



OTTAWA

PC

Happy New Year!

NEWS

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ARTICLE

Revolution OS by Alan German

So, I was browsing through the stacks of DVD's at my local branch of the Ottawa Library when the words "Hackers, Programmers & Rebels UNITE!" caught my eye on the title page of a disk entitled "Revolution OS". A Windows' logo inside a red circle, with a diagonal line through it, and a right arrow pointing to a penguin, furthered my interest in this offering.

Turning over the box, I read that "Revolution OS tells the inside story of the hackers and computer programmers who rebelled against Microsoft and the idea of proprietary software to create GNU, Linux & the Open Source Movement... [the film] captures an offbeat group of characters who are three-parts libertarian, two parts communist, and one-part bad garage band."

Clearly, this was a DVD that needed some airplay - and who was I to deny this imperative? So, I took my find up to the checkout counter and duly signed it out for further research. It turns out that this was a master stroke. The film is highly illuminating about the origins of free and open-source software and, in particular, features interviews with the individuals (such as Richard Stallman - "the philosopher", and Linus Torvalds - "the engineer") who were largely responsible for making things happen. So, if you ever wondered how old Richard Stallman is, or

how to pronounce "Linus" and "Linux", this is the film for you.

1991 - Version 0.01 of Linux has 10,000 lines of code and one user

Since you are reading this in our computer group's newsletter, you may be interested to learn that in January 1976, when the Homebrew Computer Club of Mountain View, California was completing the layout for the very first issue of their newsletter, the now-famous open letter to hobbyists arrived from Bill Gates with a 25-point argument for the "relatively new concept of proprietary software." Or, as Bill put it: "As the majority of hobbyists must be aware, most of you steal your software."

In contrast to this overtly commercial stance, Richard Stallman, originally working at MIT, developed a passion for sharing computer software and, in particular, started the development of the GNU operating system in January, 1984. Now, GNU's Not Unix (the name itself is a recursive acronym), but the new operating system was Unix-like. It just wasn't proprietary. It was free (as in "free speech" not "free beer".) It was developed as a replacement for Unix, and written module by module, completely from scratch, by Stallman and his collaborators.

Now, GNU is free, but is subject to a "copyleft" license. This license is actually a very special form of copyright. The authors provide permission for others to distribute the software, and to make changes. However, the modified code must, in turn, be made publicly available under the terms of the original license, thus avoiding anyone creating a proprietary version of the software. The most famous version of this license is the GNU General Public License (GPL) - the license that is used for Linux.

By 1991-1993, most of GNU's modules were in place. What was missing was the kernel. This very important module had been left until last in the development process. However, in the interim, Linus Torvalds had written the Linux kernel, making use of some of the features of GNU, especially the GNU C-compiler and debugger. While there is obvious symbiosis between GNU and

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Next Meeting: WEDNESDAY, January 9th, 2008

January Raffle

Thanks to the generosity of McAfee Canada we have four, count 'em, four copies of **McAfee Internet Security Suite 2007**. This suite of security products includes anti-virus, anti-spyware, anti-spam, a firewall, identity theft protection, content protection for children, file back up & restore and can improve your PC's performance.

We will be drawing four tickets for this raffle, so your odds of winning are quadrupled!

As always, tickets for the raffle are \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten.

December Prize Winners

Harley Bloom brought along at least 30 different giveaways including Ottawa 67's tickets, Anti-virus Software CD's, Hardware tokens for file locking, hard drive enclosures for external drives, daytimers, an empty but new PC case to name just some of the available items.

Lots of the members went home with something... some people with more than a few items.

Many thanks to Harley again this year!

Coming Up...

The January 9 presentation by Jean-Pierre Fiset of Ottawa-Gatineau WiFi will be entitled: "ogWifi brings free Wireless to YOUR community"

Outline:

This presentation introduces participants to ogWifi, describing its members and its goals. The importance of free WIFI in our community is established and the necessity for volunteers to participate is explained. The contrast between ogWifi hotspots and ad-hoc neighbourhood access points is shown. There is never a wireless talk without discussions around security, therefore the measures in place to protect hotspots and users are brought to light. Finally, a discussion on the technology used by ogWifi and the deployment of its hotspots is presented. This will include routers, firmware and resources that can be found on-line.



2008 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, January 9 th	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the Canada Museum of Science and Technology , 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. http://www.science-tech.nmstc.ca/english/index.cfm
Beginners' SIG	Wednesday, January 9 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
IT-Pro SIG	Wednesday, January 9 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Linux SIG	Wednesday, January 9 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
PIG SIG (Wing SIG West)	Wednesday, January 9 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Chances "R" restaurant, Baseline Rd. at Woodroffe Ave. (College Square Shopping Centre)
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, January 9 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Liam Maguire's, St. Laurent Blvd. at Innes Rd.

Please note that unless otherwise noted, SIGs meet at 9:00 p.m. (immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting).

PRODUCT REVIEW

Exploring Linux—Part 8 *by Alan German*

Gutsy Gibbon is here! Otherwise known as Ubuntu Linux Version 7.10, the latest distro from Ubuntu is now available, and its features cause me to revisit a couple of items noted in earlier parts of this series of exploratory articles.

First up, in Exploring Linux – Part 7, I noted that it was fairly simple to create a dual-boot system for Ubuntu 6.06 and Microsoft Windows Vista. However, this did require manual editing of GRUB's *menu.lst* file in order to add a series of commands to point to the Vista partition. In the current Ubuntu release such machinations are no longer necessary. Gutsy Gibbon is fully aware of Vista's existence, and the installation process automatically provides an entry point to access this “other” operating system. So, now when you install Ubuntu 7.10, and boot the machine, GRUB's boot menu includes an option for “Windows Vista/Longhorn (loader)”.

The second new feature relates back to Exploring Linux – Part 6 where I indicated the commands needed to mount a Windows partition in order to be able to use the same data disk for both Linux and Windows' installations. My application at the time was to access a FAT data partition, and I had no trouble reading files from the disk, modifying them with Linux programs (e.g. OpenOffice.org Writer), and writing them back to the “Windows” disk. So, it came as a slight shock when, on my new machine, I used the variant of the

mount command to access an NTFS partition and found that, while I could read files from the disk, I couldn't modify them, nor rite them out to the disk, since they were opened as read-only!

This obviously needed a little research. So, firing up my trusty web browser, and equally-trusty search engine, I soon learned that getting Linux to write to NTFS partitions was fraught with difficulties. Well, it was – until February 21, 2007. That date marked the first stable release of NTFS-3G, an open-source NTFS driver for Linux, and a number of other operating systems. NTFS-3G has a long history of development, stretching back to 1995, with recent activities resulting in a completely functional product.

The NTFS-3G driver is part of the Gutsy Gibbon distro and so, modifying the *etc/fstab* file to include the line: `/dev/sda3 /mnt/windows_data ntfs-3g defaults,locale=en_US,utf8 0 1` provides my system with read-write access to my Windows' data disk when I am booted into Linux.

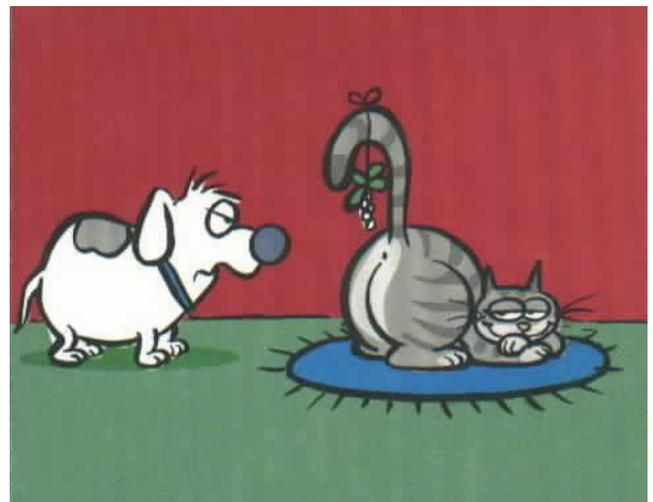
Bottom Line:

Ubuntu 7.10

<http://www.ubuntu.com/>

NTFS-3G Stable Read/Write Driver

<http://www.ntfs-3g.org>



Revolution OS *(Continued from page 1)*

Linux, the film demonstrates some friction between the two main developers, Stallman who thinks Linux should be called GNU/Linux, and Torvalds who is happy to have anyone who develops a Linux distribution give it a name – such as Red Hat Linux, SuSE Linux, and even Debian GNU/Linux!

1995: Version 1.2 of Linux has 250,000 lines of code and 50,000 users

The “killer app” for Linux was the Apache web server. The combination of a free operating system and free web server software provided an extremely cost-effective means to develop server farms, and sparked the incredible growth of the Internet. The particular feature of Apache that appealed to ISP's was the ability to host multiple web sites on a single box and, in 2001, Apache accounted for 66% of the web server market.

Another interesting aspect of friction between the leading lights in the development community covered in the film is the nuance between free software and open-source software. Richard Stallman, now with The Free Software Foundation, is portrayed as being passionate, even dogmatic, about the ethics of proprietary software and the associated intellectual property rights. Bruce Perens, a co-author of the Open Source Definition, believes that the only real difference is that Stallman thinks all software should be free, whereas the open-source movement allows that both free and non-free software can co-exist. Perhaps, the best line in the whole film is from Richard Stallman who, in accepting an award at LinuxWorld said “Giving the Linus Torvalds' Award to The Free Software Foundation is a bit like giving the Hans Solo Award to the rebel fleet.”

The film also provides considerable insights into how to make money out of free software – by providing support, as did Cygnus Solutions (note the inclusion of GNU in the name), or by developing hardware solutions like the PC-Linux work stations built by VA Linux Systems as cheaper alternatives to Sun machines. It also has references to the dot-com financial meltdown of a few years ago, with details of the astounding IPO by Linux VA, its stock increasing by 698% on opening day, and the subsequent demise of this company.

1998: Version 2.1110 of Linux has 1.5 million lines of code and 7.5 million users

Some special highlights in the film are clips from the installfests offered by local user groups where experienced Linux users assisted new users to install various distros on their own ma-

chines. There is mention of the Linux defence - “there is an alternative operating system” - used by Microsoft to try to defend an anti-trust lawsuit. And, who can forget the Windows Refund Day Protest when Linux users tried to return unopened copies of Windows (that came with the purchase of their computers) to Microsoft for a refund, as specified in the end-user license agreement?

Overall, this is an interesting film for those wanting to know something about the early development of Linux and the free-software and open-source movements. Of particular interest is the opportunity to listen to the on-camera interviews with many of the major players of the time, and to hear directly their thoughts and philosophies. (The DVD is actually a two-disk package and has more interview footage than just the clips used in the film.)

So, should hackers, programmers & rebels unite, and will they have the smarts to be able to re-define the software world? Perhaps so. The film's final word has to come from Richard Stallman when he says: “The whole GNU project is really one big hack. It's one big act of subversive, playful cleverness.”

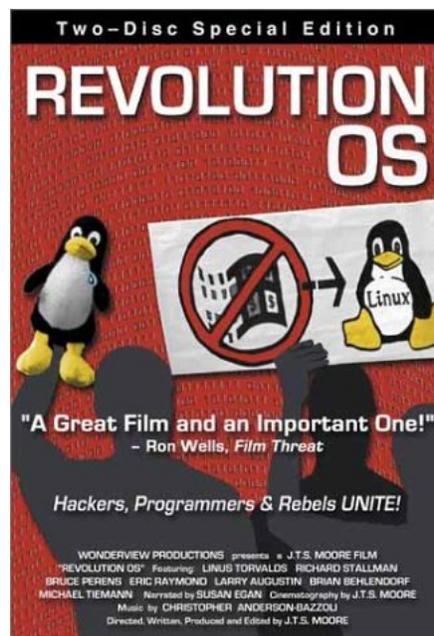
Yes, the man is a true philosopher.

Bottom Line

Revolution OS

Wonderview Productions & Seventh Art Releasing

A J.T.S. Moore film Ottawa Library
Call No. 005.43 R4545



HUMOUR

“WHO'S ON FIRST” FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Submitted by Peter Hawkins. Available at Mikey's Funnies (<http://www.mikeysfunnies.com/>)

ABBOTT: Ultimate SuperDuper Computer Store. Can I help you?

COSTELLO: Thanks. I'm setting up a home office in the den, and I'm thinking of buying a computer.

ABBOTT: Mac?

COSTELLO: No, the name is Bud.

ABBOTT: Your computer?

COSTELLO: I don't own a computer. I want to buy one.

ABBOTT: Mac?

COSTELLO: I told you, my name is Bud.

ABBOTT: What about Windows?

COSTELLO: Why? Does it get stuffy?

ABBOTT: Do you want a computer with Windows?

COSTELLO: I don't know. What do I see when I look out the windows?

ABBOTT: Wallpaper.

COSTELLO: Never mind the windows. I need a computer and software.

ABBOTT: Software that runs on Windows?

COSTELLO: No, on the computer! I need something I can use to write proposals, track expenses. You know, run a business. What have you got?

ABBOTT: Office.

COSTELLO: Yeah, for my office. Can you recommend anything?

ABBOTT: I just did.

COSTELLO: You just did what?

ABBOTT: Recommended something.

COSTELLO: You recommended something?

ABBOTT: Yes.

COSTELLO: For my office?

ABBOTT: Yes.

COSTELLO: Okay, what did you recommend for my office?

ABBOTT: Office.

COSTELLO: Yes, for my office.

ABBOTT: Office for Windows.

COSTELLO: I already have an office and it already has windows! Let's say I'm sitting at my computer, and I want to type a proposal. What do I need?

ABBOTT: Word.

COSTELLO: If I'm writing a proposal, I'm going to need lots of words. But what program do I load?

ABBOTT: Word.

COSTELLO: What word?

ABBOTT: The Word in Office.

COSTELLO: The only word in office is office.

ABBOTT: The Word in Office for Windows.

COSTELLO: Which word in "office for windows?"

ABBOTT: The Word you get when you click the blue W.

COSTELLO: I'm going to click your big W if you don't give me a straight answer. Let's forget about words for a minute. What do I need if I want to watch a movie over the Internet?

ABBOTT: RealOne.

COSTELLO: Maybe a real movie, maybe a cartoon. What I watch is none of your business. But what do I need to watch it?

ABBOTT: RealOne.

COSTELLO: If it's a long movie I'll also want to watch reels two, three and four. Can I watch reel four?

ABBOTT: Of course.

COSTELLO: Great! With what?

ABBOTT: RealOne.

COSTELLO: Okay, so I'm sitting at my computer and I want to watch a movie. What do I do?

ABBOTT: You click the blue 1.

COSTELLO: I click the blue one what?

ABBOTT: The blue 1.

COSTELLO: Is that different from the blue W?

ABBOTT: Of course it is. The blue 1 is RealOne. The blue W is Word.

COSTELLO: What word?

ABBOTT: The Word in Office for Windows.

COSTELLO: But there's three words in "office for windows!"

ABBOTT: No, just one. But it's the most popular Word in the world.

COSTELLO: It is?

ABBOTT: Yes, although to be fair there aren't many other Words left. It pretty much wiped out all the other Words.

COSTELLO: And that word is the real one?

ABBOTT: No. RealOne has nothing to do with Word. RealOne isn't even part of Office.

COSTELLO: Never mind; I don't want to get started with that again. But I also need something for bank accounts, loans, and so on. What do you have to help me track my money?

ABBOTT: Money.

COSTELLO: That's right. What do you have?

ABBOTT: Money.

COSTELLO: I need money to track my money?

(to be continued next month)

OTTAWA PC NEWS

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Member participation is encouraged. If you would like to contribute an article to Ottawa PC News, please submit it to the newsletter editor (contact info below). Deadline for submissions is three Sundays before the next General Meeting.

Group Meetings

OPCUG meets on the second Wednesday in the month, except July and August, at the Canada Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa. Meetings are 7:30-9:00 p.m. and Special Interest Groups go until 10 p.m.

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