Take No Prisoners
(Venimus, Vidimus, Dolavimus)

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®Linux is a trademark of Linus Torvalds in several countries
Warning!

To make a point, broad generalities are about to be spoken......

Nit-picking will not be tolerated!
Overview of Presentation

- A tale of courage
- What really makes Linux unique
- What can we do?
- Questions
October Sky
(a.k.a. Rocket Boys)

- Coalwood, West Virginia
- A dying coal mining town
- Six boys who taught themselves rocketry

"The future was somewhere else, not in Coalwood....
...I had to get ready for it" - Homer H. Hickham, Jr.
Monolithic computers
- Cost millions of dollars
- Schedule time of 0200 hours
- Computers worth more than you were
- Computers were very "small"
  - 8-64 K bytes of memory
  - initially no disk storage, only drum and tape
A New Style of Computing

- **Mini-computer**
  - Hundreds of Thousands of dollars
  - "Desktop" or "Departmental"
- **User Groups Started**
  - Free Software (well, freely distributable)

Computers started to become personable.
Lots of new....

- Languages
- Programs
- Games
- Operating Systems

Power to the people
Computers in the Elbow

Prices stayed the same (or dropped gradually), but...
- More memory, disk was added
- Computers got faster, bigger
- Programs got more complicated
Enter the Microprocessor
1975

- Prices dropped for small computers (very small)
  - 4-8 K bytes of memory
  - tape storage only
- User groups sprung up
  - Free Software came about!
Lots of new....

- Languages
- Programs
- Games
- Operating Systems

- Power to the people
Price Adjustments in Computing....

- As computers become cheaper
  - more memory
  - more disk
  - more graphics
  - sound cards!!
- The elbow returns
  - 1-3K USD
Programs Become More Sophisticated

- Graphics and windowing systems became more commonplace
- Programming used more and more of "standard" interfaces
- More and more was asked of "small" computers
- More and more was asked of programmers
- Non-programmers "started" using computers
"Shrink-wrapped" Software

- Shrink-wrapped software started to appear
  - had to run on the platform out of box
  - power of software matched power of hardware
- One operating system became prevalent in microcomputer space
One Operating System
One Company

• The operating system started to spread
  – compilers
  – databases
  – windowing systems
  – networking
  – mice
  – keyboards

• Influencing the production of:
  – modems
  – printers
  – computers in general
Everything Centers on Redmond

After all, how many different:

- operating systems
- compilers
- computing languages
- office systems
- databases
- networking protocols
- etc.

do you need?
Or Even How Many Programmers?

And why should they live any other place than Redmond?

Why should their
• teachers
• researchers
• supporters
• etc.
live any other place?
Enter a New Operating System

- Only Operating System in major usage started outside the United States
- Only Operating System in major usage which runs across multiple (more than two) hardware platforms
- One of two operating systems growing in market share
More Price Adjustments to Computing

- Free Hardware appears
  - buy Internet service, get a computer
  - "outmoded" computers given away
  - Communities worry about computers in landfill
- Hardware/Software price ratio shrinks to a (small) fraction
The World Uses Computers..
....or Do They?

- 200 Million Microsoft Systems
- 9 Million Commercial Unix systems
- 2 Million *BSD systems
- 2 Million "Proprietary" systems
- 15 Million Linux Systems
- 228 Million General Purpose systems - Total

5.6 Billion people in the world
Software Piracy abounds in Asia
  
  How far would you pedal for a quarter?
  
  Which would you rather do:
  
  • feed your family
  • use Microsoft Word?

Would your military trust an operating system developed by one company in America?
  
  Even if you got access to the source?

Those cheap Chinese computers
So Why is Linux Uniq?
(Sorry about the spelling)

- The man who could not pay
- Debian’s system administrator
- The trademark nightmare
- The Linux Company
- The lack of control at Compaq
- The new entrepreneurs
- The untapped resources
Whose Operating System is it?

- It is not THEIR operating system.....
- ....it is OUR operating system.
- If you don’t like it.....
  - make it realtime
  - make it a supercomputer
  - make it embeddable
  - make it fit on a palm pilot

A sense of ownership
So What Can I do to Help Linux?

Anything you want....

• Write code
  – write fancy demos
  – write plain demos
  – write example code
• Write documentation
• Review documentation
• Join a user group
• Start a user group
• Create presentations for a user group
• Start N.U.N.s (New User Nights)
  – Train two people to use Linux
Questions?

Sometimes one dream is enough......
................to light up the whole sky
--- Homer H. Hickam, Jr.