Drew Pulliam – DTP180003

Week 2 Essay

Reflection on “The History of UNIX and GNU–Linux”

This chapter gives a brief overview of UNIX and how Linux was started. UNIX was first made for researchers and used primarily in universities. Early on it was inexpensive and usable by large amounts of people. It later became popular in industry which resulted in it becoming more specialized and proprietary. This made it much harder to gain access to UNIX for the average person. The GNU Project was created with the hope to give “free software” to people. The software would typically still cost money but would be available to modify and expand upon. This project was used as groundwork for Linux later.

Linux was designed to be as efficient and powerful as possible, in contrast to other operating systems like UNIX such as MINIX. It was designed to be able to easily accommodate many users using the same physical hardware at the same time. This was accomplished in several ways, one of them being the ability to use different shells simultaneously. Linux uses different shells depending on what the user wants to accomplish. With the capability for multiple users, they needed to add capability for multiple shells as well. As a result, multiple users can all be using the same machine and they can all use different individual shells as well.

Some of the benefits of using Linux over other operating systems that are not “free” is that it saves money for companies and consumers. A computer manufacture that makes Windows laptops must pay Microsoft on a per-unit basis for Windows licenses. Linux does not require this which will save obviously save money for companies and will also result in them being able to reduce prices for consumers. Companies are seeing the value of having Linux as an operating system, and they are paying their employees to help contribute to the continued development and updating of Linux.