Open formats, what for?
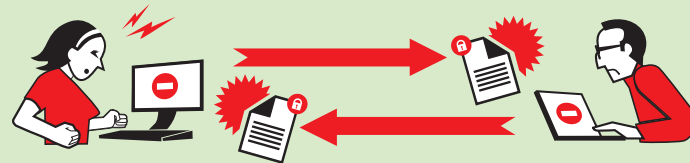
▶ So that users might read my documents unhindered

Users exchanging reports.

So that your documents might be read more easily by other people, without you having to worry about which software they use, choose open formats.

CLOSED FORMAT, IDENTICAL SOFTWARE

Alice uses the software program "Carcera[1]." She records her report in a closed format (one that does not permit interoperability), then sends it to Bob, who has the same software program. He can read the document, modify it and send it back to Alice.

PROGRAMS WITH CLOSED FORMATS, DIFFERENT SOFTWARE

The following day, Alice sends her report to Albert. He doesn't have the same software program, which refuses to open the document. Albert has no other choice than to acquire the Carcera software used by Alice, with the hope it is compatible with its computer.
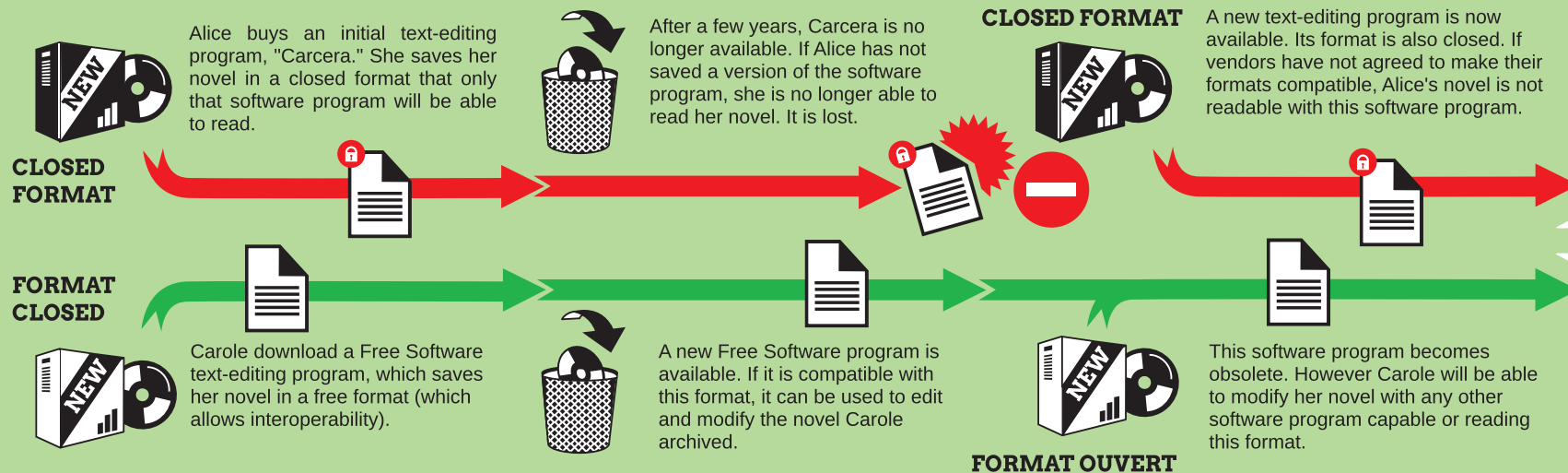
PROGRAMS WITH OPEN FORMATS, DIFFERENT SOFTWARE

Carole, another user, choses to record her report in open format (allowing for interoperability) and sends it to David. David can read the document, modify and record it, either by using the same open format software or by using another interoperable software.

▶ To ensure the longevity of my documents

Alice and Carole use text editors to write, save, and preserve a novel.

CLOSED FORMAT

Alice buys an initial text-editing program, "Carcera." She saves her novel in a closed format that only that software program will be able to read.

After a few years, Carcera is no longer available. If Alice has not saved a version of the software program, she is no longer able to read her novel. It is lost.

CLOSED FORMAT

A new text-editing program is now available. Its format is also closed. If vendors have not agreed to make their formats compatible, Alice's novel is not readable with this software program.

The availability and longevity of your documents, saved in a closed format, depends on the decisions of software vendors.

FORMAT CLOSED

Carole download a Free Software text-editing program, which saves her novel in a free format (which allows interoperability).

A new Free Software program is available. If it is compatible with this format, it can be used to edit and modify the novel Carole archived.

FORMAT OUVERT

This software program becomes obsolete. However Carole will be able to modify her novel with any other software program capable or reading this format.

In your interest, choose software programs that save your documents in open formats. They are not dependent on any particular software program.

April

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