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Software giant Microsoft announced yesterday that it will begin shipping its newest operating system, Windows Linux Ubuntu, by the end of this month. Computers sold with this free, open-source operating system pre-installed will cost, on average, \$149.95 fewer than computers sold with Windows Vista Service Pack 9 pre-installed.

Microsoft's announcement caught computer-industry analysts by surprise.

"We're normally used to waiting three or four years and two or three delays before Microsoft releases a new operating system," said Louis Chuptka of PC Age magazine. "For Microsoft to release a new operating system before hackers have exposed all the vulnerabilities in the previous one is a revolutionary step."

To Microsoft, however, the decision was a no-brainer.

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