

## Re: Re: names good for marketing

**Source:** <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/Debian/2005-01/0513.html>

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**From:** Robert (*nuke\_at\_phipps.uklinux.net*)

**Date:** 01/05/05

To: debian-user@lists.debian.org

Date: Tue, 4 Jan 2005 23:58:27 +0000

>Alvin Smith writes:

>> *To put it bluntly, the issue is whether white people will accept a*

>> *product with a Black African "sounding" name or not.*

>What a loony notion.

>John Hasler

Why loony? It hits the nail on the head. As I understand the original question was whether "Ubuntu" is a good marketing name. Most definitely it is not, in fact so bad that it had not even occurred to me that they were trying to "sell" it until this topic came up.

Mainstream marketing professionals are unashamedly racist in their appeals to the public. For example, we (in UK at least) are led to believe that Danes are racially superior when it comes to making lager, Italians at ice cream, Germans at car making, Swiss at clocks, Scanadanavians at furniture, Indians at spice, Japanese at consumer electronics, and Americans at software. Informed people know that any of this stuff could be made anywhere and often is (except for some agricultural products) – look at a can of that Danish-sounding lager and you will see it is really made in North London. Nevertheless, most of these advertising notions are based on some factual origin – clockmaking was indeed first perfected by the Swiss even if they no longer have the skill monopoly.

However the idea of computer software emanating from Black Africa, as a marketing ploy implied by the name, will leave most members of the public baffled – probably even in Africa itself. I am not aware of any particular Black African tradition in this respect – nothing equivalent to the Swiss clock making for example. Probably the only connection between computing and Black Africa that will be made in most people's mind is the Nigerian 419 scams.

Japanese cameras today are regarded as second to none, but Japan originally failed to break into the World camera market because they

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used their Japanese names. It was only when "Nippon Kogaku" rebranded to "Nikon" and "Asahi" to "Pentax" that they made the breakthrough. Similarly the promoters of Ubuntu are mistaken to have associated it in people's minds with a cultural niche.

Nuke

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