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3 Operating Systems Benefits and Challenges

Computers are a fundamental piece of technology in everyday life. Any computer needs software to run. Operating systems are the most essential piece of software that a computer requires. Windows 7, Mac OS X 10.0, and Linux are the main operating systems that are in use today. These operating systems have major benefits, problems, and differences.

Even though Microsoft has come out with Windows 10, Windows 7 is a staple in the Microsoft world. Microsoft Windows 7 was released in October 22, 2009, and is Windows most popular operating system. Some of the features in Windows 7 include Internet Explorer 8, accelerated performance and start-up time, support for virtual hard disks, and increased security (Beal, 2012). When Windows got an upgrade from Vista to Windows 7 there was a large increase in overall speed in the operating system. They spent a long time on perfecting the speed in which the computer responded, so that the user felt more in control (Har-Even, 1970). Resets and boot-ups were faster on Windows 7 as well. There was a lower hardware requirement for the computers, so that lower end computers could run better (Har-Even, 1970). Even though Windows 7 is Microsoft’s most popular operating system, it also comes with its fair share of bugs.

Microsoft Windows 7 had some problems and challenges that came with its popularity. Some reports came in saying that a handful of Windows users could not even upgrade from Windows Vista to Windows 7. The update would get stuck at 62%, and the user would have to try and fix the issue themselves or seek professional help (Williams, 2009). In certain cases, consumers’ computers would sometimes have errors saying that the DVD drive on it would not be found. Windows 7 had compatibility issues with iPhone users. This issue can be frustrating for iPhone users and may force some users to switch to using Macs instead, a big competitor to Microsoft (Williams, 2009).

Apple’s first version of Mac OS X 10.0 was unveiled on March 24, 2000 (Warren, 2012). Its codename was cheetah and it was introduced by Steve Jobs after he was brought back as interim CEO. He was given free reign to make any changes he sought to be necessary (Warren, 2012). He saw the outdated interface and wanted to remodel it and enhance its capabilities. With the acquisition of NeXT, a computer software company, they produced their next generation operating system, Mac OS X 10.0 (Rosen, 2015). They had many failures and attempts, but with Steve Jobs and NeXT they were able to succeed. With Mac OS X 10.0 Apple was able show that they were a major competitor in the operating system world. Mac OS X 10.0 had some major flaws to it as well.

Although it was Apple’s first successful next generation operating system, it had some imperfections. One of the biggest problems were that new users to 10.0 were unable to print. They were only able to print if they went through many steps to only be able to print a simple document (Staff, 2001). Some minor issues would be the cursor staying as a “spinning beach ball”, and documents that would open in the wrong application (Banks, 2010). Both of these issues can be bothersome and time-consuming problems to fix. Especially documents opening in the wrong application and it can make interacting with those documents frustrating to open them in the right document. Another operating system competitor to Apple and Microsoft is Linux.

The creator of Linux name is Linus Torvalds, and was released on September 17, 1991.Linux is also a very popular operating system because of the customization and all the changes you can make the original. “Linus Torvalds created Linux when he was a student at the University of Helsinki. In early 1991 he purchased an IBM-compatible personal computer that came with the MS-DOS operating system. Linus wasn’t satisfied with MS-DOS and wanted to use a UNIX operating system like he was accustomed to at the University” (N.a., n.d.). Linus wanted to make a cost efficient “UNIX-like operating system” (N.a., n.d.). He wanted to make it and be able to use it on his personal computer. “Linux is open source software. This means that anyone can use, copy, study and change the software in any way they chose so long as the source code is openly shared with others” (N.a., n.d.). Because of this, it makes Linux unique and different than all of the other competition. Although Linux may be old and considered outdated, it is reliable, secure, and stable to run on new and old hardware. It can be modified, its free, and it is fun to tinker with. Linux, like any other operating system, have bugs and problems that must be addressed.

Linux may be fully customizable, secure, reliable, and stable, but it makes it hard for companies and new users to use it. It lacks built-in software for users to use. When companies use Linux, it is hard to trust 3rd party software, or take the time to make their own. (Fagioli, 2013) The biggest problem in any big company is passing the torch to another. Linus Torvalds is the heart and soul of the company. Linus is quoted saying, “I don’t do work anymore. I manage people. I’ve turned to the dark side.” (Vaughan-Nichols, 2015) When he is no longer managing people at Linux it will be hard for the company to stay prominent in the operating system world today.

All of these companies have great qualities and great drawbacks. Mac’s hardware costs too much for what is received. Windows offers greater flexibility, has more software, and a better gaming experience. While Mac has fewer viruses, requires less maintenance, and is more user friendly. (Dachis, 2013) From a marketing standpoint Microsoft’s Windows dominates the Operating share market. Windows 7 alone owns 59.85% of those shares. With the combination of Windows 10, Microsoft current operating system, it owns 80.12% of those shares. So, to investors they pour all their money into Microsoft products rather than Linux, at 0.95%, and Mac, at 4.61%. (N.a., n.d. Operating system market share) Linux may not be commercially popular, but it is more customizable, gives the user more control, and is more secure than Mac and Windows. (Dachis, 2013) Although Linux isn’t as popular as Microsoft and Mac it is a very powerful and unique operating system.

Microsoft’s Windows 7, Apple’s Mac OS X 10.0, and Linux are the major competitors in the operating system world today. Windows 7, Mac OS X 10.0, and Linux are popular operating systems. These competitors have different advantages and disadvantages to each of them. Without these essential pieces of technology our computers would be like the ones in the 1970’s.

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