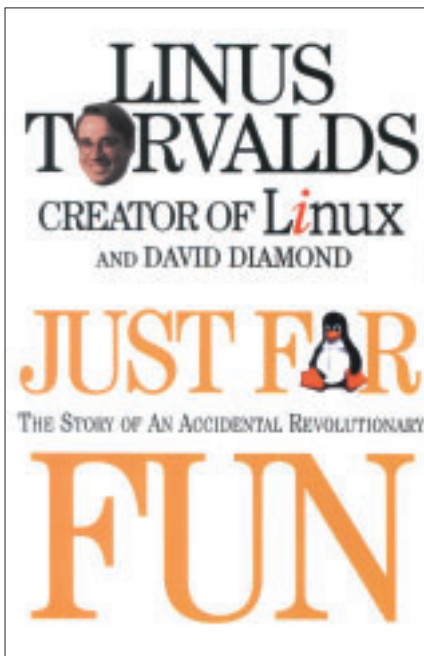


JUST FOR FUN



ALISON DAVIES

This is the gospel according to Torvalds. The account of the birth of Linux by the one person who knows the truth, and the story of the man who went from computer programming student to multimillionaire and the figurehead of the Open Source movement. The book was written in conjunction with David Diamond, a journalist for the New York Times, Business Week, Wired and editor of Red Herring Magazine. It interweaves accounts of Diamond's meetings with Torvalds to collaborate on various chapters, with the account of Torvalds' life and his own views on Linux and Open Source. The title — Just for Fun — comes from Torvalds' belief, stated more than once in the book, that the ultimate motivation for everything in life is that it is 'just for fun'. Entertainment is the meaning of life, once it has progressed through survival and social order, and the development of Linux was a product of this. He started writing the program as entertainment to learn more about the workings of his new computer and the development continued as a team entertainment over the Internet as more and more people had an input.

The book chronicles Torvalds' life from his childhood and first encounters with his grandfather's VIC 20, through his initial choice of a Sinclair QL and his student days with his new PC bought with birthday and Christmas money. It

covers a little of his family background but he admits that his memory is not as clear when it comes to family events as it is when asked about events in the life of Linux. His description of his early development of Linux is preceded by a warning that the section contains geek language so we have been warned! Having followed the birth of Linux the story follows Linus' move to the US, the birth of his children and his financial fortunes due to the stock market launch of Red Hat.

Some scenes give us both points of view, both Torvalds' and Diamond's with fascinating insights into what different people consider important. Occasionally we are treated to a third point of view, when Tove, Linus' wife, gives her clarification of an issue (the famous penguin was originally her idea).

Linus sets out his very pragmatic views on Open Source, he defends himself against accusations that he betrayed the movement by allowing Linux to be distributed commercially and by taking a job with a very secretive company. He also defends himself against accusations that fame and fortune have made him less accessible. The book explains his philosophy on life and makes no apology for his geekiness, in fact he revels in it. It is an entertaining account of a life that has changed the course of computer history and compulsory reading for anyone interested in Linux.



Info
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