

# Know Your Friend: GNU/Linux

-Ranjeeth P T



- In 1969, Kenneth Thompson, Dennis Ritchie and others at AT and T Bell labs began developing Unix. The same year when Linus Torvalds was born. The Unix was far expensive and the source code of Unix was not available. In 1971, **Richard Matthew Stallman** joined MIT Artificial intelligence laboratory as a programmer. The programmer used to share their code freely among each other. In 1972, Ritchie rewrote Unix in his new programming language C. Because of the emergence of portable software-software which can be compiled to run on different computers, a business model emerged and they refused to share the code.
- [RMS](#)-as they call him, the *father of GNU movement* was against this trend. He believed in the principle that software should be free which led to Free Software Foundation. In 1985, RMS published GNU manifesto and he wanted to create a free operating system called [GNU](#), which would be compatible with Unix. GNU is an acronym for '**GNU is Not Unix**'.
- In the same year Andrew S Tanenbaum wrote Unix like operating system called *Minix*. It had an advantage that the source code was available. Anyone who happened to get the book 'The Operating System: Design and Implementation' by Tanenbaum could get hold of the 12,000 lines of code, written in C and assembly language. It was the first time a hacker (hackers are the good ones & crackers are the bad ones )could read the source code of an operating system. Students of CS all over the world pored over the book reading through the codes to understand the very system that runs their computer and one of them was Linus Torvalds.
- In 1989, stallman released [GNU General Public License](#) now popularly know as **GPL** or copyleft ,he published all his works under this license, which gives you the legal permission to *copy, distribute and/or modify the software, also with the principle* 'Ones in GPL always in GPL'. At the same time RMS along with a group of like minded programmers started working to develop the tools to make a complete operating system like an editor (emacs),a compiler (gcc),libraries etc... they only lacked a free OS kernel. The GNU kernel HURD was in progress.
- In 1991,the 21 year old sandy haired, soft spoken second year student of CS at the university of Helsinki and self taught hacker '*Linus Torvalds*' wrote his own kernel and released under GPL. He named it *Linux*. With the kernel and GNU tools the free OS GNU/Linux was released to the public . Linux is the kernel for an operating system, kernel is not everything for a complete os you should have so many tools like an editor, compiler, libraries, the list goes. All these tools where developed by GNU programmers. Their contribution is not less so it's **GNU/Linux** .

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Comments to:

[Ranjeeth PT](#) Govt Engg College Sreekrishnapuram,Palakkad.