

Gentoo founder to 'educate' M\$

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Daniel Robbins, the founder and former chief architect of the Gentoo project, began working for Microsoft in late May, according to a posting this week on the Gentoo Web site. According to Gentoo, Robbins is "helping Microsoft to understand open source and community-based projects."

Microsoft confirmed Wednesday that Robbins will have an educational role at the company.

"Daniel Robbins will be working under Bill Hilf who heads the Platform Value team's research lab in Redmond. Bill's team educates internal Microsoft product teams about open-source development, testing, and deployment issues," said a Microsoft representative.

Gentoo is a distribution of Linux that its developers claim is fully customizable for any application or need. According to a recent Netcraft survey, the number of Web sites running Gentoo increased by almost 50 percent over the previous six months.

Ulrich Plate, who works on the Gentoo project, told ZDNet that he is not concerned about Robbins' move to Microsoft and hopes to maintain a good relationship with him.

"The drawback of an open-source community project like Gentoo--no matter how technologically advanced and powerful we've become already--is we have no financial means to pay our developers. So if one of us decides to get employment, even if it's outside the open-source realm, that's not a political move, but in order to feed his family," said Plate.

Robbins "hasn't been actively involved in Gentoo development for over a year now. We've been fortunate enough to keep an excellent relationship with our former chief architect, and intend to keep it that way--no matter what his choice of a career path may be. We wish him the best of luck in his new job," Plate said.

But some Gentoo users were worried about Microsoft's motives in hiring him.

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