

# RTI Application to Visvesvaraya Technological University

*Centre for Internet and Society* | 2009-03-30

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*The Centre for Internet and Society filed an RTI application to Visvesvaraya Technological University asking it to provide details about its curriculum design, and its tie-ups with various software vendors.*

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The grip software vendors have over courses in technology (at both the school and the university levels) is a matter for concern. Due to what can be termed institutional inertia, educational institutions often don't realise that alternatives exist in the form of FLOSS (Free/Libre/Open Source software), as proprietary software is entrenched in the system (and is sometimes the market leader in that tech sector). To further tighten their grip, software vendors enter into commercial deals with governments and universities in attempts to penetrate the crucial education sector. This often results in students being taught courses on how to use particular (usually proprietary) software instead of being taught standard technologies. In turn, this denies them the opportunity to learn the concepts behind the software effectively, and ties them to the particular software that they were taught. For software vendors, getting their products into the curricula is very important because the supply of students trained in particular software also affects the demand for that software.

Students should be taught technologies first and foremost, and these technologies should be taught via the vehicle of both free and proprietary software (this is much easier if the technology itself is an open technology). That would allow students the opportunity to understand different implementations of the same technology and make an informed decision as to what they wish to use. It would also offer them more opportunities and choices in their future careers. The importance of FLOSS in the education sector is highlighted in a guide brought out by the United Nations Development Programme's International Open Source Network.

Against this backdrop, when news reports appeared in the Hindu (19 November 2008) and the Deccan Herald (20 November 2008) about a curriculum tie-up between Microsoft and Visvesvaraya Technological University, we filed a Right to Information application to get more details about it. The response stated that this matter was still under discussion and no agreement had been signed.

To read the application, [click here](#); to read the response, [click here](#). You can download a scanned copy of the response [here](#).

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