

## GCSE Bitesize Computer Science

### Bill Sellars on open source

My name's Bill Sellars and I work at the University of Manchester as a zoologist. And what I do is I create 3D dinosaurs as computer models.

All the software that we write is freely available and open source and you can download it from our website. All the models that we create are also freely available and you can download them.

Some of the actual raw data that we use to create the 3D models, though, belongs to the museums that house the original specimens. Some museums let us give it away and some museums don't.

In science, there's often a lot of value in having your software widely used. And although it might be possible to make money selling the software, probably there's a very limited market for people who want to simulate dinosaurs and it's actually more useful to encourage more people around the world to actually use your software, and making it freely available is one guaranteed way of doing that.

It's really very useful if software is open because I'm claiming that my software is representing reality. Someone really needs to be able to look at the source code and check that I've done a decent job. And if this was closed source software, then they wouldn't be able to do that. People make a lot of money out of open source software and they do it by offering things like consultancy. So if Steven Spielberg did want to use my software, the chances are he'd ask for my help to go and teach him how to use it properly, and I could charge for that.