

Linux lab lays off programmers

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The Open Source Development Labs, the organization that employs Linux leader Linus Torvalds, has laid off nearly a sixth of its staff as part of a shift to new priorities.

The group cut nine of its 57 staff and contractor positions, Chief Executive Stuart Cohen confirmed Monday. The cuts affected several programmers who worked on the open-source operating system as well as staff in sales, marketing, business development and internal computer operations.

The organization, which calls itself the "center of gravity" of the Linux movement, made the cuts as part of a plan to rebalance its work force. New priorities include the establishment of a European office and an expansion of Asian operations into China and Korea from today's base in Japan, said Nelson Pratt, director of marketing.

"We're a small enough organization that what would be a small change in focus for a bigger company has a large effect on us," Pratt said.

The nonprofit organization isn't dropping its programming efforts, however. It still employs Torvalds, a top deputy named Andrew Morton, and Chris Wright, who maintains a Linux security component. And "substantially more than half our employees are engineers," Cohen said.

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