

Making an OS popular

A cautionary tale

Who am I?

- Founding marketing hire at Ubuntu
- Led most marketing efforts for the OS over 5 years for desktop, server, mobile, TV, netbooks (remember them)
- Now an independent marketing consultant

What was Ubuntu trying to do?

- A single ubiquitous open source OS that was the centre of the opensource application universe.

How?

- Operating system would be a 'stalking horse'
- Launchpad would be the bug tracker and repo for all projects
- All open source projects would adopt the Ubuntu cadence
- Ubuntu community would be the largest and best
- Ubuntu would bring open source to the world

Why would the world flock to Ubuntu?

- Uniquely Ubuntu would build a brand around an operating system
- Ubuntu would build direct relationships with the manufacturers
- <wave hands> \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ for everyone

What happened in desktop market ?

- Open Source communities were suspicious
- PC makers were scared of MS
- Intel had nothing much to gain
- Public were indifferent to an OS
- Ubuntu 'diversified' and users and industry were confused

Mission Creep

- By 2011 there was Ubuntu Server, Ubuntu for Netbook, Ubuntu (desktop), Ubuntu Cloud, Ubuntu One, Ubuntu TV, Ubuntu Mobile, Ubuntu for ARM, Ubuntu for In-Vehicle Infotainment, Juju....

Are there lessons?

- Focus on trying to solve a solvable problem (that people care about)
- Honour your community above all others
- Be about what you are about and only that
- Don't get led by big companies with fixed agenda
- Do not rely on others to get you there

Thanks...

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