Linux is a tool.

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Ok, the talk lately of cute likening of Linux to other areas and items is interesting but still not getting through to many folks.

Here's the guts of it. Linux is, not is like, but IS, a tool.

It is an Operating System, a group of files and code that are packaged together to allow human users to interact with other devices connected together through the computer.

It is a part of what makes a computer work, it is a part of a computer.

Like any part of a computer, there are various groups, commercial and otherwise, who manufacture, package and otherwise provide various pieces of a computer.

Many people would like to separate software from hardware in identifying a computer, but the reality is that it is a combination of software and hardware that makes a fully functioning computer, one cannot really work without the other.

Take any other part of the computer. Any part. and see how many different vendors and manufacturers there are of that part.

Monitors, Hard disks, video cards, keyboards, power supplies, fans, heat sinks, mice, batteries, ethernet cards, memory cards, soundcards, the litany goes on and on.

There are multiple manufacturers and providers of each and every part of a computer. software is the same.

How many wordprocessing programs are available? Spreadsheets, games, graphics apps, backup programs, name it, there are a number of them and all are available in the same market.

People and businesses somehow find a way to to choose which items and parts for their computers they will use. Sometimes, they let others who they feel "know better" choose for them. But that doesn't change that there are several for whoever is choosing to choose from.

The amazing thing is, with all these choices and manufacturers and providers of all the various and sundry computer parts, business goes on. Whole enterprises manage to make choices and implement them.

As a matter of fact, one could consider Linux to be one of the greatest examples of a free market. people come to

'market' with their version, perhaps to sell, sometimes just to show their abilities, but the people who are looking for a distro wander through the marketplace, going from cart to cart, booth to booth looking at and stopping at those that catch their eye.

Some vendors fare better than others, Some vendors get no serious attention and those often never come back to the marketplace. Some of them might not get their own distro to 'sell' but end up joining with another vendor, adding his unique ideas to the other.

Is this a realistic situation? of course it is. market places as I just described are plentiful in all parts of the world. in some places along the coast, you will find as many as 30 fish sellers. All are selling fish, but different kinds of fish, prepared differently. Incredibly, people manage to find something they like and survive.

The business world and the rest of the world is a marketplace for anything someone might want to put out there. just because a few people don't like going to the marketplace doesn't mean there is necessarily wrong with the market, it works fine for the majority of the people the majority of the time.

So the next time someone tries to tell you that the Linux approach of presenting a large number of distributions isn't good for the business sense of Linux, they apparently haven't been to a marketplace in a long time.

By the way, before they try to pull the "big city" argument out there, remind them that the big city relies on the marketplace practice as well. Ever heard of Wall Street?

Big Bear

[Linux](#)

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