FreeDOS's Linux Roots

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I discovered Linux in 1993 and instantly recognized it as a Big Deal. Linux had a command line that was much more powerful than MS-DOS, and you could view the source code to study the Linux commands, fix bugs and add new features. I installed Linux on my computer, in a dual-boot configuration with MS-DOS. Since Linux didn't have the applications I needed as a working college student (a word processor to write class papers or a spreadsheet program to do physics lab analysis), I booted into MS-DOS to do much of my classwork and into Linux to do other things. I was moving to Linux, but I still relied on MS-DOS.

In 1994, I read articles in technology magazines saying that Microsoft planned to do away with MS-DOS soon. The next version of Windows would not use DOS. MS-DOS was on the way out. I'd already tried Windows 3, and I wasn't impressed. Windows was not great. And, running Windows would mean replacing the DOS applications that I used every day. I wanted to keep using DOS. I decided that the only way to keep DOS was to write my own. On June 29, 1994, I announced my plans on the Usenet discussion group comp.os.msdos.apps, and things took off from there...