

# Linus Torvalds - A Biography

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## Abstract

Este documento es una biografía de Linus Torvalds creador del sistema operativo Linux. La fuente principal fue Wikipedia. El objetivo de esta practica es crear un documento en el que se utilicen figuras y tablas y se haga referencia a ellas utilizando las etiquetas de  $\text{\LaTeX}$ .

## 1 Introduction

Linus Benedict Torvalds (born December 28, 1969 in Helsinki, Finland) is a Finnish software engineer best known for initiating the development of Linux. He now acts as the project's coordinator (or Benevolent Dictator for Life).

Linus was inspired by Minix (a kernel and operating system developed by Andrew Tanenbaum) to develop a capable UNIX-like operating system that could be run on a PC. Linux now also runs on many other architectures.

## 2 Biography

Torvalds was born in Helsinki, the capital of Finland, as the son of journalists Anna and Nils, and the grandson of poet Ole Torvalds. His family

belongs to the Swedish-speaking minority (roughly 6%) of Finland's population. Torvalds was named after Linus Pauling, the American Nobel Prize-winning chemist, although he prefers to claim he was named after Linus in the Peanuts comic strip. Both of his parents were campus radicals at the University of Helsinki in the 1960s. His father was a Communist who in the mid-1970s spent a year studying in Moscow.

Torvalds attended the University of Helsinki from 1988 to 1996, graduating with a master's degree in computer science. He wrote his M.Sc. thesis, titled *Linux: A Portable Operating System*, on Linux.



Figure 1: Linus Torvalds.

His interest in computers began with a Commodore VIC-20. After the VIC-20 he purchased a Sinclair QL which he modified extensively, especially its operating system. He programmed an assembler and a text editor for the QL, as well as a few games. He is known to have written a Pac Man

clone named Cool Man. In 1990 he purchased an Intel 80386-based IBM PC and spent a few weeks playing the game Prince of Persia before receiving his Minix copy which in turn enabled him to begin his work on Linux.

Linus is married to Tove Torvalds (ne Monni). She is a six-time Finnish national Karate champion, whom he first met in the autumn of 1993. Linus was running introductory computer laboratory exercises for students and instructed the course attendants to send him an e-mail as a test, to which Tove responded with an e-mail asking for a date. They have three daughters, Patricia Miranda (born December 5, 1996), Daniela Yolanda (born April 16, 1998) and Celeste Amanda (born November 20, 2000), and a cat named Randi (short for Mithrandir, the Sindarin name for Gandalf, a wizard in The Lord of the Rings).

Torvalds moved to San Jose, California and lived there for several years with his family. In June of 2004, Torvalds and his family moved to Lake Oswego, Oregon. Finally, they moved to Portland, Oregon to be closer to Linus's place of work.

He worked for Transmeta Corporation from February 1997 until June 2003, and is now seconded to the Open Source Development Labs, a Beaverton, Oregon based software consortium. Figure 1 shows a relatively recent picture of Linus.

His personal mascot is a penguin nicknamed Tux, which has been widely adopted by the Linux community as the mascot of Linux shown in Figure 2.

Linus's law, a tenet inspired by Torvalds but coined by Eric S. Raymond in his paper The Cathedral and the Bazaar, is: "Given enough eyeballs, all bugs are shallow." A deep bug is one which is hard to find, and with many people looking for it, the hope (and so far most experience) is that no bug will be deep. Both men share an open source philosophy, which has been in part (and implicitly) based on this belief.

Unlike many open source "evangelists", Torvalds keeps a low profile and generally refuses to comment on competing software products. He has been criticized for his neutrality by the GNU Project, specifically for having worked on proprietary software with Transmeta and for his use and alleged advocacy of the proprietary BitKeeper software (For version control in the Linux kernel, BitKeeper was replaced by git in June, 2005). Torvalds has commented on official GNOME developmental mailing lists that, in terms of window managers, he encourages his users to switch to KDE [1]. Despite his neutral nature, Torvalds has vehemently defended open-source and free software against what he perceives as slander or lip service by proprietary software

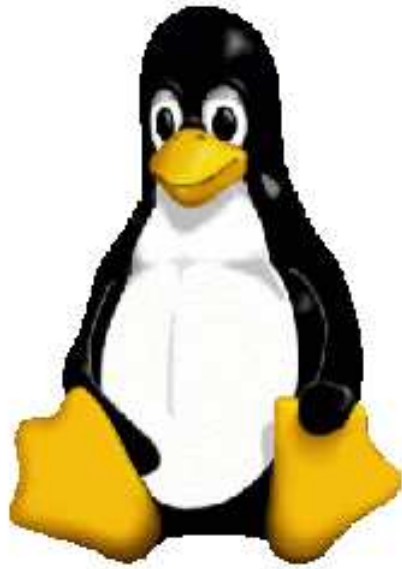


Figure 2: Tux the Linux Mascot.

vendors.