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CMPT 376W D100
Journal Entry #25

Introduction

BeOS, an operating system, is still in use even though it was discontinued in 2001 due to its parent company, Be, Inc being bought out. Efforts have been made to "resurrect" BeOS with the design and implementation of an open-source replica. This paper will provide an overview of BeOS.

Overview

Be, Inc. was founded in 1990 by Jean-Louis Gassee, a former Apple executive. Be originally planned to buy an operating s3ystem which would be able to run their proprietary hardware platform, dubbed BeBox, because there were no operating systems released at the time that would fit it's needs. Instead of buying an operating system, Be began working on their own.

Be named their operating system for the BeBox platform, BeOS in 1996. BeOS is good at both multitasking and real-time operation because it is an entirely multithreaded system written in C++.

Be quit the hardware business in 1997 and focused on developing BeOS instead. BeOS was ported to the x86 platform and was marketed as a replacement to Windows or MacOS. BeOS struggled to get a widespread user base because of its release of a free Personal Edition. The Personal Edition had a feature limitation that limited its total partition size to 512MB.   The free Personal Edition's partition size was enough to create a fully working system, therefore, as a result, demand for the Profession Edition was affected. Because of low demand for the Professional Edition of BeOS, Be Inc lost revenue and eventually Be Inc had to sell their intellectual property to Palm, Inc in 2001 for $11 million.

Although BeOS never achieved widespread use, there is still a dedicated base of users that use the operating system.

An operating system called Haiku, formerly known as OpenBeOS, is an open source project dedicated to the re-creation of BeOS. Haiku recreates BeOS in an open source implementation without the use of the original code base. Another open source project called BeBits creates new drivers and software designed to run on BeOS. Although BeOS is discontinued, open-source replicas of its design and implementation exist to carry on its legacy.