

History of Linux

 THE **LINUX** FOUNDATION

The Creation of Linux

- **Linux** was first announced to the world on August 25, 1991, by **Linus Torvalds**, then a 21-year-old student at The University of Helsinki, in a posting to a **Usenet** newsgroup
- Linus' original motivation was to write a terminal emulator for the purpose of accessing the University's **UNIX** servers
- He began using the **MINIX** operating system, but became frustrated by its licensing constraints (which limited it to educational use) and by the procedures for having changes made

*From: torvalds@klaava.Helsinki.FI (Linus Benedict Torvalds)
Newsgroups: comp.os.minix
Subject: What would you like to see most in minix?
Summary: small poll for my new operating system
Message-ID: <1991Aug25.205708.9541@klaava.Helsinki.FI>
Date: 25 Aug 91 20:57:08 GMT
Organization: University of Helsinki*

Hello everybody out there using minix –

I'm doing a (free) operating system (just a hobby, won't be big and professional like gnu) for 386(486) AT clones. This has been brewing since april, and is starting to get ready. I'd like any feedback on things people like/dislike in minix, as my OS resembles it somewhat (same physical layout of the file-system (due to practical reasons) among other things).

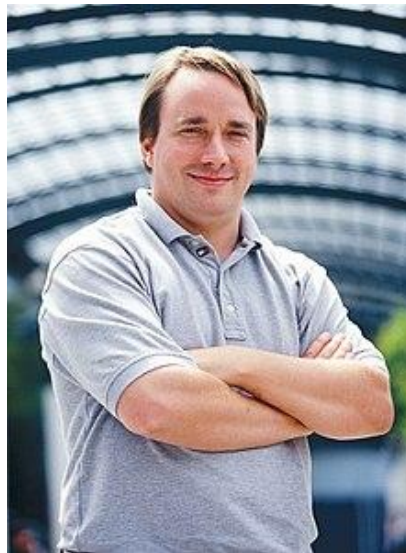
I've currently ported bash(1.08) and gcc(1.40), and things seem to work. This implies that I'll get something practical within a few months, and I'd like to know what features most people would want. Any suggestions are welcome, but I won't promise I'll implement them 😊

Linus (torvalds@kruuna.helsinki.fi)

PS. Yes – it's free of any minix code, and it has a multi-threaded fs. It is NOT portable (uses 386 task switching etc), and it probably never will support anything other than AT-harddisks, as that's all I have :-).

Naming

- Originally, the name was intended to be **Freax** under which name the files were originally stored
- The name **Linux**, originally rejected by Linus Torvalds as being too egotistical, was adopted and implemented by a coworker, and Linus only consented to this later



1990s

- The original release 0.01 was released under its own license, which had restrictions on commercial activity; this changed in December 1992, when version 0.99 was released under the **GNU GPL**, under which it has remained ever since
- Linux (together with the GNU project components) filled a need in that the operating systems available for x86 computers were both proprietary and limited in ability, while the more robust **UNIX** variants were not available for personal computers
- The first really usable Linux distributions: **Slackware**, **Debian**, and the predecessor of **SUSE** were released in 1992; with **Red Hat** following in 1994
- In the meantime the number of contributors to Linux development grew from a handful to hundreds and then to thousands
- Version 1.0 of the Linux kernel was released in 1994, version 2.0 in 1996, Version 2.2 in 1999, Version 2.4 in 2001, and Version 2.6 in 2003

2000s

- In 2000, the **Open Source Development Lab** (OSDL) was created as an independent non-profit organization with a mission to promote and optimize Linux, and became the employer of Linus Torvalds
- In 2007, it merged with the **Free Standards Group** to form **The Linux Foundation** whose base mission was to promote, protect, improve and standardize Linux
- Corporate involvement in Linux has steadily grown, and was accelerated by a one billion dollar investment by **IBM** in 2000
- Today, while there are many independent developers contributing to Linux, a large share comes from both major Linux distributors and major hardware and software industry players
- Linux has also grown to handle dozens of architectures, and systems from small embedded form factors to the vast majority of the world's supercomputers

