

Re: [opensuse] Why are there not more using Linux?

Source: <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/SuSE/2008-01/msg02150.html>

- *From:* Joe Sloan <joe@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 21 Jan 2008 10:51:20 -0800
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Jerry Houston wrote:

James Knott wrote:

Why is it that people have to learn Windows or Microsoft Office, instead of how to use a computer or an office suite? Do you teach your kids how to drive a Ford? Or how to drive a car? We should be teaching skills, not products.

I love my kids too much to teach them to drive a Ford. <g>

Seriously, I don't think it's a valid comparison. Cars are designed to be nearly universal, and those differences that exist (headlight, cruise, heater controls, etc.) can be figured out in minutes. Operating systems and the applications that run on them have much steeper learning curves.

I'm not suggesting that kids shouldn't be exposed to Linux. Or that it shouldn't be their OS of choice (if it really is their choice). But preventing them from learning anything about Windows and Microsoft applications isn't doing them a favor.

You and I might prefer an open source world, but that's not the world most of us live in, and have to earn a living in.

I think this fear of not being sufficiently deeply steeped in mickeysoft trivia is a bit overblown. I'm with James on this one. Look at college degrees as an example. Let's say there are 2 degree programs you are considering, either for yourself or a child. Both schools grant a Bachelor's in computer science, but the approach is completely different. I will describe 2 actual schools, while protecting their names.

At school A, the computer science department is run by the school of business. No hard science is required, and no math is required beyond "business math". The core curriculum teaches the use of products: ms word, ms excel, ms powerpoint, ms visual studio, ms iis. The students

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are taught in visual basic, with optional courses is visual c dot net.

At school B, the computer science department is run by the school of mathematics and engineering. The CS degree requires calculus I II III, differential equations, linear algebra, discrete math, finite automata, probability and statistics, and 3 semesters of calculus based physics. The core CS curriculum covers assembly language programing, computer architecture, top down software design, algorithms and data structures, operating systems, and is taught for the most part in java, with mandatory coverage of c, c++, c#, lisp, prolog, fortran, and perl, with programming assignments due in each language, and a semester long programming project as part of a small team. Senior level courses include database design, www design and management, computer networks and other electives, of which 12 units must be taken.

Which degree carries more weight? The one that teaches products, or the one that teaches the principles which will allow the student to learn and use any product?

In the same vein, which is better? To teach someone about word processing, or to teach them ms word?

Joe

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