

Can Willow Garage?s ?Linux for Robots? Spur Internet-Scale Growth?

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Created 29/03/2012 - 11:34pm

Submitted by srlinuxx on Thursday 29th of March 2012 11:34:01 PM Filed under [Linux](#) [1] [Gadgets](#) [2]

Robot builders have a lot to learn from Internet entrepreneurs.

That?s one of the main arguments you?ll hear from the engineers at Willow Garage, a unique startup in Menlo Park, CA, that?s developing hardware and software for a new generation of personal robots. You can?t name a single Internet company, they say, that would have succeeded if it had been forced to recreate all the basic tools underlying the Web, from the Linux operating system to the Apache HTTP server to the MySQL database system to the Python, Perl, and PHP programming languages?the ingredients of the so-called LAMP stack. Yet most robot companies still try to reinvent the wheel every time, building robots that require putting together a tangled mess of proprietary, one-off software systems.

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