

Free Open Source Tax Software

Presented to FTA
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- 501(c)(3) Charity
- Charitable Purpose:
“To lessen the burdens of government and reduce the complexity and the expense of tax preparation and e-filing for all persons who prepare taxes for themselves or on behalf of another person, by creating open-source, public access, royalty free tax preparation and e-file software. The benefits of such software inure to the entire tax administration system by ensuring tax software is accurate, secure, publicly accessible, and fair.”

Membership

- Anyone can become a member that believes in purpose and mission.
 - No fees to become a member.
 - Membership is encouraged for Tax Administrators, Tax professionals, Software developers.
 - Members participate in votes, Tax Code Counsel & Tax Code Working groups
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Why should Tax Software be Free & Open Source?

- Ensures tax software is compliant with the tax law.
 - Code should be made available for public review by both government and public.
 - Results in more complete and accurate software.
 - Lower cost of service for tax professionals.
 - Lower cost of self preparation for taxpayers
 - Solves the conflict of interest problem (government producing tax software and being tax admin)
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How its developed?

- Open source software is developed by a group of developers and tax experts.
- Organization has to be managed.
- TCSF is modeled after Jabber Foundation(www.jabber.org) and the Apache Software Foundation.
- Board of Directors
- TCSF members
- Tax Code Council
- Working groups. Responsible for the day-to-day management of the projects and development of software.
- Tax Code Interest groups

Technology

- Uses Open Standard XML technologies for forms, efile, and other components.
- Open Stanards (XML, XForms, XHTML, XMLSchema, XSLT).
- Commercial FOSS software implementations are available for all of these technologies. Mostly GPL or LGPL.
- Commercial closed source Packages are also available
- Seeks to automate the generation of tax forms and e-file schemas from government PDFs and e-file specifications
- Section 5-8 compliant

How can Government be involved?

- Become a Member
 - Fund a grant
 - Structure your data (Accessible PDF)
 - Contribute to the interest group and submit concerns about development related issues.
 - Spread the word to professionals
 - Spread the word to taxpayers
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How can Software Developers become involved?

- Become a member
 - Sponsor a developer
 - Provide support and services
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FAQ

- Will TCSF provide e-file service? Yes, until free direct e-file is made available to every taxpayer by government.
 - Will TCSF provide a public tax prep server? Yes, but it will be do it yourself.
 - Will TCSF provide support for its software? Yes, Support will be provided by the community on TCSF mailing lists. Commercial entities can also provide support to users for a fee.
 - Can Software companies resell value added version of Tax Code? Yes, anyone can resell Tax Code, even for a fee, but the code and derivatives must remain open source.
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References

- www.taxcodesoftware.org
 - www.w3c.org W3C Consortium, Standards setting body for markup technologies (XML, Xforms, XSLT, XMLSchema)
 - www.softwarefreedom.org -Software Freedom Law Center
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