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Tutorials

An introduction to GNU/Linux, Free Software Foundation (FSF) and four pillars of free software

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The Free Software Foundation was founded in 1985. Free software Foundation promotes the users right to use, study, copy, modify, and redistribute computer programs. The FSF promotes the development and use of free (as in freedom) software (Mainly GNU operating system or GNU/Linux).

The web sites of Free Software Foundation are <http://www.fsf.org> and <http://www.gnu.org>.

The word "Free" in "Free software" is related with liberty, not price. You should think of the word "Free" as in "free speech," not as in "free beer."

Free software promotes users' freedom to run, copy, distribute, study, change and improve the software. Free software refers to four kinds of freedom as listed below:

1) The freedom to run the program, for any purpose (freedom 0).

2) The freedom to study how the program works, and adapt it to your needs (freedom 1). Access to the source code is a precondition for this.

3) The freedom to redistribute copies so you can help your neighbor (freedom 2).

4) The freedom to improve the program, and release your improvements (and modified versions in general) to the public, so that the whole community benefits (freedom 3). Access to the source code is a precondition for this.

The GNU Project was launched in 1984 to develop a complete Unix-like operating system which is free software: the GNU system. GNU's kernel isn't finished, so GNU is used with the kernel Linux. The combination of GNU and Linux is the GNU/Linux operating system.

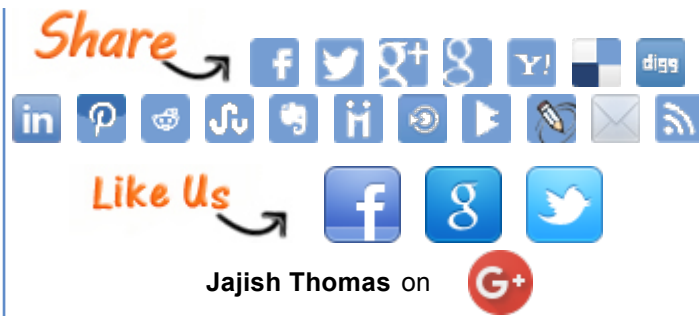
Linus Benedict Torvalds (born December 28, 1969) began the development of Linux, an operating system kernel, and today acts as the project coordinator.

Inspired by MINIX (a kernel and operating system developed by Andrew Tanenbaum), he felt the need for a capable UNIX operating system that he could run on his home PC. MINIX was a small UNIX-like operating system written by Professor Andrew Tanenbaum. MINIX was written from scratch, with no AT&T code, for teaching purpose. MINIX is a UNIX like operating system and is very useful for anyone who wants to learn the basics of UNIX operation.

Torvalds did the original development of the Linux kernel primarily in his own time and on his equipment.

Torvalds originally used Minix on his computer, a simplified kernel written by Andrew Tanenbaum for teaching operating system design. The Linux system quickly surpassed Minix in functionality.

The first version of the Linux kernel was released to the Internet in September 1991. with the second version following shortly thereafter in October



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