

### ***The Public Ought to Know returns: Credit Not Necessary***

Tonight an email from former and would be Public Advocate Mark Green touts [Government2.0](#) which includes “open sourcing” among its components. In 2004, I wrote a [column](#) that touted the benefits of the City switching to “open source” software. Part of my “[The Public Ought to Know](#)” series the editors chose, “Schools, libraries would benefit from free software” as its title. I preferred a different header made clear in the lead sentences of the first two paragraphs:

Government administrators often talk of savings realized when they introduce technology in agency operations.

Few give any attention to New York City's potential waste of millions of dollars on "closed source" (fee-based) software, including Microsoft Word, Windows and Internet Explorer, when it could be taking advantage of free and faster comparable programs.

I based the analysis on work by my son then about to enter the [Macaulay Honors College at CUNY](#) as a Queens College student to study Computer Science. (He graduated with a Political Science degree and will soon enter NYU to study “the sociology of education” on a federally funded fellowship on his way to earning his doctorate.)

The previous March (2004), Jonathan proposed, at the request of a then citywide aspirant and still distinguished New Yorker, a software transition plan for running New York City computers on open source software. In a New York Observer [interview](#) later that year, the aspirant embraced what Ben Smith then called a “modest” proposal. Unfortunately, the technology-conversant City Hall incumbent seems comfortable with programming that continues to enrich fellow billionaire Mr. Gates.

In the nearly five years since advocating open source, I have migrated from open source word processor and spreadsheet to open source browser, then open source publisher and most recently an open source file-transfer program. As I stated in September 2004, “Policymakers and would-be policymakers would do well to give these alternatives a chance in our city's agencies, schools and libraries.”

Open source was a no-brainer five years backs; it remains so today. I thank the once and would-be future Public Advocate for including it. I also embrace the other 29 recommendations. – *Corey Bearak*