



UF GROUPS TO CLEAN LAPTOPS, INSTALL OPEN-SOURCE SOFTWARE

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Source: Gavin Baker
(407) 929-5657
grbaker@ufl.edu

GAINESVILLE, Fla. -- As part of the University of Florida's Weeks of Welcome, the Florida Free Culture student organization will host its first Free Your PC event from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday on the north lawn of the Reitz Student Union.

With the help of the UF Help Desk and IT Security Team, laptop computers will be cleaned for viruses and secured, and open-source software will be installed on computers. Students will learn about free and open-source software and walk away with legal software, music, games and goodies.

"Florida Free Culture wants to work with students to help educate them about the importance of open-source software," said Gavin Baker, president of Free Culture. "This event is a fun way to make your computer safer while becoming more socially conscious."

Florida Free Culture, UF's chapter of the FreeCulture.org student movement, was formed last spring. Free Culture works to promote a participatory culture, engaging students on issues such as copyright law, free software and access to information. Free software, also known as open source, is a matter of liberty, not price, its advocates say. Users are allowed to freely re-distribute and modify the programs.

With the recent rash of viruses and other malicious activity on the Internet, free software can make a big difference, said Baker. Mozilla's Firefox Web browser is known in the IT community to be a more secure browser than Microsoft's Internet Explorer.

Free Culture will install Firefox and other open source programs on students' laptops, as well as free Creative Commons-licensed music MP3 files. UF security experts will install its licensed McAfee VirusScan, which is free for students, faculty and staff. The group also will distribute promotional merchandise for nonprofit groups such as Creative Commons.

For more information about the event, visit: <http://uf.freeculture.org/>