

Year of the Linux desktop? Who cares!

By *stmok*

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The words "This is the year for the Linux Desktop" has become a cliché. It's a serious over-simplification of a large issue.

The key thing though, regardless if "This is the year for the Linux Desktop" or not, is that we really should be focusing on improving and contributing (directly or indirectly) to the community, instead of getting ourselves involved in these types of never-ending trivial discussions and issues that drag out to an area of pointlessness.

We waste a lot of time trying to defend Linux when we don't need to. Let people think what they think. BUT, let our contributions speak for themselves. And finally, let the user decide if Linux is right for their desktop. The ultimate decider has, and always been the user. People and companies can trick them for now, but eventually, the truth or benefits of alternatives will spread to them. (Whether it be by word of mouth, or some clueless journalist just realising a change in tide of the IT industry).

Remember, the difference between open-source and companies like Microsoft, are that they corner or "encourage" the user into their specific way or solution. (often with the ultimate goal of profit). We don't. We stand for the right and freedom to choose. Just remember that when someone is talking about MS Office 2007, and how they are unable to go back to the older user-interface that they are familiar with. (That's right, people have to re-learn Office 2007's way of doing things.)

Everybody knows open-source is inevitable. (Even Microsoft).

If you don't believe me, just look at these examples...

(1) Microsoft Shared Source Initiative

=> <http://www.microsoft.com/resources/sharedsource/default.mspx> [2]

(It's like open-source...But not).

(2) MS Research Facility to study Open-Source solutions.

=> port25.technet.com [3]

(To fight and kill your enemy, you must understand and study him).

(3) CodePlex

=> www.codeplex.com [4]

(Microsoft's attempt to copy SourceForge.net)

(4) Novell and Microsoft ? Working Together for Customers

=> www.novell.com/linux/microsoft [5]

Need I say more?

What we should be focusing on, is ways that we can help improve things for everyone. That's what open-source is about. The community. It could be coming up with an idea that fills a current niche in open-source, etc. Even if you want to make a business or money out of it, it doesn't matter. If we all put a little bit in, it doesn't matter what some weenie from an ad-filled tech site says OR even what Microsoft does/says.

So avoid and ignore blogs, opinions, editorials, forum posts that don't specifically ask for help or provide useful information, but bring up trivial discussions. They're time wasters, that's a fact. You don't actually learn anything out of them. (such that you can use the information in the future). IF you really want to be productive, focus on looking at or making guides (even for newbies), online technical stuff, maybe learn to program, etc.

By the way, you don't have to be an engineer or a computer scientist to learn how to program. You can do it as a hobby. A self taught thing...Some of the most skilled and influential people in the world are self learners. Take for example, guitarists like Eric Clapton and Jimi Hendrix. (Both taught themselves how to play a guitar). And what of "DVD Jon" (Jon Lech Johansen)? He is a self-taught software engineer. Look at his contributions!

I'm using these to start off...

How to Think Like a Computer Scientist: Learning with Python

www.ibiblio.org/obp/thinkCSpy [6]

How To Think Like A Computer Scientist: Learning with C++

www.ibiblio.org/obp/thinkCS/cpp/english [7]

ShowMeDo

<http://showmedo.com/> [8]

...And look at examples. (This is where downloading the source code comes in handy...Don't you just love open-source?). Be sure to post your own code in programming forums. Ask for criticism and feedback, as you learn. (Always question: Why does my way suck? Why should I try someone else's suggestion? Are their's better? In what way?)...The difference between a winner and a loser, is the winner learns from their mistakes and understands the goals of what they want to do and never let up.

We can clearly see the weaknesses of Linux for the mainstream, non-techie user. (If you don't, just visit any newbie section in forums of any distro)...The biggest one is compatibility with Windows applications. (Games for enthusiasts and specific apps that businesses rely on).

So what do you folks want to do? Talk about trivial subjects until the cows come home? Or actually do something about it, and make a REAL difference. (You never know, you may even end up making your mark in open-source history books!)

There are two kinds of people in this world. Those who complain about the weather, and those who do something about. Question is...Which are you?

Its about what we do right now, that will make a difference for tomorrow. In this case, if you really want Linux to get a good foothold on the desktop; you, me, and any other experienced Linux user needs to step back, clearly identify issues and the problems faced by the non-techie Jane/Joe PC user, and figure out GOOD solutions for them and anyone else who can benefit.

There will never be a clearly defined year that will be the year for the Linux desktop. Such discussions are pointless

and trivial, as its a gradual thing to see over time.

I'll think I'll end with some words that have inspired me...

The most important thing the hacker community does is write better code. Our deeds are the best propaganda we have. Most of us, most of the time, shouldn't be distracted by worrying about beating Microsoft's PR or countering their political moves, because writing good code is in the long run a far more potent weapon than flackery.

-Eric S. Raymond

[Linux](#)

Source URL: <http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/13138>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/123>
- [2] <http://www.microsoft.com/resources/sharedsource/default.msp>
- [3] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/port25.technet.com>
- [4] <http://www.codeplex.com>
- [5] <http://www.novell.com/linux/microsoft>
- [6] <http://www.ibiblio.org/obp/thinkCSpy>
- [7] <http://www.ibiblio.org/obp/thinkCS/cpp/english>
- [8] <http://showmedo.com/>