

As Linux stalks Windows poor countries will benefit

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Created 29/07/2013 - 10:47pm

Submitted by srlinuxx on Monday 29th of July 2013 10:47:23 PM Filed under [Linux](#) [1] [Microsoft](#) [2]

What do the International Space Station, the Czech Post Office, the French Parliament and the Turkish Government have in common? All have switched from using a proprietary Operating System (OS) on their computers to an 'open source' or free OS; or putting it simply: They have switched from Windows to a free OS called Linux. And they are not alone. A growing number of businesses, educational and scientific institutions, schools and governments are doing likewise. Why are they doing it? And what has all this got to do with Pakistan?

First some definitions: An OS is the software that manages the computer and its resources such as processors, storage, drives and the like. It plays host to the many programs called applications that people need for computers to be useful. Popular programs used for typing and editing documents, preparing spreadsheets and office presentations, and surfing the web would be useless without an OS. The OS provides the 'operating environment' for these programs to function so that you - the user - can do what you want to.

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