

Open source software changing the connected world

Celebrating 25 years of Linux

25 August 2016 - On 25 August 1991, a certain Finnish student publicly shared the Linux kernel. Fast forward 25 years and there is little arguing the fact that it has irrevocably changed how businesses have come to view open source, says Matthew Lee, regional manager for SUSE Africa.

“Of course, the student was Linus Torvalds and one cannot help but wonder whether he suspected the impact it would have on the technological landscape. Examining some of the generally available Linux statistics and there is clearly enough ammunition to consider how instrumental it has been in driving the connected world in which we live today,” says Lee.

Statistics such as Linux being the operating system behind more than 95% of the top one million domains. And then you have the fact that in excess of 80% of smartphones are running Android (based on the Linux kernel). This means that millions of people the world over are already using an iteration of Linux without even knowing it.

There are a myriad of reports and research documents illustrating the impact that Linux has had on computing. By way of example, a recent Forrester [report](#) discusses how open source underpins the digital transformation of businesses across industry sectors. Had it not been for the groundswell of support that Linux received at a critical junction in the history of ICT, things might be very different today.

“Open source software is no longer the exclusive domain of technology geeks who were looking for a free (and easily adaptable) alternative to proprietary software. Instead, open source has become widely accepted by enterprises as a secure and cost-effective way to address technology requirements of the digital age.”

Not too long ago, traditionalists would balk at the very thought that open source software could underpin mission-critical applications. And yet, very few businesses do not have at least some form of it behind their essential systems. Furthermore, IT leaders who were all too willing to keep promoting proprietary systems have changed their strategic approaches and have embedded open source as a vital part of their software layers.

Just consider SUSE for example where for more than two decades the

company has been delivering advanced open source solutions. In fact, today, more than 80% of the Fortune Global 50 and the 10 largest global automobile manufacturers and telecommunications carriers are active SUSE customers. 9 of the 10 largest aerospace companies rely on SUSE and 70% of all SAP applications running on Linux run on SUSE.

“The flexibility that open source provides, one of the tenets behind Linux and other iterations such as SUSE, mean that it will become even more critical for business in the months and years ahead. It presents users with the ultimate way to create interoperable systems. Part of this entails that innovation can become the cornerstone of organisational strategy instead of being bogged down in the details of how software can integrate effectively.”

Lee believes that it is an even more exciting road ahead for open source software.

“With technology permeating virtually every aspect of our professional (and personal) lives, there are expectations that the core areas of computing – such as storage, cloud computing, and others – will drive even higher adoption of open source. Additionally, through the enormous amount of contributors, open source projects have a dynamic of innovation that no other singly vendor with a closed source model can achieve. Here’s to the next 25 years and beyond!” concludes Lee.