

# I Miss BSD/Linux

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I miss BSD/Linux. Or was that GNU/Unix, I'm not sure? Silly jokes to get a statistical minority reading this on the edge of their seat aside, I do miss it. It's still out *there*, but no longer in *here*, so what happened? In 2007, work happened, permanently putting a hold on endless Fvwm reconfigurations and the growing of [custom Linux kernel patchsets](#). In 2012, a MacBook happened, pushing Linux and FreeBSD to the outer edges of occasional OS usage. In 2020, [another one with an M1 chip happened](#), further fueling my discontent with macOS but at the same time also my respect for and reliance on Apple's hardware.

My 2003 Windows XP/Linux dual build that acted as the main work/play PC tower has been written off since the first MacBook. Fortunately, I managed to salvage and upgrade her, and she's now a part [of my retro office desk setup](#). When I reinstalled everything a few years ago on the Core2Duo 32-bit machine, I admittedly picked Ubuntu as a dual boot option out of laziness. It's running a boring default Gnome desktop instead of a cool custom Fvwm theme like the ones [I did in 2004](#) when time was still a commodity. I should at least switch to Xfce, just to make a statement.

I rarely use my retro computers because they're locked inside my home office. I don't want to wake our daughter in the evenings and just take the laptop downstairs when a blog post such as this one needs to be written. These 13" MacBook Airs are so damn portable, it's unfair. Why would I want to build yet another tower? Besides, I really don't have any space left and I'd rather keep the quirky Win98 Athlon PC that constantly crashes just because it has Windows Plus Themes installed.

Speaking of cool themes, [my Desktop is dull thanks to macOS](#). I didn't even bother to change the stupid default background on my work MacBook.

These are all valid reasons to hark back to a more configurable, free, and fun OS, yet they're not the reason why I'm frustrated with modern operating systems—in my case, Sonoma. Here's a short list of grips:

- Did you know that your laptop never sleeps, even if it is put to sleep as you close the lid? At 3 AM in the morning, it's still firing away HTTP calls to various servers according to my Pi-Hole, such as fetching weather data for a widget I have tried to disable countless times.
- Every single time I want to open a file, a five-second-beachball effect occurs thanks to an [unresponsive Open And Save Panel Service](#). After hours of poking and prying, I gave up.
- Every single upgrade comes with bigger and badder icons, taskbars, titlebars I haven't asked for.
- Every single upgrade comes with gigabytes full of bloat that I cannot uninstall. On that moment, I wish I could fire up openSUSE's YaST and simply uncheck most stuff.
- Yes, I am sure I want to run this binary. No, I do not want to restart this app. Ah okay, you are restarting the app? But I said—okay, never mind.

But Wouter, why don't you install the Fedora Asahi Remix on your ARM64 machine? Because it [doesn't support USB-C display](#) nor the microphone or Touch ID. Yes, I can run [an UTM VM](#) but that's completely besides the point. If you mess with an OS that's as tightly coupled as macOS and the MacBook, you're bound to run into problems.

Why doesn't a great MacBook alternative exist? Preferably one where FreeBSD would run well on, even though I know it's probably a stretch to ask after reading [Michal's BSD advice](#). I stopped after fiddling with 5.3 a long time ago but liked what I saw back then. But the passive cooling, the ideal form factor, the superb screen, the amazing battery life and the explosive performance of Apple's laptops are *very* hard to ignore. That's starting to sound like someone who's addicted...

Most tools I lean on work very well on macOS thanks to its popularity. The only pieces of native software I'd probably miss are:

- [DEVONthink](#); although I've been using Obsidian with a few PDF-related plugins lately and it works equally well as I use only 20% of DEVON's full capabilities;
- [Alfred](#); although I could easily configure all shortcuts in a good window manager if I wanted to;

- [Affinity Designer](#) that's only available on macOS and Win; although I'm an occasional newbie and rely on ImageMagick and GIMP for simple edits instead.
- macOS' Mail app; I tried migrating to Thunderbird several times but it wasn't a pleasant experience.

Thanks to open source software alternatives (LibreOffice instead of Office/Pages etc, Restic instead of Time Machine, the Subsonic family instead of Music, Firefox instead of Safari, ...), the transition should be relatively painless. But it's not the software that's the problem. I'm yearning for less bloat, but my limited free time also prevents me from reinstalling Gentoo Linux and compiling everything from scratch just for fun.

Will my next personal laptop purchase be a non-Apple device? I don't know. I do know that my previous MacBook lasted for more than eight years so there's four more years to contemplate...



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## Bio and Support

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I'm [Wouter Groeneveld](#), a *Brain Baker*, and I love the smell of freshly baked thoughts (and bread) in the morning. I sometimes convince others to bake their brain (and bread) too.

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