommendation - those examples are generally intended such as: "if you wanted to do something like this, this contrived example is what the command would look like, in some hypothetical case"

```
xdg-settings check default-web-browser firefox.desktop
xdg-settings set default-web-browser google-chrome.desktop
```

even if a parabola user wanted to do what exactly either of those particular command demonstrate, both of those example commands would fail on parabola; because no parabola package installs those .desktop files, which would be necessary for the commands to be useful - we hope that every parabola user knows, that it is never recommended to install any software that is not in the parabola repos

the question boils down to: "would anyone reading those words, be persuaded to install one of those programs because of those words?" - it more clearly would, if those were followed by: "you need to install google-chrome in order for that command to work properly" - its just a shame that the "free desktop" project would use such a non-free example - it would be more interesting to see how they would handle this bug report, IMHO

that just my first impression, and based on the most strict interpretation of the FSDG - there are many such grey area that could be discussed

#2 - 2020-07-25 10:26 PM - bill-auger

/me wonders if we could modify 'your-freedom' to manage small edits like this, rather than maintaining entire packages for trivial changes, such as deleting a single file, or replacing few words - if so, there are probably many such packages, which could be liberated without the maintenance burden

```
sed 's|google-chrome|YOUR-FAVORITE|'
```

#3 - 2022-04-13 03:43 PM - GNUtoo

- Status changed from unconfirmed to not-a-bug

In the FSDG we have:

```
Programs in the system should not suggest installing nonfree plugins, documentation, and so on.
```

And to give a little bit more background, in the man we have:

Get the desktop file name of the current default web browser

```
xdg-settings get default-web-browser
```

Check whether the default web browser is `firefox.desktop`, which can be false even if "get default-web-browser" says that is the current value (if only some of the underlying settings actually reflect that value)

```
xdg-settings check default-web-browser firefox.desktop
```

Set the default web browser to `google-chrome.desktop`

```
xdg-settings set default-web-browser google-chrome.desktop
```

Set the default mailto URL scheme handler to be `evolution.desktop`

```
xdg-settings set default-url-scheme-handler mailto evolution.desktop
```

So to me it seems that it's not pushing people to use Firefox or Google chrome.

For the first one we have:

```
$ xdg-settings check default-web-browser firefox.desktop
no
```

So it just tells me that I've not Firefox. So I'm happy not to have Firefox by default. So this is not an issue at all.

The second one is more problematic:

```
$ xdg-settings set default-web-browser google-chrome.desktop
```

But since I don't have `google-chrome.desktop` it didn't do anything:

```
$ xdg-settings get default-web-browser
icecat-safe.desktop
```

So as-is it doesn't seem to really push people into installing chrome.

And to compare to something that is somewhat accepted: `linux-libre` (and Linux too), tend to run nonfree software (here without even asking the user):

- Some of the ACPI tables given by the BIOS / EFI / UEFI contains code. That code is run by `linux-libre`. And that code is nonfree if the BIOS / EFI / UEFI is nonfree.
- The nouveau, radeon and amdgpu driver do something similar: they run code that is in the video BIOS.

In both cases that code is not installed or downloaded from the Internet. It's already there "in the hardware".

And in both cases that issue is covered by the RYF certification and not the FSDG (the FSDG allows that).

So you kind of need both the RYF and the FSDG to really have your freedom respected.

And also using RYF hardware without an FSDG distribution will also not work as you might end installing nonfree software without knowing it or even using nonfree software shipped by the distribution. And in both cases upstream will probably not remove that nonfree software even if you send patches for that.

Denis.

Files

xdg-settings

584 Bytes

2020-07-25

joh