

Reiser FS: The open source file system fallout

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Yesterday, the Open Source community took an emotional hit when veteran Linux programmer Hans Reiser was convicted of first degree murder in the suspicious disappearing of his wife, Nina. While I won't go into the details of the case, as this has been covered extensively in the press, I would like to talk a little bit about how this verdict will impact the technology in play for file system dominance in our favorite Open Source operating system, Linux.

While Namesys' ReiserFS, of which Hans Reiser (right) was the primary programmer and lead designer was not the pre-dominant journaled file system used on Linux systems, it was praised for its stability and performance, and was and still is the default file system on the second most popular enterprise Linux distribution, SuSE Linux Enterprise Server (SLES). ReiserFS was also included in the 'upstream' Linux kernel maintained by Linus Torvalds because it shares the same license, GPL version 2. ReiserFS is also popular on Debian-based systems as well.

SuSE and Debian use ReiserFS version 3, a stable and proven version of the code that has been sitting mostly fallow for some time, and is maintained with bug and security fixes on a best effort basis. Prior to the whirlwind and highly publicized trial, Hans Reiser and his small team were working on Reiser4, but much of this development ground to a halt due to his legal woes, and the project is more than likely to die an unfortunate death by virtue of its lead programmer having to serve a minimum 25 year life sentence in prison.

From the SuSE and Debian perspective, this is an obviously unacceptable state of affairs.

[More Here](#) [2]

Also:

- For now, the future of ReiserFS, and its parent company Namesys, remain in jeopardy. Reiser put the company up for sale in December 2006, and as of yet the company is unsold. Namesys employee Alexander Lyamin, writing in the Linux Kernel Mailing List in December 2006, said his company will continue its work absent of Reiser's leadership, and attempt to appoint a 'proxy' to run operations until a better solution could be found. At this time, Namesys' website is current inaccessible.

["Misunderstood" programmer receives 25-to-life](#) [3]

- The few prominent Linux distributions that were still shipping the stable version of ReiserFS by default have shifted to the more common Ext3 for various technical reasons. Reiser4, his next-generation filesystem, has been under active development for some time, but has not been streamlined into the Linux kernel because Linux developers claim that it fails to adhere to coding conventions and has several technical problems.

[Hans Reiser is fsked: jury delivers guilty verdict](#) [4]

- I don't know if Hans Reiser, creator of the well-regarded, open-source ReiserFS (Reiser File System), is actually guilty of the murder of his estranged wife, Nina Reiser. We can't actually even be sure that Nina Reiser was murdered. Her body was never found and Reiser's attorney argued that she may have returned to her native Russia.

Never-the-less, as Wired reported, "with no body, no crime scene, no reliable eyewitness and virtually no physical evidence" Hans Reiser was found guilty of first-degree murder. In California, first-degree murder must be "willful, deliberate, and premeditated."

I don't see it.

[Was Reiser really found Guilty of being a Hacker?](#) [5]

- Computer programmer Hans Reiser was arrogant while testifying in his murder trial and never showed any compassion for his estranged wife, one of many factors that led to his conviction on first-degree murder, a member of the jury said today.

[Reiser juror: "Never showed sympathy" for Nina](#) [6]

[Reiser](#)

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