



Southern Minnesota Section Newsletter

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Linux

By Dave Boutcher

Linux[®] is a subject that gets a huge amount of hype in the trade press these days and also has a very strong grassroots following. Its current popularity, flexibility, and architecture independence has caught the eyes of many large companies as a potential operating system for use in a variety of applications.

Linux was fathered by Linus Torvalds, a Finnish programmer who, when he was a college student in 1991, wrote the operating system that was the seed for Linux (he named it after himself). The group of programmers working on Linux has blossomed from a relatively small number of ardent fans to a large assortment of free software developers, corporate IT shops, software companies, and home users.

At the same time, Linux has moved from an operating system running on cheap PC hardware to one that runs on everything from PDAs to mainframes. It has continued to gain capabilities, such as SCSI drivers and compliance to the U.S. government's Posix standard, that have further boosted its usefulness.

One of the most interesting things about Linux is that you can tinker with it. If it doesn't behave the way you expect, you can go read the source program and figure out why. If you want to add new function to it, you are free to do so. Because it was written by people who are interested in tinkering, it is very easy to make it do new things. Whether you want to make it run on a small embedded board in a larger project, or make it control the equipment and chemistry of your backyard swimming pool, chances are it is fairly easy to do.

This talk will cover where Linux came from, where it is today, and where it has the potential to go. Whether you are interested in Linux because it is coming into your company, because you would like to customize it to drive some unique piece of hardware, or because you are interested in an alternative to Microsoft, this talk will provide an interesting perspective.

IEEE Section Meeting

Dave Boutcher, IBM

Linux

*Monday, April 22, 6:30 pm
Mayo Medical Sciences Building
(321 3rd Avenue SW, Rochester)*

☞ Pizza at 6:30; Meeting at 7:00 ☜

Dave Boutcher is a Senior Technical Staff Member at IBM Rochester. He started with IBM in Canada in 1986, and has since worked on a wide variety of projects, ranging from writing the microcode in communications adapters to designing graphical user interfaces. Currently he is working on supporting and improving Linux running on the IBM iSeries computer.

Dave is an adjunct instructor at the University of Minnesota, teaching courses in Linux and C++. He has a bachelor's degree in computer science from the University of Manitoba.

UW-La Crosse Distinguished Lecture Series

Yale Patt, Ph.D., professor of electrical and computer engineering at the University of Texas at Austin, will present a symposium and lecture on Monday, April 22, at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. At 10:00 a.m. there will be a symposium on *The microprocessor six or seven years from now*. At 4:00 p.m. Dr. Patt will deliver the keynote lecture, *The future of computing: where we are likely to be and where we are likely to not be in 20 years*.

The sessions will be held at the Cartwright Center on the university campus. Registration is at 9:30 a.m. For further details, visit www.ewh.ieee.org/r4/southern_minnesota, or contact David Riley (608-785-6806, riley@cs.uwlax.edu).



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