

# Interview with Linus about Git

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Linus Torvalds didn't want to change software configuration management tools; however, business and open-source philosophy problems left the Linux founder with no choice but to abandon BitKeeper and create his own system: Git.

SCM programs are used to control the flow of updates and track program changes. In a project as large as Linux-more than 17,000 files-this can be very difficult and very slow.

Because most SCMs-such as CVS (Concurrent Versions System)-are too slow for him, Torvalds built his own.

He describes Git as "a stupid (but extremely fast) directory content manager. It doesn't do a whole lot, but what it does do is track directory contents efficiently."

t also can't be used with BitMover Inc.'s BitKeeper, the controversial and proprietary SCM that Torvalds had used to manage Linux kernel development.

"Git has a totally different model of representing the source tree," said Torvalds.

The name itself really doesn't have a meaning. Torvalds joked that it can be a "random three-letter combination that is pronounceable, and not actually used by any common Unix command. The fact that it is a mispronunciation of 'get' may or may not be relevant." Or, "'stupid. contemptible and despicable. simple.' Take your pick from the dictionary of slang." Or, "global information tracker: [if] you're in a good mood, and it actually works for you. Angels sing, and a light suddenly fills the room."

Git has already been used for its first run of Linux: the beta of Linux 2.6.12-rc3. But Torvalds admits that Git is still a work in progress.

"The roughness really comes from two things," said Torvalds. "It's a young project, and it just takes time for things to mature. That will go on for years, assuming none of the other open-source SCMs just eventually show themselves to be capable enough that we just end up deciding that Git was a good temporary bridge."

Also, Git does some things very differently from traditional source management, Torvalds said.

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