



# Biography of Linus Torvalds

## Intro

Born December 28<sup>th</sup> 1969 Finland Linus Benedict Torvalds is a Finnish-American software engineer most known for his work on the Linux Kernel and other operating systems like Android. Honoured with the 2012 Millennium Technology Prize by the Technology Academy Finland "in recognition of his creation of a new open source operating system for computers leading to the widely used Linux kernel.", the 2014 IEEE Computer society Pioneer Award as well as the 2018 IEEE Masaru Ibuka Consumer Electronics Award he is clearly a very well-respected engineer contributing a lot to the industry.

## **Early Life**

Torvalds was born in Helsinki Finland in 1969 to journalists Anna and Nils Torvalds grandson to well-known Finnish statistician Leo Törngvist. Named after Linus Pauling, the Nobel Prize-winning American chemist, Torvalds certainly lived up to the name.

## **Education**

Between 1988 and 1996 he attended the University of Helsinki graduating with a master's degree in computer science from the NODES research group. His education as put on pause when he joined the Finnish Navy Brigade in the summer of 1989 selecting the 11-month officer training program to complete his mandatory military service. During this time he became interested in Unix buying a copy of his professor Andrew Tanenbaum's book "Operating Systems: Design and Implementation" which describes MINIX the educational version of Unix. He was exposed to Unix for the first time when he returned to his studies in the form of DEC MicroVax running ULTRIX. Then after this he began research and development on the Linux operating system. In his final year he wrote his Master's thesis on Linux titled "Linux: A Portable Operating System".

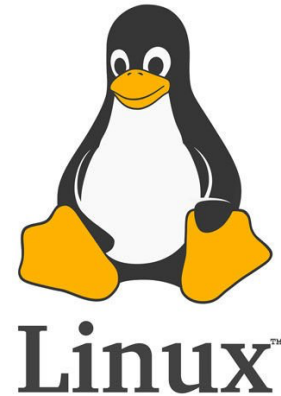


## **Career**

On January 5th 1991 Torvalds purchased an Intel 80386-based clone of IBM PC before receiving his MINIX copy, which in turn enabled him to begin work on Linux. Later in 1991 the first public prototypes of Linux were released.

After a visit to Transmeta corp. a microprocessor manufacturer in late 1996, he accepted a position at the company in California, where he would work from February 1997 until June 2003. He then moved to the Open Source Development Labs (OSDL), which has since merged with the free standards group to become the Linux Foundation,

under whose auspices he continues to work. In 2004 he moved his family to Oregon to be closer to the OSDL's HQ. From 1997 to 1999, he was involved in 86open, helping to choose the standard binary format for Linux and Unix. In 1999, he was named by the MIT Technology Review TR100 as one of the world's top 100 innovators under age 35. He was presented with stock options from Red Hat and VA Linux to show their gratitude for his work.



Linus was also the founder of the heavily influential software development tool Git. Criticized for his use and alleged advocacy of the proprietary BitKeeper software for version control in the Linux kernel, he decided to write Git as a free-software replacement for BitKeeper. Torvalds began development on the version control



software on April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2005. On July 26<sup>th</sup> 2005, Torvalds turned over maintenance of Git to Junio Hamano, a major contributor to the project. Git has gone on to be a widely used platform across the

software engineering community ever since its release.

## **Reflection**

From all the information above we can certainly say Linus Torvalds is a heavily influential contributor to the world of computer science and a top class software engineer. He pioneered Linux, one of the major operating systems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and launched Git, a version control software which has heavily influenced how the software engineering process works. Torvalds is a prime example of an expert software engineer demonstrating extreme levels creativity and scrupulous attention to detail throughout his career. Even after all his achievements Linus stays humble, often cracking jokes and using witty humour to lighten the mood during interviews. He is the perfect figure for young aspirational developers to look up to for years to come, both in his genius and his attitude toward the art of software engineering. The world of computer science and technology will not forget Linus Torvalds any time soon.

# **References**

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