

Introduction

Richard Stallman Biography Mathematical Writing 301

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Richard Stallman



Pictured: Richard Stallman (1)

Early Life

- Stallman was born to Alice Lippman and Daniel Stallman in New York 1953.
- He showed an early interest in computers and attended Columbia University Saturday program, IBM New York Scientific Center.
- He attended Harvard in which his first year he became a programmer at MIT Artificial Intelligence Laboratory.
- He graduated from Harvard magna cum laude in physics in 1974.
- He attended MIT for graduate research and while there published a paper with Garry Sussman detailing dependency-directed backtracking. Which is still used to this day.

Stallman



Pictured: Richard Stallman (2)

GNU

- Later in his career Stallman got frustrated with the current state of computer software.
- He disliked the privatization of code and believed that software should be free.
 - This is the idea of free as in freedom, not free as in beer.
- Following this philosophy, he announced the GNU Operating System in 1983.
- He created some of the necessary tools including a text editor (emacs), compiler (GCC), and a build automator (GNU make).
- Additionally he created the GNU General Public License (GPL) which was a legal document protecting taking code and selling it.

GNU

- Unfortunately by 1990, Stallman had not created a kernel for the proposed GNU operating system.
- Fortunately, Linus Torvalds had created a kernel using the existing projects Stallman had created.
- With a kernel (created by Linus) and basic programs to use, the operating system called GNU/Linux was released.

Linus Torvalds



Pictured: Linus Torvalds

Activism

- While Stallman has a lifetime of computer work under his belt, he is most known for his activism
- He has promoted world wide the notion of free software
 - He has met with Hugo Chávez
 - was on the Advisory Council for the TV station teleSUR.
- He has criticized ATI, Apple, and Steve Jobs for the privatization of software.
- He also actively fights against copyright law suggesting that copyright should only be 10 years long.
- He helped the International Music Score Library Project come back online after it was taken down.

Accomplishments and Awards

- He has won over 23 awards in his life
- Grace Murray Hopper Award "For pioneering work in the development of the extensible editor EMACS"
- Holds over 12 Honorary Doctorates
- Holds over 4 Honorary Professorships
- Exceptional merit award from the MacArthur Fellowship

Personal Life

- Richard Stallman's personal life is, "interesting", to say the least.
- He does not celebrate Christmas but rather celebrates Grav-mass which celebrates Isaac Newton instead.
- He supports the National Initiative, The Green Party, Paper voting, not using Skype, and not owning a cell phone.
- If you were wondering, he supports Bernie Sanders for the 2016 Presidential Election.

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