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Operating Systems

50 years of OS

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The paper describes 3 operating systems, Multics, Unix, and Minix (which became Linux). Multics was developed between 1964 and 1968 and primarily focused on interactivity and community and was programmed in a high level programming language since the programmers did not want to use assembly to create an operating system of such size. Unix was developed in 1971 from some ideas that Multics used. The reason why Unix was created was because of the cost and size of the Multics system. Dennis Ritchie and Ken Thompson, both from Bell Labs, are the creators of Unix and were looking to create a more lightweight and cost-effective operating system that could run on a “mini” computer. The Unix system was developed using the C language and from this C became the new standard that operating systems were created with. About 16 years later in 1987, Andy Tanenbaum released Minix, which was a student-oriented version of Unix and then one of his students, Linus Torvalds, created Linux from the Minix system.

Peter James Denning is a Director of the Cebrowski Institute for information innovation at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, a distinguished Computer Science Professor, an Editor of ACM Ubiquity, and is past president of ACM. James Grey is not mentioned in the article under that name, I found out he went by Jim by finding Grey in the article. Jim Grey is mentioned and is only mentioned as a colleague of Peter James Denning that had died by the time this article was published. He proposed the idea that “a principle is great if it is ‘Cosmic’,” meaning that it is timeless and very useful.