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Subject: Re: OT(ish): ANA seems to be back  
Posted by [hcp](#) on Wed, 14 Nov 2001 14:32:45 GMT  
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In article <MPG.165c280c7c3ae17d98976d@news.frii.com>, David Fanning  
<david@dfanning.com> writes:

|> James Tappin (sjt@star.sr.bham.ac.uk) writes:

|>

|> > It looks as if the ANA site <http://ana.lmsal.com/> is operation again. Still

|> > no updates since Sept 00 though.

|>

|> This is the downside of "free" software. At least

|> when you pay for it you get \*something\*, even if you

|> don't get the help files to be able to use it.

It is important to note that there are many differences between one  
Free Software project and another, just as there are between one proprietary  
software company and another.

Perhaps the biggest difference is between

(a) projects run by a moderate sized committee (normally with a substantial  
user community from which that committee is drawn) and

(b) projects which are essentially a one-man effort (often with a user community  
drawn from one government lab).

R, whatever its failings, is firmly in the first category, with an army of  
grey statisticians to keep it alive even if any one of them becomes the  
less pleasant sort of statistic. The same is clearly true of GCC,  
the Linux kernel, perl etc.

ANA is (was) in category (b) [1], which means that it only took one  
person to change employers and the whole thing ground to a halt. This is a  
risk with small commercial suppliers and small Free Software suppliers alike.  
Of course, with Free Software you have the source code and can  
fix/re-compile it yourself, so it keeps working as you upgrade your OS.  
But that is nothing like as satisfactory as being part of a larger user  
community.

Hugh

[1] As is Yorick.

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Hugh C. Pumphrey | Telephone 0131-650-6026  
Department of Meteorology | FAX 0131-650-5780  
The University of Edinburgh | Replace 0131 with +44-131 if outside U.K.  
EDINBURGH EH9 3JZ, Scotland | Email [hcp@met.ed.ac.uk](mailto:hcp@met.ed.ac.uk)  
OBDisclaimer: The views expressed herein are mine, not those of UofE.

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