Blog of helios

Linux is to computing what freedom is to mankind...and then there's Microsoft

🖥 Linux - Stop holding our kids back

This blog is momentarily interrupted to bring you a snippet of recently received email.

"...observed one of my students with a group of other children gathered around his laptop. Upon looking at his computer, I saw he was giving a demonstration of some sort. The student was showing the ability of the laptop and handing out Linux disks. After confiscating the disks I called a confrence with the student and that is how I came to discover you and your organization. Mr. Starks, I am sure you strongly believe in what you are doing but I cannot either support your efforts or allow them to happen in my classroom. At this point, I am not sure what you are doing is legal. No software is free and spreading that misconception is harmful. These children look up to adults for guidance and discipline. I will research this as time allows and I want to assure you, if you are doing anything illegal, I will pursue charges as the law allows. Mr. Starks, I along with many others tried Linux during college and I assure you, the claims you make are grossly over-stated and hinge on falsehoods. I admire your attempts in getting computers in the hands of disadvantaged people but putting linux on these machines is holding our kids back.

This is a world where Windows runs on virtually every computer and putting on a carnival show for an operating system is not helping these children at all. I am sure if you contacted Microsoft, they would be more than happy to supply you with copies of an older verison of Windows and that way, your computers would actually be of service to those receiving them..."

Karen xxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxx Middle School
AISD

Hmmmm....

I suppose I should, before anything else, thank you. You have given me the opportunity to show others just what a battle we face in what we do. "We" being those who advocate, support and use Free Open Source Software and Linux in particular.

If you find my following words terse or less than cordial, take a breath and prepare yourself...what I have to say to you are soft strokes to your hair in comparison to what you are about to experience.

First off, if there was even the slightest chance that I was doing something illegal, it would not have been done. To think that I would involve my kids in my "illegal" activities is an insult far beyond outrage. You should be ashamed of yourself for putting into print such none sense.

And please...investigate to your heart's content. You are about to have your eyes opened, that is if you actually investigate

anything at all. Linux is a free as-in-cost and free as-in-license operating system. It was designed specifically for those purposes. Linux is used to free people from Microsoft. The fact that you seem to believe that Microsoft is the end all and be-all is actually funny in a sad sort of way. Then again, being a good NEA member, you would spout the Union line. Microsoft has pumped tens of millions of dollars into your union. Of course you are going to "recommend" Microsoft Windows". To do otherwise would probably get you reprimanded at the least and fired at the worst. You are only doing what you've been instructed to do.

You've been trained well.

I don't know when you attended college Karen but the Linux of even two years ago pales in feature and ability to what there is available now...and that in turn will pale in a year's time. linux is superior to MS windows in so many ways, they are too numerous to mention here...I am weary of enumerating them. Unlike Microsoft who meters their "improvements" and then shovels them to you every five years or so for purchase; Linux releases their improvements upon their completion. We receive the newest and the best of the system when it is tested to be usable and stable. Karen, you have no idea the slavery you work under...but you don't know any better. The shame of it is, you are trapped with millions of other teachers in obeying the NEA and preaching the goodness of Windows and Microsoft. A superior, free and absolutely entertaining method of operating your computer is within reach and you are unable to grasp it.

The most disturbing part of this resides in the fact that the AISD purchases millions of dollars of Microsoft Software in a year's time when that money could be better spent on educating our children. A dedicated School Teacher would recognize that fact and lobby for the change to Free Open Source Software and let the money formally spent on MS bindware be used on our kids.

A teacher who cared about her students would do that.

That is sad past my ability to express it to you. Don't shackle your students in your prison Karen.

Now. You give that boy his disks back. Aaron is a brilliant kid and he's learned more using Linux than he ever did using Windows. Those disks and their distribution are perfectly legal and even if he was "disruptive", you cannot keep his property. I have placed a call to the AISD Superintendent and cc'd him a complete copy of your email. It looks like we will get to meet in his office when School starts again after the holiday. I am anxious to meet a person who is this uninformed and still holds a position of authority and learnedness over our children.

Ken Starks
HeliOS Solutions

All-Righty Then

822 comments:

[Amenditman](#) said...

> Absolutely goes to show the mindset billions of dollars of PR money will buy.Goes right along with 'It's illegal to erase Windows from my computer!' Utter nonsense!AmenditmanIgnorance is not bliss, but slavery. Our educators should know this better than we do.Micro$oft doesn't 'give' anything away. There is always a cost, known or hidden.Amenitman

[12/8/08 10:11 PM](#)

Mark said...

Ken - I'm very much interested to know how many times you had to edit this to keep it as civil as you did. :-)Looking forward to hearing the results of the conversation with the superintendent and wish I could be a fly on the wall for it.

Fred said...

I have rarely seen a worse, more damaging ignoramus than this Karen person. Ye flippin' gods, what do they DO to human being in Education, turn them into zombies?Disclaimer: my parents used to be teachers. They told me that when you don't know, you ask questions before forming a conclusion. Obviously, being a teacher nowadays is a license to pass judgement like others pass gas, without care or concern for the well-being of other people.

Anonymous said...

I'd be more worried about teachers that can't spell or think, than kids being corrupted by Linux.Geeesh.Everandanon

Urmas said...

Omigosh... please, PLEASE tell me this is fiction!If it's not... wanna ammo?Quoting from "Winners of the [Finnish] Prime Minister's Awards for Best Practices 2006":Commendation: Penguins in school – NowMunicipality of Noormarkku, Education ServicesPrincipal Esa Kohtamäkitel. +358 400 901512During the last three years, we have improved the computer education we provide and our school network using open source software and LTSP technology. This has dramatically increased the use and effectiveness of computers at our school, and we have managed to reduce costs to a fraction of what they used to be. We have created a website that is open to everyone so that anyone can share the benefits and contribute to developing the expanding network with other interested people.Using LTSP technology, we have built a network in our school (500 students and 40 teachers) with more than 90 remote terminals (i.e., we have achieved the target student-to-computer ratio defined in the Information Society Programme).All students and staff members have a personal username and password they can use to access a personal desktop, home folder (with unrestricted size), e-mail, web, office applications (OpenOffice), image processing (Gimp) and educational and training software.As a result, the need for computers has increased so much that we will add another computer room to the currently existing two computer rooms and one media/library room. Moreover, there is at least one terminal in each classroom. In other words, computer use has increased dramatically compared to the time before this project when the computer hardware we had was barely usable. We used to suffer from recurring software malfunctions, computer instability, excessive size of software and limited funds for updating hardware and software, pranks by students, etc. As a result, the teachers were increasingly unwilling to use computers, the computer teacher had to spend his spare time at the school, and the cost of continuous maintenance was heavy on the schools finances.Thanks to our development work, however, all this is behind us now.TodayThe computer teacher needs only four weekly hours to maintain and update the school's computers, train staff and do the same to the 25 computers of the school next door and its staff, too!We have placed our old computers back in use without needing to invest in updating them. We have also helped schools in neighbouring municipalities (Pomarkku, Siikainen) to reach the same stage in development and they have been able to set up their computer rooms simply by acquiring a server (EUR 2,500) and a low-cost switch. They have hooked up their old computers to the new server at a very low cost: for example, a new network adapter costs EUR 7.The Satakuntaliitto, the Regional Council of Satakunta, provided the municipality of Noormarkku with EUR 42,000 to launch the project. This was used to initiate a project to introduce open source software to schools in Satakunta region. Our website www.antarktis.fi provides additional information. In the autumn we will contact decision-makers and schools in Satakunta region to tell them about the successes achieved in this project.During this spring, we helped to create corresponding systems in the municipalities of Nauvo, Paimio, Valkeakoski and Eura. During last year, 28 different groups visited our school to see and learn about our system. Some of them have already set up a corresponding system in their school (for example in the new Vitikkala school

in Jämsänkoski).The development project has been largely managed by Alpo Välimaa and Janne Karjanlahti.Jury's judgementDrawing upon the local resources, the practice makes efficient use of available software and existing hardware to serve the needs of the Education Services of the municipality of Noormarkku. The jury appreciated Noormarkku's active role in publicising the project within the public sector and the fact that it has also assisted other municipalities in adopting and using the practice.http://www.tietoyhteiskuntaohjelma.fi/parhaatkaytannot/en_GB/2006_awards/

12/9/08 4:16 AM

Larry the Open Source Guy said...

And people ask me why I make the added sacrifice to send my child to a private school . . . .At least her teachers can spell "conference."Speaking of which, H, we need to know how this goes and you might consider getting the press involved.

12/9/08 10:23 AM

Dan said...

Hey, Ken!Man, once again, you're fighting the good fight! I thought I'd chime in with just a word of encouragement, and perhaps a "turn of phrase" I heard many years ago that perhaps you can find helpful as you battle the woefully ignorant:"Ignorance isn't stupidity, but choosing to remain ignorant is."Methinks Austin is about to become significantly more enlightened, if they so choose!Dan sends...

12/9/08 11:36 AM

Geo said...

Thank you for your input Karen... you would have made a great inquisitor during the Salem witch trials. Perhaps you should go back to teacher's school and start over. Only this time try to read some 21st century literature instead of the 15th.

12/9/08 11:42 AM

Anonymous said...

Forgive them, for they know not what they do.

12/9/08 11:44 AM

Evan said...

"I am sure if you contacted Microsoft, they would be more than happy to supply you with copies of an older verison of Windows and that way, your computers would actually be of service to those receiving them..."She can't possibly believe this? Not only do older version not have any support, but MS would charge you full ticket for them all.Considering that Linux has only be on the scene for about 15 years, and only installable by none hardcore geeks for the last 8, and finally only real installable by a non-CS type for the last 5, I would say that Karen is a recent College graduate trying to look good and earn points with the school board.

12/9/08 11:46 AM

Ken Jennings said...

I really, really want to believe this is just a piece of humor whipped up by Ken during an idle moment. Because, if it is not then clearly not enough random drug tests are administered to public schools employees.

12/9/08 11:46 AM

Philip said...

This is sad.Surely one should approach education with an open mind.The fact that this person can not think in a non-conventional way is shocking.I think that a letter of this tone deserves contact with the Principal of the

school, as the language used in the letter is in a very threatening tone.Good luck with this!

IGnatius T Foobar said...

Wow. Just... wow. I'm really disappointed that you chose to obfuscate the identity of this teacher, who desperately needs a few whacks with the cluestick.It's ironic -- teachers tend to be left-wingers so if she's in the US then she probably voted for "change" last month -- and yet, here she is, doing her part to prop up the wealthy corporate establishment in Redmond. Totally clueless.

Anonymous said...

Dear Ken,could you please write a short note after you had the talk to the teacher? I would be very thankfull. What she said was more than just insult and what she did was illegal.

Henaway said...

Seriously - how can she say in one breath that "no software is free" and in the next that she "tried linux in college"?? If she tried it, she already knew that it was truly free, in BOTH meanings.

Werner said...

This is the first time I actually got angry at reading an article concerning Linux advocacy. This teacher should have done a simple Internet search to find the facts before sending such an ignorant message.Werner Zarth

barton said...

If you can't do. teach. Unfortunately, too many teachers could never make a living in any other way. The best teachers I ever had were part time and had their main job in industry of science.

richy said...

A superb article and once again shows some of the numbskulls that live in our society. Something tells me her authority has gotten to her head a litl:D Go represent the tux !!!!!!!RegardsRichy

Anonymous said...

I can attest to this behavior. I have been working with a few high school students in Orlando, FL who were SUSPENDED for sharing Ubuntu disks.The comment was that there is no such thing as a "FREE" operating system, this is pirated software.Unbelievable.

Anonymous said...

I dont believe a single line of text that Ken Starks aka helios posts.

Kevin (aka Padma) said...

This is just ... sad. I almost can't believe that such ignorance can exist. ESPECIALLY since she claims to have tried

Linux in college!Ken, I thought this was important enough that I linked to it on both my private blog (read by family & friends) and my main computer-related blog.

Anonymous said...

Ok, Ken's point was to defend Linux and correct myths about it, and that's fine.But what I found more disturbing was that a teacher was confronted with the situation of a group of students excited to learn about something new, and she immediately saw her first duty to put a stop to that right now!

AdamW said...

Ken, if you pass Karen's email address on to me, I'll be happy to mail her as a direct representative of Mandriva to confirm that we do indeed provide software for free...I hope the student got their discs back.

Anonymous said...

*But what I found more disturbing was that a teacher was confronted with the situation of a group of students excited to learn about something new, and she immediately saw her first duty to put a stop to that right now!*I'm guessing you haven't been through the American school system, where the goal is often to produce conformity and obedience rather than education. I was lucky enough to go to a good school (meaning we had teachers and others within the system who pushed back against this tendency), but the attitude conveyed by the teacher Helios quotes is all too familiar to me.

Anonymous said...

I haven't read all the comments, so forgive if this is posted already.I'm not sure what she did is legal. What about students rights? Someone should take her to court for confiscating a students personal property.

geminiguy said...

Could you please let us know which school she teaches at, cuz if it's my kids school.. I'm pulling him out Also the college she attended.. so I know not to send my children there. I'm sorry but... this woman is a complete moron.

geminiguy said...

Oh, btw... is she aware it is illegal to threaten civil suit? Obviously yet one more thing she didn't learn in college

BR549 said...

As a retired classroom teacher and district administrator who started with Apple II's, TRS-80's and even Commodore 64's in classrooms, it's usually not the NEA or the state or local teacher organizations standing in the way of technological progress. In most cases, you'll find an understaffed IT department that lacks the inclination, budget, time and leadership support to be so innovative and disruptive as to launch a free and open source software initiative in their district. MS-based products offer the path of least resistance. In many cases, it boils down to their employee knowledge base and lack of training and support for anything other than Microsoft products. Microsoft spends large sums on lobbyists, marketing and training to keep the status quo.In your discussions with the AISD Superintendent and his or her staff, please look for district IT policy directives that limit school and teacher hardware and software options. Look at teacher and support training programs that

ONLY offer MS-based options. Look at district and school budgets for technology and possibly offer sound financial alternatives that make common sense as state and district funds shrink. Schools and teachers usually like "free."Also understand that few school or district officials - administrators, teachers or IT staff - have much reserve capacity for technology risk-taking when they have so many schools at risk from unrealistic No Child Left Behind regulations and testing schedules. Technology is seldom at the top of their list of things that MUST be done today. Yes, please talk to the Superintendent and anyone else who will listen. Please continue to distribute CD's with Linux or even Windows versions of OOo, Firefox, Thunderbird and other free programs. But please keep your focus on the root cause of the problem and not just the symptoms. We can overcome ignorance and injustice. Keep pushing!

12/9/08 1:27 PM

jkcorfy said...

You may want to point Karen to the inAccess program by the Indiana Department of Education. In short, it is an effort to get a 1-to-1 computer-to-student ratio in Indiana schools using FOSS to help keep the costs down. So far, thousands of computers have been set up through this program, with many more on the way.http://www.doe.in.gov/inaccess/

12/9/08 1:31 PM

Anonymous said...

I'm very much interested to know how many times you had to edit this to make it so believable as you did. Good job.The only thing missing is you asking for some kind of donation to pad your pockets.

12/9/08 1:37 PM

Edmundo said...

Man.... I'd love (I guess WE'd love) to know about the follow up of this.

12/9/08 1:45 PM

Brandon said...

I'm not entirely sure what to say about this. She is treating Linux like it is some kind of drug. I think a teacher, of all people, should advocate and support Linux; it is the pursuit of knowledge! It is a stable system that opens itself up to the user, and allows for complete exploration and enjoyment!And as far as holding children back, Linux is one of the most popular server OS's on the planet. Learning to use and administrate Linux opens a whole field of work in the future of these children that M$ would charge you hundreds to thousands of dollars to learn how to do with Windows.I can almost guarantee that these children will learn more from their computers by using Linux then they ever could by using Windows, unless of course memorizing BSOD is considered learning a great deal about the computer.Remember, close Windows, keep the viruses out.

12/9/08 1:50 PM

gagy said...

I am breathless!Fortunately, my fingers are still (freely) working.Obviously K does not realize that major universities and corporations are switching to free software for day-to-day needs encountered in such large organizations, like communication, writing letters and memos, public presentation of data, etc.You already know this, but I would like to bring it back to your memory. Major police forces in Europe are (Oh my gosh!) switching to free software (see: http://news.softpedia.com/news/Parlez-Vous-Ubuntu-Says-The-French-National-Police-77605.shtml).How can the world be safe anymore? This episode brink back to memory a historical event: that of Galileo's.In the beginning there was the earth (read Microsoft), safely placed at the centre of the universe.Now this place has been shown to be occupied by the sun, and many planets are circling around it. One of those is microsoft, and another one is linux. And there is life on linux...Please fight back for those kids!

12/9/08 1:52 PM

[Jeff](#) said...

To paraphrase another poster, stupidity is steadfastly refusing to turn from ignorance. This teacher is clearly ignorant, but hopefully she is not stupid.Sometimes the most passionate opponents of something, when converted, become its most passionate proponents. While it may seem far-fetched, I can only hope that may be the outcome. Also, you may have an opportunity to impress the superintendent, even under the unfavorable circumstances.-- Jeff Smith

[12/9/08 2:21 PM](#)

[kozmcrae](#) said...

Does this "teacher" also label Johnny Appleseed a litterbug? I am weak with rage. Hands too shaky to type. History will not look favorably upon your kind Karen.

[12/9/08 2:32 PM](#)

Anonymous said...

I saw some comments criticizing the teacher's spelling, and yes she is very uninformed. But she is probably chuckling at Ken's inability to spell "nonsense." ("You should be ashamed of yourself for putting into print such none sense")

[12/9/08 2:38 PM](#)

Anonymous said...

technology bigotry or something like that.

[12/9/08 2:40 PM](#)

Anonymous said...

I am opposed to Karen's statement, but I'm not sure about being all-out Linux. I am a windows supporter, but I encourage using Linux also. The difference is Microsoft Windows has been in the industry longer, and have lots of supporters with both common users and developers.But times are changing, and Linux is getting more and more stronger in each passing generation. I believe that Linux is good for testing and other things, but I would still recommend that Microsoft products be used for production, not just because of their name, but the tools are on the same par with Linux, and sometimes much easier to use. This is not an argument, but only an opinion. Honestly, I am an idiot when I am using Linux and its programs, but on Windows, its a different story. "... to each their own ..."-dunno where I got that, but you get the point

[12/9/08 2:49 PM](#)

[saimon69](#) said...

In italian we usually say "o ci fa o ci e'" means: either she act like that or she is really like that; in my opinion is time to call the people in the FSF and other linux associations and start a real campaign for educating teachers about benefits of the open source software especially in the educational sector and aminly for low income families that harly can afford a computer and the expensive suite of softweare required to run it; most important, talk on how people need to know how to USE programs, no matter what kind or in which OS, instead of learning simply some key or menu sequences in order to do thngs: that s something linux and other open os might help to develop: an open approach to a computer.

[12/9/08 3:28 PM](#)

Anonymous said...

" No software is free and spreading that misconception is harmful."It's really not her fault. She is simply a victim of billions worth of advertising for the last 10+ years from "don't copy that floppy" to today's RIAA lawsuits and more.Here's my story. My dad bought an EeePC with Linux. It didn't interoperate as well has he had hoped with his Outlook, so we loaded XP onto it. He was floored by how slow it was, and is desperate to get Linux back on it

so he asked my how to get Linux back. I said just go to www.ubuntu.com and download and install it. He said, "I can just download it for free?" Yes! That's what I've been saying all along! It's still hard for him to understand after so many years of proprietary software propaganda.

ColonelPanik said...

Go get em, Ken!Is our children learning? NO!

twingeckos said...

Dear Karen:You are doing your students a disservice by applying your biases regarding computer operating systems to them. I would not have the job that I do nor would I have started a business were it not for the exposure to the Linux Operating System when I was a teenager. Your students WILL encounter Windows for sure but they encounter other operating systems every day and don't even realize it. Having exposure to a variety of operating systems will only make them more worldly in the same sense as visiting a foreign country.While I'm sure in your little k-8 universe Microsoft Windows is all there is. If your eyes were open you'd see that there is larger world out there that use a variety of Unix-like operating systems on servers, network appliances, and even cell phones. Your students have a chance to learn for free; don't stand in their way.JD Austin

tracyanne said...

Well said, that man.

Anonymous said...

I wonder what kind of favors she had to do to get though collage. She apparently isn't that smart. Perhaps she use to be intelligent and was in some kind of accident.Obviously she's been in a hole in the ground. People have been using free software for a long time, Open source or just freeware.

Anonymous said...

I could not come up with a polite word to describe this "teacher"'s knowledge(or lack thereof), so I would refrain from responding to that.My ten year old daughter uses these - Ubuntu Linux, Firefox, F Spot, OpenOffice, Gimp, KTouch and few Linux games. She loves all of them. She absolutely loves Compiz and assorted graphical tricks that come with it(no parallel found in proprietary world). In fact she loves showing off our Linux computer to her friends. Occasionally she wonders "why do people use windows?"!I showed her Windows Vista. I showed her Ubuntu. She chose Ubuntu.

Anonymous said...

This story is complete fiction. There is no Karen. It never happened except in the mind of the blogger. Good story.

Anonymous said...

...This story is complete fiction..."anonymous...? I don't think so.I know who you are...your sister is a crack queen and services those who accommodate her. She's a busy girl.

Ryan Sommers said...

nonesense can be spelled either way btw. It has more impact separated than it does run together. Did you have trouble understanding the authors meaning? If not,your notation was pointed to ridicule, not correction.Ken...will contact you via helmet cam. Emailing you now.Ryan Sommers

12/9/08 6:06 PM

Tom said...

You can lead a person to knowledge, but you sure can't make them think....

12/9/08 6:39 PM

Anonymous said...

It's so outrageous, I wonder if it is real.

12/9/08 6:42 PM

Jose_X said...

That was excellent, helios.We need more teachers like this writing this sort of thing to more helios and more helios meeting that challenge, including posting the conversations online.Discussing Linux, Today.That teacher may yet get a second chance by virtue of having been bold (if a bit confused). And teacher may even turn into a major Linux advocate in the future.helios, want to challenge readers to help produce such encounters? Maybe a little prize can go to the best encounter (online voting). We should also encourage those with less knowledge to be engaging by letting them know that they will have a support group online to help them address the concerns and inaccuracies their correspondent may have about Linux.Excellent post!PS: Another idea: encourage FOSS advocates everywhere to ask a specific series of Linux questions on camera, out on the street, perhaps for posting on youtube.

12/9/08 7:11 PM

Anonymous said...

You may want to tell her that many school districts user Linux. For example, http://www.austinisd.org/inside/technology/webteam/guidelines03.phtml"While you may be doing your web page development on either a PC or Mac computer platform, your web pages will be accessed from a Linux server"

12/9/08 7:31 PM

Anonymous said...

Unfortunately, the story is definitely true. I had a very similar discussion a few months ago with a teacher at the local High School. She insisted that the kids MUST be taught Microsoft Word, as "it's the only legal word processing software". I just couldn't get through to her.

12/9/08 7:34 PM

swiftnetcomputers said...

This 'teacher' and I use the term loosely, is why our nation's students leave school virtually uneducated. President-elect Obama understands that education is paramount and wants to help good teachers and cull the bad teachers. I suspect Ms. Karen will be culled.

12/9/08 7:42 PM

Tim Daily said...

Well, I am a school teacher in the Austin Independent School District and while I don't know any "Karen", I am intimately familiar with the rhetoric and attitude. The author here is uncomfortably close to knowing what he's talking about when he speaks of the NEA. We are "encouraged strongly" to discourage the use of anything other

than Microsoft products in the school district and between the Tech folks fearing for their jobs and the ignorance of all the "Karens" I deal with daily, it's a wonder the boy wasn't publicly flogged.I have been trying to get our school district to use Linux for 3 years and I've been told that I am to desist with this quest if I want to keep my job.Those who questioned the email's authenticity owe him(?) an apology. Of course as I peruse the comments of the sort, I note with a wry smile that you don't have the courage to sign your name to it.Cowardice is easy. I wish this author well.Tim Daily

Anonymous said...

If this is a real story, you're right right in educating this teacher that free software actually does exist and that there's nothing illegal about it.But why get into tinfoil-hat territory with this?*Then again, being a good NEA member, you would spout the Union line. Microsoft has pumped tens of millions of dollars into your union. To do otherwise would probably get you reprimanded at the least and fired at the worst.*[citation needed]As has been noted above, teachers and teachers' unions don't set IT policy.

Anonymous said...

heck,take all wepaons from every men and give them bubblegums.It`s not linux or windows or even apple. Its all about the parents. I wonder such peoples are allowed to have children. If you can`t handle a child, dont have one.But please stop with make everything responsible for your personal fails.If you would trust in your kids, you would turst in your kid`s intelligence.weiner

Anonymous said...

My entire school district is just as bad, unfortunately, and it's from the top down. I've given up on them and am focusing my efforts on the Latin Americans in this country. I'm having much more success now. GNU/Linux, remember, is multilingual. :-)--SYG

Anonymous said...

Hi Ken. Hard to believe that an educator is so ignorand and has such a bad attitude...or maybe not. On a brighter note, a friend of mine (not a computer expert nor a Linux expert by any meands) helped convert a small rural school from using Windows to using Linux. He was using his computer to play music for a school dance. The principal saw that he was not using Windows, and was curious. HE asked my friend many questions, and expressed interest in using Linux in the school. My friend spent 5 days total at the school, and with the help of a willing (but ignorant of Linux) computer teacher, they deleted Windoes from all of the schools computers, and installed Linux. MAny of the computers are networked for file sharing. He also did the same for the principal's home computers.He got started with Linux from watching me using Kanotix, and then sidux. I helped him get started with Linux, but he has learned a lot on his own.Keep up the good work!

Orlandus said...

She may have "tried Linux in college"...but obviously she didn't inhale.

James Dixon said...

> I'm not sure what she did is legal. Depends on whether she gave the disks back once class was over. A teacher can confiscate pretty much anything to keep order in his/her class. But they are not allowed to keep someone's property.Those who doubt this actually happened are obviously not well acquainted with our current school system.

David Wing said...

I wrote a short blog post and linked to this email. I also dugg the story to help raise awareness of this issue. This teacher really did not hear her calling in life. She should have become a lawyer with the RIAA.

lythandrel said...

I'd bet that teacher was one of the people who tried linux in it's early days, and hasn't seen it since 1997 or thereabouts, and is of the opinion because it was difficult for her then, that Linux must not have changed. She needs some serious re-education, not only about open source software, but about linux, and teaching in general. Her closed mind and ignorance is what is holding her students back.

Demosthenes said...

I really had to post after reading this letter, especially since not so long ago i was in the position of your son. (its amazing how scared school administrators are of live cds)Teachers like this Karen are the ones that smart kids the world over universally despise. If you are responsible for opening the minds of ourselves and our children, *you must be able to keep your mind open to changing technology and new ideas as well.*While my opinion of Microsoft is nowhere near as critical as some of the other posters, (I even happen to like Vista, but I've got a few servers running Debian in my garage, too) anyone even remotely connected to modern technology can attest that linux and the open source movement are some of the most important things ever to happen in our day and age.If the conference goes well, you should bring a copy of "The Cathedral and the Bazaar" for Karen, maybe nudge her in the right direction

joshua said...

I recently came across your blog and have been reading along. I thought I would leave my first comment. I don't know what to say except that I have enjoyed reading. Nice blog. I will keep visiting this blog very often.Sharonhttp://www.autoloans101.info

Anonymous said...

> and let the money formally spent on MS bindware be used on our kids.Did you mean 'formerly'?geoff_f

GNUguy said...

Ken, please inform Karen the teacher/Luddite that the NYSE is using this illegal software. Also the NSA, NASA, the US Army, and I'm certain I'm missing a bunch more. Then do all those students and parents a favor and ask for her immediate termination so she can go to a REAL college and get a REAL teaching degree. Finally, thanks to jkcorfy and gagy for the links re inACCESS and the French police.And one more finally. You're absolutely correct Ken. Karen's dim-witted actions have probably been very motivational for these students. I'll bet she has inspired those students to learn even more about Linux and OSS. Nothing is more tempting than seeing something as illicit and dangerous. Go get 'em (ie, distros), dear students. Make copies. Distribute and learn.

Cypress said...

Holy mother of God... I can't believe people like that woman actually exist. This is surreal.

SamW said...

Anyone doubting the authenticity of this blog post clearly has never been a student of AISD. Set in its ways doesn't even begin to describe it.Obviously not all of the teachers and other staff members are that bad, but one of my parents' criteria prior to moving about a decade back now was that it was outside AISD. That's pretty freaking bad.

Mr said...

If this is true this is awesome for Linux.What do you think each one of those kids is going to do when s/he has the disc confiscated from them? Most are probably going to go of on their windows machines and find out what this Linux is all about. Then their going to download it and install it and be converted anyway.Kids are going to explore and if you put barriers like this up in front of them they are going to be even more inquisitive and be even more adamant about getting Linux onto their machine.Even if they hate it their still going to use it because it's something the teacher banned; and challenging the adults is cool.We need more of this!

Chris said...

Thankfully, I'll be raising my kids to be Linux users. I want them to pick their own OS and be free too change at anytime.M$ couldn't offer me enough money if they tried to convince me otherwise.I feel sad for the millions and millions of people, schools, and businesses around the world who actively waste billions of dollars every year on M$ and it's products.

Anonymous said...

My two cents from far away (ie, never been inside a US school).First, this teacher is a testimony to the esteem teaching at a high/middle school is held at. The fact that she is allowed to teach while being at least partially ignorant or even incompetent illustrates the standards teachers are held to.For those in the US: it is your people who voted this policy in.Second, I would like to suggest to Ken to avoid any impression of "humiliation" or "punishment" of this teacher. She is most likely under-trained, badly managed, and badly instructed. And I will not go into her pay and career perspectives. Maybe you might even be glad that SOMEone is willing to do the job?I did not get the impression from your post that her (misdirected) actions were motivated by anything but the intention to protect her pupils. Personally, I think an enemy converted is always to be preferred over an enemy beaten. Winter

AAM said...

I would suggest that you offer the teacher a 1 month trial period of using nothing but Linux to educate and inform her.

PaganWolf said...

Quote "I along with many others tried Linux during college and I assure you, the claims you make are grossly over-stated and hinge on falsehoods."Wow she makes it sound like an illegal drug! Are we just handing out the first one free, then charging for subsequent ones? I hope you insist that she send a FULL apology upon her findings for calling your motives and character into question. Unbelievable that these people are supposedly looking after our most precious asset!

[hikaricore](#) said...

omfg.... everyone in Texas needs to call the district superintendent right now and ask for that bitch to be fired.This is just one more reason why I won't be trusting my kids to public schooling if I ever have them. :p

[12/10/08 5:32 AM](#)

[MattBD](#) said...

This is deeply worrying that a teacher could come out with something like this. Sadly, this kind of attitude is all too common.The argument that "the whole world uses Windows so we have to as well" doesn't hold water. Plenty of people have learnt using other word processors, back in the 80's or early 90's, and now use MS Word without problems. And what if some of those kids go into a company where they use Linux, Solaris, Macs, whatever? OpenOffice is similar enough to MS Office that you can pick it up straight away, and Firefox isn't hard to use either.My personal opinion is that schools should be using free and open source software unless there's a specific need that can't be met with it. However, I can't think of a single occasion when that would apply to the sort of thing done at high school level. It probably would occur at university level (ie having to use Photoshop for graphic design), but even then there are free software alternatives.

[12/10/08 5:44 AM](#)

[Alex Tokar](#) said...

Wow... I cannot believe such idiots as that woman are on this planet. I myself have some experience in this area, although not in the US. Stuff like talking with teachers at local school, all saying Windows is the future and that there is nothing for free. Even the IT teacher insists upon using Windows and all their stupid applications like IE, Microsoft Word etc. while there are so many cost-free and much more smart applications which can do even more! It seems to me that teachers all over the world are controlled by Micro$oft! They are teaching totally wrong things to children from early age!I always try to persuade everyone I know who is still using Windows to switch to Linux. Ordering free Ubuntu CDs in order to pass them to friends of mine. Buying a server machine within few days and going to use Linux on it as well! Even though Linux might not be widely used by end users, more than 80% of companies use it for their data servers, web servers etc. The use of money for Windows and paid applications is a total waste, open source applications are much better and are FREE to use FOREVER! I hate the woman who said this!Ken, I wish you luck.

[12/10/08 5:47 AM](#)

Anonymous said...

Hang da mofo!!!!

[12/10/08 5:55 AM](#)

[Bogdan](#) said...

Have you heard of football hooligans? They call themselves "ultras". Well, this teacher is a Microsoft "ultras" :).Reading this person's email, one gets to the pessimistic conclusion that Microsoft has achieved it's goal of perverting most of the people into thinking that the crap they charge a lot of money for is the only thing out there. So sad and so true...

[12/10/08 6:21 AM](#)

[Antagonist Prime](#) said...

This situation is more indicative of the sad state of the education system than anything else. The simple fact is that excluding masochists and saints the only people left teaching our children are generally not mentally equipped to do anything better.With the pay that is on offer and the working environment that is provided who would do the job but those who couldn't do anything else?

[12/10/08 6:27 AM](#)

logix said...

Ive been treated like this my entire school-life. Ive been suspended from school for things like starting a DOS prompt, browsing network neighborhood and programming a small BASIC program on a C64.It angers me SO much to see, 15 years later, that kids are still being criminalized due to shear teacher ignorance.

12/10/08 6:32 AM

Anonymous said...

I find this very sad on many levels. First that the teacher, who is supposed to be the mature one, reacted so harshly with no knowledge of the situation. Secondly, that they are truly under the belief that Windows is the only valid OS...

12/10/08 6:33 AM

Peter said...

Wow. Just, wow. That's one angry educator.I could understand "I don't have the time or inclination", but threats of getting law enforcement involved because you're handing out Linux disks? The only possible explanation is that she was having a *really* bad day, or the student handing out the disks was causing a disruption in her classroom. But she could have handled it a lot better...maybe as a "learning moment", where she could have taken some time to ask (and learn) about the student's experience with free software.I must admit to being very surprised at her statement that she had used Linux in school.Well, there's always one in every crowd. It's a shame that she didn't want to learn, though.

12/10/08 6:37 AM

Anonymous said...

"She may have "tried Linux in college"...but obviously she didn't inhale." Maybe the inhale should read swallow.

12/10/08 6:38 AM

flrichar said...

Karen is an interesting case. She should go and research how many CTO's know and recommend a mixed environment, and often hail the huge advantages of Linux and Open Source. I highly doubt there's any successful CTO on the planet who says "We're a one-vendor shop! I enjoy vendor lock-in!". That being said (and Karen can find many CTOs voicing their opinions on places like LinkedIn), does she not want any of her kids to have the possibility of growing up to become a CTO? Who's holding the kids back now?I also honestly hope Mrs Karen knows a history teacher or two. She is taking a stance against open software like those who took a stance against abolitionism. I'm sure someone in the course of history uttered the words "There's no such thing as a free slave" as well.

12/10/08 6:39 AM

Cong said...

Ken,I think I understand your feelings. As a Linux user and supporter I have a lot in common with you, both in viewpoints and in emotions.However, I'm a bit disappointed to see your reply to Karen's letter. You were given a chance to inform her of the truth about Linux, and even one to reasonably convince her that Linux is beneficial and important to the future generations. But sadly, you missed it.Linux need more friends, not more quarrels or flaming emails.I'm all for your passion and practice of bringing free software to the kids. You are doing a great job, unlike most of us who just sit here and whine (me included). However I for one really can't agree with your attitude shown in your letter.

12/10/08 6:41 AM

Anonymous said...

I very much doubt that Karen xxxxx is one of the popular teachers. My 11-year-old son uses Linux at home quite

happily. I assume that Karen xxxxx is quite proficient at using Windows and finds Linux too much of a task. In this situation it would be rather embarrassing to have children happily using Linux while she remains unable to do so. How mean of her.

12/10/08 6:44 AM

[Ryan Hayward](#) said...

Hello KenBest of Luck to you, I am a Systems Admin at a private Catholic school in Canada. We for the longest time had issue with software costs. When I came on board 2 years ago I found innovative ways to cut IT costs while still inhering to the moral, ethical and educational needs of our students. I teamed up with our local universities computer science department who built us an off shoot of their own network based distro (based on Gentoo). On top of that they donated 60 new computers though computers for schools which we use in our main high school lab and in the smaller primary lab. Our goal for next year is to move this system called Labnet http://www.slug.nf.net/past/IntroToLinuxLabnet/(this is a link to a slide show dealing with Linux and Labnet) to the classrooms. I thankfully had a very easy time converting the masses at the school, (when they saw the bottom line and how cheap it was) TOC is super important to me and the school. As of this moment we have a total of 160 computers 6 are Macs 4 are Windows Based and rest are Linux.Good Luck and God SpeedRyan HaywardSystem AdminSt. Bonaventure's College

12/10/08 6:46 AM

Anonymous said...

Bravo, excellent letter, and its been slashdotted

12/10/08 6:54 AM

Anonymous said...

Linux is free only if you never have to trouble shoot hardware or software installations. After that, the time it takes to find solutions rather quickly balloons into a time expenditure that offsets the cost of OS-10.x/XP.Great learning tool, for the computer club. But when the rest of the world has a deadline and much to do, we want the tools that we don't have to stop and tweak. FOSS simply does not have the tool bench that even XP/Office 2003 has. And that's a cheap platform, these days.Heck, even mac minis come in at ~ $550, with OS 10.x AND parallels already installed. So why should I spend the equivalent of that in time searching message boards for solutions?

12/10/08 6:56 AM

Anonymous said...

Ok, well yes the teacher is in the wrong and needs to be educated on free and OSS. however the reply you sent was not very good. It was condescending and confrontational. This is not the way to win new useres to oss.

12/10/08 7:01 AM

[Solitaire](#) said...

Guess the old addage is true..."Those who can't, Teach!"

12/10/08 7:06 AM

Dave said...

@ Anonymous"Linux is free only if you never have to trouble shoot hardware or software installations."Nice troll. Not welcome here though, I suspect. Try looking up commercial use of Linux. If any of what you said was remotely true, IBM wouldn't be investing millions in Linux technologies, let alone the various other large corsp and national governments making the switch.On the main topic, it would be nice if more people this ignorant wrote to the people they accuse of distributing illegal software so that they could be corrected.That she is a teacher, a teacher of computer skills, and holds these opinions is unbelievable.

[Simon Butcher](#) said...

Here here, well done!I've long believed that Linux in the hands of kids who are interested in IT (and in particular software engineering) is an excellent thing. Any *nix platform will ultimately get them closer to the hardware and therefore a much richer understanding of how things work "behind the screens".Sadly, Karen's letter is not a surprise to me at all; in my experience truly well-informed teachers on any subject in any education system are few and far between. If education was given more interest financially, they could probably weed out these idiots as improved salaries and working conditions encouraged more people to become teachers.

[Oberon-](#) said...

As a teacher myself, I would like to clear a few items up.My union has never said word one about operating systems. I run Linux when I can, and Windows when I must (to use district mandated grading software, for example), and it's never been so much as suggested that I should do otherwise. The union has little to do with me beyond coercing my dues and negotiating my contracts, and with respect to contracts, it's the local union that handles that, not the NEA.One sample does not a profession make. To tar us all with the same brush used to tar this benighted soul does the *many* intelligent, dedicated, knowledgeable, committed, caring, compassionate, and open-minded teachers (of any age or generation) a terrible disservice.I doubt I am the only teacher who gives away CDs with free and open source software to my many students who may have a Windows computer, but cannot afford Microsoft Office or other proprietary software. I talk to interested students about Linux and show them my laptop running Linux when time and opportunity permit. I am not a technology teacher; I teach drama and English.Many are quick to condemn educational institutions and teachers categorically when it is not the categories that are at fault, but individual examples within those categories. There are great and mediocre and awful schools, and great and mediocre and awful teachers. All labor under onerous and often draconian restrictions that actively inhibit their ability to deliver meaningful and engaging instruction.This teacher is *wrong*, but that does not make all teachers wrong. This teacher is foolish, but that does not make all teachers foolish. Many (most, at the school I currently teach at) are subversive; we seek to teach kids *how* to think, and not *what* to think at all. Many want to equip kids to be successful as themselves, and not as corporate drones or members of the State.I began running Linux with SLS 0.68 (or something like that; it's been a while, and I no longer remember the version--it was a *massive* stack of 3-1/2 inch floppies, at any rate). I've found many reasons to stick with it as it has evolved from a novelty of more use as a laboratory experiment than as a utility into the polished, usable, capable operating environment it provides today. And like I said, I'm *not* a technology teacher. I run into more resistance from my site's IT personnel than anyone else, but that's because it represents additional work for them; they already *know* Microsoft product, you see. I understand their perspective... can you?

Anonymous said...

Having worked for state universities for many years, now in the private sector. Such an uninformed, bigoted, arrogant stance still astonishes me. Most state universities, at least in the 3 states I work with use a large quantity of open source software, including linux, and have since even before linux came out. Education budgets being what they have been for 20+ years forced that reliance, we freely modified GPL'd source code for our own needs and have saved millions of dollars, along with thousands of banks, financial institutions, manufacturers, ISP's, and anyone else using 'illegal' free, open source software. Such ignorance needs to be rewarded with a pink slip, and throw that salary down the same rat hole with M$ crapware.

Anonymous said...

Ken,Linux runs routers, access points, network-attached storage, set-top boxes, et al. All such devices are currently present at electronics retailers and network operators everywhere. I'll tell Karen xxxxxxxxx as a practicing engineer that Linux use is pervasive in the embedded industry. Mentioning that Google runs Linux might also get her attention.Education should expose students to multiple career options. Office droids running

Word and Excel won't produce any green industrial revolution.

[Martin](#) said...

My goodness, and Linux users are accused of having religious zeal..."No software is free and spreading that misconception is harmful."... Riiiiiight. Spoken like a True Believer. The sentence that really got to me was the last one: "I am sure if you contacted Microsoft, they would be more than happy to supply you with copies of an older verison of Windows and that way, your computers would actually be of service to those receiving them...The way that's worded reminds me of every time a Christian evangelist has told me "If you accept Jesus into your heart, ____ will happen". The whole letter reeks of the same "Well I sure don't know about free software but the almighty Microsoft don't do it so it must lead to communism and fornication" attitude. It's just a shame the FOSS model doesn't provide itself much of a public education budget :P

Anonymous said...

Please tell me she's not at Murchison.

Donald said...

This must be one of my teachers from the 60's and 70's. Younger teachers would, no doubt, be more informed of new technologies and developments in software used in education. I'm surprised she got past the domination of Apple software and hardware that lasted so long before it gave way to an even more dominating company, Microsoft. If Windows was available on a live CD and if PCs back then had more than a floppy drive and 10 MB hard disk, would she have said the same about a demonstration of Microsoft Windows? Most likely she would have, from her ignorant stance against newer and better things.People are resistant to change, and that is in Microsoft's favor, I'm afraid. I believe things are slowly shifting to open source and free software, and we'll see an increasing use of various Linux distributions. That may be the one thing that holds Linux back from taking over the world by storm like Windows did years ago--too many different distros out there that just confuse things.When you have that discussion with the teacher and administrator over this matter, I do hope that you explain how the companies that distribute their own version of Linux can and do make some profit by offering paid support for businesses. For those who don't have paid support, like many Windows users, there are always other means of "fixing" problems when they happen. I am learning how to do things beyond the basics in Ubuntu Linux and, if it weren't a "Windows world," I would only use Linux. Unfortunately, it is difficult to rely solely on Linux right now, so I set my laptop up to dual-boot to either Windows or Linux, much like many in the MAC world do with Windows or Linux (or both).Best wishes for your discussion at the school. Maybe you can convince Karen it's time to retire if she is as old as she seems from her stand against changes for the good.Don

Anonymous said...

I suppose asking you to be more professional in your reply would be met with deaf ears, but please, pretty please, could you actually learn how to use ellipses?

Anonymous said...

What a wonderfully funny post. I honestly do hope this is not real and that Karen is a figment of Ken's imagination.[placing tongue in cheek]After reading this part of the letter: "...Mr. Starks, I along with many others tried Linux during college and I assure you,..." Maybe someone slipped Karen some Linux at a college party and she had a bad experience. This is just conjecture on my part. There are so many possibilities that may have led Karen to fear freedom that we should not condemn Karen. We must condemn those that have made Karen the way she is. It is the root cause that we must correct. Not the symptom.[removing tongue from cheek]I also wait, with

great excitement and anticipation, any information Ken will share of his upcoming conference with the school.

Torrey said...

Excellent reply. Unfortunately, the ignorance which you pointed it exists and is more common in schools than one thinks. I should know - I'm the IT director of a school district. About two years ago, I started advocating for using OpenOffice on our school computers instead of paying Microsoft to upgrade to the latest version of Office. I spelled out all the advantages of doing so to the administration - not just the cost savings, but also that we would be allowed to give out copies of the software to our students, so that they wouldn't need to have to pay Microsoft to work on their homework at home. Also I demonstrated extensively that OpenOffice was as capable of a product as Microsoft Office. My biggest resistance came from the teachers, who mostly rejected the software, even though in my opinion it is better than the old version of MS office we are using. Their arguments? "Since it is free it can't be as good" and "The rest of world uses Microsoft Office, so we should be teaching our students that". I have a problem with those arguments. In my mind, you shouldn't be teaching a program, you should be teaching a concept. A student using OpenOffice at school is not going to be unable to use another Office program in the future. The minor differences in the program (menu layouts, etc) are not a big deal. A student who knows the concepts can use either program - they do the same thing! So since the teachers began complaining to their administrators, who were initially willing to give it a try, the administrators got tired of hearing the complaints and began to buy the BS argument that OpenOffice was somehow inferior.There was some success - the Elementary school is mostly OpenOffice and I've done training sessions there for the teachers, where I demonstrated some of the potentials of the program and won over most. But the High school has been much more resistant. So I've had to mostly give up on my quest - I can't fly in the faces of my bosses.I'm just deeply saddened by the ineptitude of some of the teachers, who can't even come up with a sound argument, who refuse to even try the program before dismissing it - and yet they ask for Office 2007. Refusing to learn another program unless it's the latest from Microsoft. It's sad. These are the people that are teaching our kids.

Anonymous said...

I'm sorry. Teachers tend to be ignorant, but this is just too unbelievable.My wife is the technology teacher at a school and she doesn't know too much about computers. However the little she does know puts her way above the other teachers.However, although I know how little teachers know about technology, I still can't believe this came verbatim from Karen.

JASG said...

I am the program director at a college, and would happily hand out linux disks myself. If someone doesn't like that, well my boss is the dean. :-)Got OS?

jman6495 said...

It;'s A Good Thing I Only Have THe First Name Or I Would Track Her Down AndMake Her Watch Windows Vista Boot 1000 Times With 512 MB Of Ram!She Is Sooooo Closed MindedWIndows Will Give Out There Software Like That ...Hmmmmm.....LISTEN NO THE FOLLOWING VIDEO FIRST THEN USE THE WORDS HERE INSTEADhttp://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvanJYOGlusTher'le be Lots Of Happy Users Wait And SeeNo Costs To Pay For WIndows Wait And SeeThe Whitehouse Has Been AlertedAll The Streets have Been DesertedWhen MS Finaly GIve Us WIndows FreeYeah The World Will Be A Better Place To BeIce Caps Will Stop Melting InstantlyNo More Famine Ridden PlacesNo More Flies On Childrens FacesWhen MS Finaly GIve Us WIndows FreeWe Will Finaly Get A Cure For Cancer Wait And See!They'le Get Some Music Shows On MTVNew Orlands Will Get ResidentsWe'le get a Decent President (SPEAKING OF BUSH)When MS Finaly GIve Us WIndows FreeNorth Koria Will Apise UsLinsey Lohain Will Find JesusWhen MS Finaly GIve Us WIndows FreeDAMN BLUE SCREEN OF DEATHAl-Kaida Will Lay Down There GUns And FleeYour Wii-mote Wont Destroy Your new

TVPhilladelphia Car With Gas Wont Take A Suitcase Full Of CashWhen MS Finaly GIve Us WIndows FreeYou'le Never Have To Shannel Hop To See Rosie..Fut Folks Will Stop Wearing Baby Tee'sSenators Wont Make Duty CallsIn Dirty Airport bathroom StallsWhen MS Finaly GIve Us WIndows FreeYeah The World Will Be A Better Place To BeNo Costs To Pay For WIndows Wait And SeeMicheal Dick Will Stop Abusin'Barry Bonz Will Stop The Juisin'No Costs To Pay For WIndows Wait And SeeNo More Blogging From Wil WheatonNo Jack Thompson Will Get BeatonWhen MS Finaly GIve Us WIndows FreeCOPYRIGHT JORDAN MARIS

12/10/08 8:15 AM

Will Higgins said...

I lol'd a bit. "I tried Linux in college" needs to be on a t-shirt. Also, I think you should post her full name, details, etc. No harm can come from it. She's a teacher who is obviously very willing to express herself publicly to you.

12/10/08 8:15 AM

Jon S Olsen said...

I just...wow. dude. I mean *wow*. Come on. This just has to be fake. This is *fake*!Fake, right?Please?

12/10/08 8:19 AM

Brian said...

This is astounding! Keep up the education Penguin fans!!

12/10/08 8:19 AM

Chase Ingersoll said...

I am having flashbacks to my ignorant high school principal that told me I could not take classes at the local Junior College during my senior year and poked me in the chest to emphasize his point. So I applied as an early entry to a four year school and was not longer on his plantation roles.Please post this "Karen"'s full name and school information so that I can call her from my Linux Netbook (free Ubuntu Operating System), via my Grand Central number(free long distance courtesy of Google), using a free wireless connection....well that won't really be free until the low spectrum bandwidth comes on-line...but you get the point.http://a2iq.blogspot.com

12/10/08 8:23 AM

yaxzone said...

This is simply shocking! What a crazy teacher.Anybody knows if the spending records of any school district is accessible to the general public? It would be interesting to find out how much in fact AISD actually spends in software licensing with Microsoft. That money could be put to a better use obviously.

12/10/08 8:23 AM

Anonymous said...

Post his name. We are Legion.

12/10/08 8:23 AM

N8 said...

I love how she makes it sound like linux was like smoking pot in college...Lemme guess "I did not Install"

12/10/08 8:32 AM

Anonymous said...

I sent the following note to the school district in question: I read about this story (http://linuxlock.blogspot.com/2008/12/linux-stop-holding-our-kids-back.html) on Slashdot, a widely read

national technology blog. I must say that I found the misinformation presented by your teacher and actions taken by her to be appalling. Please take the appropriate actions to apologize to the student and his classmates, and to educate your staff so that such an action does not occur again. Linux is "free" as in open source and in most distributions, including the one in question here, "free" as in free to use at no cost. It may interest the teacher in question that the majority of websites around the world run over the free Apache web hosting software that runs over free Linux. My own website, which I pay a commercial company to host, runs over Apache and Linux (that is the software the company chooses to offer, and by doing so, they offer a lower cost than their commercial windows based alternatives). A vast number of websites use php, a free programming language, and perl and python are also free. MySQL (free and open source again), is the database with the largest number of installations in the world. There is a clear case to be made for commercial software, and for Windows, but claiming the alternatives are ilegal is just mind-boggling. Claiming that Windows is the world is also untrue. Windows rules the desktop, but not the server world or web hosting world. Please take the appropriate action to prevent such an unfortunate event from occurring again.

12/10/08 8:33 AM

Anonymous said...

This is the page for the Arlington Independent School District. There is a "Karen" listed along with a phone number, not sure if it's the right karen. http://www.aisd.net/administration/admin.aspx

12/10/08 8:35 AM

Anonymous said...

Someone seems to have traced a possible victim. I am afraid Ken will be into a LOT of trouble.Does anyone here actually understand how extremely bad this can turn out to become for the Project?Winter

12/10/08 8:41 AM

Anonymous said...

I just posted a link to a publicly available page that can be found by searching google. I just saved some people a little bit of typing that's all.

12/10/08 8:42 AM

Anonymous said...

"I just posted a link to a publicly available page that can be found by searching google. I just saved some people a little bit of typing that's all."You just showed you are even more ignorant than the person you just subjected to massive online harassment.Harassment that will be blamed on Ken.Personally, I would block your IP number from any site I can.Winter

12/10/08 8:45 AM

Mike said...

To swiftnetcomputers:suure, Obama wants education improved. After all, that's why he did absolutely nothing for education in the IL state senate, why he did absolutely nothing for it as a US Senator, and why the majority of those who voted for him make the populace of *Idiocracy* look smart by comparison.Obama is no aid to those who truly want to see our education system reformed.

12/10/08 8:53 AM

jasonlikestacos said...

Give her what she deserves.. our entire office just had a good chuckle at her expense. It feels surreal, like a really big joke.Let us know how it turns out after the Holiday, I for one am anxious to know. ps LOL @ soft strokes to your hair

Anonymous said...

This is NONE SENSE!

DrYak said...

About the omni presence of Windows and MS-Office being an argument to prefer teaching computer skills on Microsoft product, I want to share this personal experience :I happen to have gone through rather long studies at my universities (I graduated in Medecine, and then came back again for a second cursus for reseach in the biomedical field).Over the course of the years, I've witnessed several major overhaul of Microsoft products, and our university has gone through several version of the software.Several times this came with lots problems : the move from Office 95 to Office 98 was a real disaster because of completely incompatible file formats. Recent introduction of yet another set of XML-based incompatible formats. A new stripe-based interface which absolutely doesn't look like the previous one. And lots of other small migration problems.This is a clear demonstration that the world of computing is a really fast moving one. As I have longer studies I've witnessed more change during mine and thus am a little bit more used to them. But each average student is going to encounter at least one during his/her studies. The MS-Office he/she used when starting the studies at the university won't be the same as the one later on in the active professional life.Having blindingly memorised each short-cut, learned each of the idiosyncrasies, working with the software as if it was a spinal reflexe... all this won't help. At all. It won't necessarily be transferable to the next complete rewrite of the tool set.The only skills which are definitely useful as the generic ones : the ability to use *a* word processing software, whichever it is. The latest peculiarities of the software version-du-jour will be learned on the fly when need arises.And I am speaking about university.Karen is a teacher at *a school*. The kids she teaches to are 15 to 20 years away from active professional life. Given the speed of new development in the computer world, that's almost an eternity. Company have risen and fallen in that interval, as bubbles brusted by.15 to 20 years ago we weren't using the same tools at all. Microsoft's word processor wasn't even a major player in the field. And none of them looked even remotely to the current crop : text console-based interface were the norm. Only generic skills acquired back then are still useful.After 15 to 20 years, the professional world that today's kids are going to encounter simply won't look like at all like anything that we can even currently imagine.In that context, whatever is currently the most frequently found office suite doesn't play any significant role in the choice of which software tools to teach the kids on.The only significant factors are the licensing cost, the ability to run on hardware that the school currently has without needing expensive hardware upgrade, the ability to run on old donated hardware that the school may receive, and (most important factor in free software) the ability to give away free copies to kids who might be interested in trying the same stuff at home.School's job is not to prepare the kids for the professional world of *today*. But for the world of *tomorrow*. As there's no way we can currently determine what *tomorrow* will be made of, school need to teach being open.---And besides as pointed by other commenters : Outside the world of desktops & laptops, linux is pretty much already everywhere. Karen is probably already running Linux on a couple of appliances (cable/DSL router, TiVo, etc.) without even noticing, and none of these gadget is illegal.---I would really be interested to know how the meeting with the principal went.

David said...

I'm hopeful that the teacher (at least in the portion you posted) doesn't seem so much maligned as naive. If she doesn't know Linux exists, is it wrong of her to believe all OS's should be paid for? If she's never heard of it, how can she know what stand it's trying to take?

MCat said...

It's a shame that she's in charge of a group of children, able to show them how to think about new ideas or problems...and she's just stupid and irrational and clearly ignorant. She should not be allowed to reproduce, much less have a whole classroom worth of them.It saddens me that she didn't take this opportunity to show the kids

how to do simple investigation and instead took it upon herself to look like a complete idiot to the child involved and by extension to his friends.

Cherveny (Bruce Orcutt) said...

Kind of reminds me of my early college days. 90% of the classes were taught on a IBM mainframe running VM (which was a nice teaching platform actually in it's day.) There were a few classes in UNIX. When I learned about UNIX and C, I spent most of my free coding time coding C on UNIX. A couple of the teachers noticed this and said I was "wasting my time" pursuing UNIX, as it would never last, and if I wanted to get jobs, I should stick to the mainframe, and PASCAL, FORTRAN, and COBOL.

Hrafnkell said...

Very sad to see things like this. Our kids should be taught to use their brains, not mindlessly follow doctrine (of whatever kind). I want my children to be able to reason, to examine a problem and arrive at their own conclusions (and I'm happy to say they can). This teacher needs to look at other career possibilities.

Anonymous said...

I'd be curious to see what the teacher's reply to Ken's comments might be.

Martin said...

Mr. Starks,This was a pristine moment to educate someone about Linux and Free Software. I unfortunately am disappointed with your approach. Personal attacks, such as the snide bit about her union, only serve to keep us as an "invite only," "nerd," "you have to be in the know" community. Additionally, show boating afterwards on your blog does not help this image.Trust me, I care about free software. I'm not being an MS apologist. I develop patches and donate to many projects (including Amarok and Rockbox). In fact, I'm submitting this on an Ubuntu box using Firefox.

Sandrat said...

You've missed a valuable opportunity. By being arrogant and rude in reply to this teacher, you have ensured that she'll be alienated and dead-set against anything having to do with the Linux community. Remember, first impressions are lasting impressions. Since her first impression of Linux was clearly dissatisfying, this could have been an opportunity to show that, like many a disruptive child many years later has done, Linux has grown to be a very strong contributor to the global community.Instead, you've shown that the disruptive child is still disruptive (from her point of view).

harshadsharma said...

I wonder if your backspace key is worn out by now, trying to keep the response nice and friendly.The schools are turning kids into good 'employee material' - packaged people who don't ask questions, who don't try to use their head but do as are told to do. This Linux thing breaks that happy scene, it makes the kids think for themselves and learn on their own - do we think actual creative people can be herded and swapped like hot-swap HDDs in companies? /sarcasmKeep up the good fight, we're in this together!Now where's my stash of blank CDs that need some burnin'? :-D

Fred Blotnic said...

I'm a Linux advocate as well in much smaller circles and I find this kind of small mindedness on a regular basis. I work in a smaller IT shop and found such opposition to Linux. I currently find two things your teacher pen pal mentions and you make rebuttal to. first is that linux is inferior because when they tried it years ago it didn't do what they wanted it to do. second is that they are being told by the big corporation that there is no such thing as "free" software. On the first point I have been using linux on and off for almost ten years but no means an expert. However I find that as time goes on as you mentioned it gets better and better. On the second point I have noticed that Microsoft spends time and money to get the word out that everything Linux is built on has been Microsoft's Intellectual Property and that Linux infringes on freeloads off of those accomplishments. In Actuality most if not all of those infringements are actually ideas built on from previous free software and small time developers for which the work was stolen and patented or bought. Make sure to send along reading materials for both the superintendent, principal and that aforementioned teacher of what free software is and can be before you attend the meeting. Where does this teacher get off also stating that your actions might be illegal. Her attempts to paint you in the criminal light are defamation and libelous. I hope you post more about what happens on this after you attend this meeting.

12/10/08 9:19 AM

Proteus71 said...

I will purchase a copy of Ubuntu via Amazon and have it sent to this school if requested by either Karen or the principal.

12/10/08 9:20 AM

Anonymous said...

I encountered this kind of thinking when I was in school 10 years ago. We tried Linux (SuSE 5.3 I think it was then) and met stiff opposition from the CS instructor to the possibility of a free OS being anything better than Windows had to offer. Oddly enough 3 years later, at a Community College I met the same, though smaller opposition from my CS instructor/college advisor (same teacher, funny how that worked out).As the IT admin at the local division of a publicly traded company, I still get the same opposition to OSS.

12/10/08 9:21 AM

Malk said...

you need to get the superintendent to assign a disciplinary homework assignment to this teacher.15 page paper on the history and merits of Linux, and what potential it has for education and freedom. Make it due in 2-3 weeks, CCed to you, the Superintended and all of the other teachers in that district.

12/10/08 9:27 AM

Anonymous said...

Do you find any irony in the fact that you use a closed platform (blogspot) in your advocacy of F/LOSS?

12/10/08 9:29 AM

jerryleecooper said...

You are kidding arent you ?Are you saying that this linux can run on a computer without windows underneath it, at all ? As in, without a boot disk, without any drivers, and without any services ?That sounds preposterous to me.If it were true (and I doubt it), then companies would be selling computers without a windows. This clearly is not happening, so there must be some error in your calculations. I hope you realise that windows is more than just Office ? Its a whole system that runs the computer from start to finish, and that is a very difficult thing to acheive. A lot of people dont realise this.Microsoft just spent $9 billion and many years to create Vista, so it does not sound reasonable that some new alternative could just snap into existence overnight like that. It would take billions of dollars and a massive effort to achieve. IBM tried, and spent a huge amount of money developing OS/2 but could

never keep up with Windows. Apple tried to create their own system for years, but finally gave up recently and moved to Intel and Microsoft.Its just not possible that a freeware like the Linux could be extended to the point where it runs the entire computer fron start to finish, without using some of the more critical parts of windows. Not possible.I think you need to re-examine your assumptions.

12/10/08 9:31 AM

Jehster said...

She says "I along with many others tried Linux during college" as if she were a politician talking about pot. That aside, she's pretty clearly documented her ignorance on the subject. I find it truly sad that she's been granted the position of teaching impressionable youth. It's high time this particular teacher admits she needs to learn a little something before spouting off on a subject she clearly has no clue about.

12/10/08 9:31 AM

Ken said...

The real joke here is that the teacher believes that Microsoft will be happy to provide older versions of the Windows operating system to people who do not have the resources to buy the current version. In fact, Microsoft is its own largest competitor. When a particular version does what a customer wants, it can be difficult to get them to shell out for the next version. The idea that Microsoft would freely let people use the older versions while their bottom line and existence depends on people buying the newest version is laughable at best.Some say you were too condescending in your reply. Given the personality you were dealing with, you were too kind. I've dealt with these kind as well, solid bone from ear to ear and you couldn't get their attention using a well placed hit with a two by four.Of course, nowadays you have to leave the two by four behind but let 'em have it both barrels with all the logic and facts you can muster. It likely won't do any good but it has to be tried.

12/10/08 9:34 AM

Anonymous said...

Some people are ubelievable. This moron should basically be relegated to teaching ABC to first graders only as she is clearly incapable of any more than that. Lets hope she is taken out of here current position before she causes any more harm by spreading such useless ignorance.

12/10/08 9:39 AM

Shane said...

Fair play, you didn't lower yourself to her level, and qut your point across well and measured.Linux FTW!

12/10/08 9:41 AM

Ken (not Stark) said...

Sorry, that last comment was from a different Ken, not Ken Starks.And I certainly hope that Jerryleecooper is just having some fun with all this or we have more real problems to deal with. :-(

12/10/08 9:41 AM

Anonymous said...

You can see why school systems are so far behind today's technology and knowledge. Yes the system may change, but keep the same ignorant teachers in place and the systems changes never reach the children. I mean if I added a new function to my business and the prior employee knew nothing about it, I would never allow said employee to teach on that new function. I would bring in someone who knew what they were talking about

12/10/08 9:42 AM

Anonymous said...

This teacher is not the savviest person around. But I think your response is needlessly insulting. Perhaps a little

more sweet-talk might sell your point better?Your rhetoric isn't going to gain a convert or win any battles here.

Karin said...

This poor woman! I hope she has plenty of friends and/or married. She will need a shoulder to lay upon. Unless she is adamantly proud of her actions. In which case, we all need to fear that she and others like her have a stake in our communities mores. That is truly scary, indeed!

Anonymous said...

I certainly hope jerryleecooper was joking around... jeesh!

Fred Blotnic said...

jerryleecooper is a known anti-linux troll btw

Entropy said...

Sometimes, I just wonder if it's all for the press time they get. If people like this really do exist and this email is absolutely authenticate, the teacher should be stripped of a teaching license. This disgusts me.I thought I'd seen it bad in school where the IT program consisted of keyboarding skills...Just wow...

Anonymous said...

hahahaha... jerryleecooper.com Error establishing a database connection

bitswapper said...

The misdeed here is chiefly, *not* that someone is ignorant with respect to the current IT industry (which Karen is), because she is a teacher, not an IT professional, and can hardly be expected to be knowledgeable about software. The chief mistake on Karen's part is assuming she knows something which she doesn't. That's a common human failing.My advice is not to corner her logically with the fact that much of the best software is free and much if not most of of the "world side web" runs on free software, and that the web got its start on OSS software long before the Internet was even a twinkling in Microsoft's eye. Rather, take a higher road and gently enlighten her. Let her know that over half of the websites on the internet run on 'free' software. Let her know that much software is in fact free, and it works quite well.And ask for your son's disks back. She kind of has that one coming.

Anonymous said...

This wouldn't be Karen Greathouse, would it be?(512) 841-6750http://www.austin.isd.tenet.edu/schools/staff.phtml?teacher=667Searched for AISD on google, looked for Karen with 9 letter in last name that's in middle school. ^-^If I wasn't so moral bound, and unsure of if this was her...I'd have to give a call and have a few words....

nate said...

As ignorant as she is, I think in the best balance I need to criticize you're reply to her. She was concerned that you

were some misguided robin hood thief. Explaining who created Linux from the ground up, and that it's a free-as-in-freedom OS from the ground up would have been useful to add to your semi-insulting reply (keep the semi-insults, they added flavor). Otherwise, WTF was she thinking? taking property for no good reason (even her misguided reason wasn't good).

12/10/08 9:54 AM

A. Bear said...

Ken, et al,Assuming that AISD stands for *Austin* (as opposed to Abilene) Independent School District, then "teacher" Karen might (if she were curious or capable of it) search the web and learn that AISD's own web pages are hosted on a LINUX system. See URL: http://www.austinisd.org/inside/technology/webteam/guidelines03.phtmlRight in the first complete sentence, it says, "While you may be doing your web page development on either a PC or Mac computer platform, your web pages will be accessed from a Linux server."I hope she turns her stellar legal/educational talents toward reforming her district's IT department and saves them from such LINUX folly. Of course, the fact that the webserver is functioning gives lie to her assertion that LINUX doesn't work.Keep fighting the good fight!Best regards,Larry

12/10/08 9:55 AM

Anonymous said...

You've been trained well.enough said. this line hits the point and any other stuff you wrote will bypass her brain anyway...

12/10/08 9:56 AM

Chad said...

First off, thank you for this post. I look forward to how it plays out.Second, wow! I'm appaulled at how uneducated the educators are in this matter. They should be on the "breaking edge" so to speak; leading us in knowledge. The degeneration of mankind continues.

12/10/08 9:58 AM

Anonymous said...

Well done! I don't believe that your response was too insulting; her actions as an educator were absolutely abhorrent. If she were a random stranger, yes that would be taking it too far, but for someone who is meant to guide children and teach them... her level of ignorance and crass is inexcusable.

12/10/08 10:01 AM

Anonymous said...

Also, she can't spell conference. C-O-N-F-E-R-E-N-C-E.pfft. a teacher...

12/10/08 10:02 AM

Bo said...

Still wondering why you took the opportunity to indict the teachers' union in this. Let's be responsible in our support of free and open software.Distracting folks from the real issues, only detracts from our message. Our software really is free and freeing. And as important, it's (our software) safe and of the highest quality. Our ideals support community over profit without denying the right to profit earned honestly and ethically.

12/10/08 10:04 AM

Anonymous said...

The teacher might have been ignorant, but your reply is far more damaging than anything she could have said. Thanks for giving Linux a bad name.

cmwalden said...

I think it's interesting that everyone rails against Ken's righteous indignation but seems to ignore the attitude of the teacher here. She confiscated this boys property out of ignorance. She lambasted him and told him that he was breaking the law-- which is frightening and humiliating. She attacked Ken and his goals and threatened him with legal prosecution.In the film and play 1776, John Adams said "It's a revolution, dammit, we're going to have to offend somebody!" I agree that it's good to take the high ground, but our willingness to do so has done nothing but have our cause trampled. I think we have to stand up from time to time and hand it back to them.Linux offers an *unprecedented* opportunity to students to learn how computers work. Yes, there are Office Suites and things like that. But there is also networking, scripting, programming, security, web hosting, databases and every other important and necessary computing concept that these kids are going to need to be leaders in the future of technology. We *should* be angry as we demand that our kids not be left behind until they have to scramble in college for these concepts. We *should* be angry that our kids are exposed to such obvious bias at the expense of their education.I have a great deal of respect for teachers... but they are service providers to someone who is precious in my life. As service providers they should be working with us, not against us, to find the best ways to prepare these children for their future.We must not be afraid to be open with them about their mistakes and to use the channels provided by the system to correct them. The people who work to block Linux from the education system count on our lowly state and our instinct to back down. Do you want your kids learning on Linux, or don't you?

Anonymous said...

2 things that strike me, 1 is her insistence, not on Microsoft, but on paid software. That there is no such thing as free software surely she has installed firefox or some other freeware program. That leads me to the next. She has to be lying to your face. There is no way that she used Linux and college and escaped knowing its free nature. Either she thought what she was doing was wrong, and did it anyway, or she is just flat out lying to look good. Either way that seems scary.Anyway hopefully there is a followup.

zero said...

I find this quite possible.All you people saying this is a lie, you're fucking idiots. There's really no reason not to believe this. If you don't, don't post. Fuck you. Helios: keep up the good fight.

Anonymous said...

After attempting to explain how the web works to a few Windows developers not in that line of work, I am further convinced that Windows is for people who just don't know any better.

JennyCide said...

"I along with many others tried Linux during college"...but I didn't inhale?

Rodrigo said...

First, i want to congratulate you for the way that you conduced the email tha you received.Second, i think that this teacher is a little "blind" by her work, like you say. Shes talking by her heart and not by brain (i think that we agree that today this posture is common). Third, please, if this meet realize, keep telling us what happen. Thanks :)

Anonymous said...

OMG, jerryleecooper above!... Go and buy a completely blank hard drive, and get a copy of Ubuntu, and you'll find out how wrong you are.I really find it hard to believe that there are people out there still who can't accept that Linux is a complete ground up OS that competes with Windows and MAC without advertising and against this kind of ignorance. Yes, it has it's weaknesses in different areas than Windows, just as MAC does... but it's a force to be reconed with

12/10/08 10:13 AM

Anonymous said...

"You should be ashamed of yourself""You are about to have your eyes opened""you have no idea the slavery you work under...but you don't know any better""A teacher who cared about her students would do that""a person who is this uninformed and still holds a position of authority and learnedness over our children"What exactly were you hoping to accomplish in your response? To convince the teacher in question that she is a fool and a slave to her union who doesn't care about her students? How does that benefit OSS, the teacher, the child, or yourself?Did you ever consider that it might be better to simply point out that no laws were broken, where she was mistaken, and offer to speak to the class about OSS in order that everyone learn from this experience?

12/10/08 10:14 AM

whenpoliticswasyoung said...

To all the people here who so badly want to track this one person down and harangue her:Why not go find someone else you know and teach them about Linux instead?

12/10/08 10:19 AM

personb said...

I hope that teacher read the reply.Over here in Scotland, at my school, so-called `I.C.T` is mostly taught by Business Education teachers. They feel the need to spend a WHOLE TEACHING BLOCK on MS PAINT! I finished their booklet in 65 minutes. Their 'Word Processing' is actually Microsoft Word, and there was not one mention of styles. Ooph..

12/10/08 10:23 AM

arcsis said...

Absolutely brilliant response! I know she's not the only one that feels that way, but props to the kid that knew better!I hope that she was just hopelessly uninformed, and believes in the only thing she knows. Wow...just wow.

12/10/08 10:25 AM

Anonymous said...

As a local teacher's union president here in NY, I want to let everyone know that 'Karen' does not represent the views of all teachers. Or probably even the majority. I agree whole-heartedly with the idea of free and open software, that would free my district to spend taxpayer money more effectively. Or, gasp, even lower taxes. Remember, high property taxes create a tension between educators and the community that works against or goal, to help kids learn. I would love to meet this young man, I'm sure he is one of Karen's best students...

12/10/08 10:28 AM

héctor said...

Did you finally meet? how did this thing end? did the kid get his disks back?

12/10/08 10:31 AM

héctor said...

Did you finally meet? how did this thing end? did the kid get his disks back?

Shy said...

Ken, You are probably the greatest of Linux fighters. If nothing else, you are not afraid to speak your mind, without sugar coating it to make it more appeasable. Also, I wanted to bring up a certain article which may be of interest to this Karen. Perhaps you should ask her to read these 2 stories. I should mention that both these stories are from a solid source, 'Slashdot.org', and are outlined in further detail via the link at the end of each article:"Online market share of the dominant Windows operating system has taken its biggest monthly fall in years to drop below 90%, according to Net Applications Inc. Computerworld reports that Microsoft's flagship product has been steadily losing ground to Mac OS X and Linux, and is at its lowest ebb in the market since 1995. 'Mac OS X... [ended] the month at 8.9%. November was the third month running that Apple's operating system remained above 8%.' The stats show that while some customers are 'upgrading' from XP to Vista, many are jumping ship to Apple, while Linux is also steadily gaining ground. A Net Applications executive suggests the slide may be caused by many of the same factors that caused the fall in Internet Explorer use. 'The more home users who are online, using Macs and Firefox and Safari, the more those shares go up,' he said. November has more weekend days, as well Thanksgiving in the US, a result that emphasizes the importance of corporate sales to Microsoft." - http://tech.slashdot.org/article.pl?sid=08/12/02/1857253"InfoWorld's Randall Kennedy examines Windows 7 from the kernel up, subjecting the 'pre-beta' to a battery of benchmarks to find any signs that the OS will be faster, more responsive, and less resource-intensive than the bloated Vista, as Microsoft suggests. Identical thread counts at the kernel level suggest to Kennedy that Windows 7 is a 'minor point-type of release, as opposed to a major update or rewrite.' Memory footprint for the kernel proved eerily similar to that of Vista as well. 'In fact, as I worked my way through the process lists of the two operating systems, I was struck by the extent of the similarities,' Kennedy writes, before discussing the results of a nine-way workload test scenario he performed on Windows 7 — the same scenario that showed Vista was 40 percent slower than Windows XP. 'In a nutshell, Windows 7 M3 is a virtual twin of Vista when it comes to performance,' Kennedy concludes. 'In other words, Microsoft's follow-up to its most unpopular OS release since Windows Me threatens to deliver zero measurable performance benefits while introducing new and potentially crippling compatibility issues.'" - http://tech.slashdot.org/article.pl?sid=08/11/11/0110251

WebPageFX Team said...

I hope your server can handle this post going viral.Great insight, thanks.

Anonymous said...

http://www.austinisd.org/inside/directory/index.phtmlThere's an option to search by school, and there aren't many middle schools in Austin. Happy searching.

Mike said...

``**Mr. Starks, I along with many others tried Linux during college and I assure you, the claims you make are grossly over-stated and hinge on falsehoods.** "Are you sure you weren't trolled?

Anonymous said...

please inform richard stallman. .~.

desiintoronto.com said...

Hope her punishment is to upgrade from XP to Vista!!!

12/10/08 10:36 AM

Anonymous said...

Teachers have always been the biggest impediment of a good education. I have learned far more by reading in the library or doing field work than I ever did sitting in a classroom. Most teachers skim through a textbook and then assume they are an expert on the subject. They gloss over the parts they don't understand themselves and repetitively drill the students on what little the teacher does comprehend.Talk to a teacher sometime (as I must far too often) and you'll find that most believe themselves to be experts on nearly everything. There are some fine teachers out there, I've even met a few myself. But they're rarer than diamonds.

12/10/08 10:38 AM

Anonymous said...

If this is true, the only thing accomplished by your reply was to make yourself look like a jerk.Do you really think that teachers know and/or care about what corporations are funding the unions? They don't.If you've got a beef with the software in schools, take it up with the district administration. The teacher has very little power.The sad truth is that today's teachers are usually forced to teach the curriculum that is handed to them by the district.So, give teachers a break. They don't deserve your pompous attitude.

12/10/08 10:39 AM

Cheryl said...

Just a small caveat: I love a good M$ bash as much as anyone. But I wonder if this has more to do with the BSA, RIAA and having it drummed in at teacher conferences regarding the evil of downloaded software, legal ramifications, viruses, etc., than Microsoft. The fact that she doesn't think ANY software is free shows a real ignorance that goes beyond even Microsoft. She likely has only a basic knowledge of MS Office--just enough to do her job. I hope you can show her the error of her ways, but I won't be surprised if it goes in one ear and out the other. It's usually these ignorant types who abhor anyone outside the education bureaucracy lecturing THEM on anything.

12/10/08 10:43 AM

Eric said...

Hahaha beautiful retort. She got every bit of condescension handed right back to her in spades. And she deserved it. The last thing we need are teachers who feel they know everything. If anything we need teachers who are humbled by all that we know we don't know, not to mention all that we haven't imagined we don't know. I'm not sorry if her feelings were hurt. Sometimes you need to rattle cages to wake people up. An intelligent teacher might have taken 10 seconds to research (*gasp* Google to the rescue!) rather than open with punishment. They might have interacted with the students on a respectable, even field rather than acting as their lord and master. I've had teachers like her. She's an intellectual child who is afraid of losing her "authority". (One maintained obviously through fear and oppression... hmm sounds familiar here in the USA!) Grow up for all our sakes.

12/10/08 10:43 AM

Bluetouff said...

Did The police jailed those dangerous kids ?

12/10/08 10:44 AM

Anonymous said...

Open Source Operating Systems are coming right from hell. The devil wants to overtake our souls and systems! open your eyes!And don't believe this cute harmless looking 'penguin' logo. We all now Satan aka. Linux can have

many faces. I recently detected it's real ugly face - just take a look at the FreeBSD Beast.Shame on You

12/10/08 10:49 AM

Anonymous said...

I must say, you were a teensy little bit harsh on windows. I know several people who have learned quite a bit from using windows. (Yeah, well, alright, there are a lot MORE who have learned nothing using it, but still...)On the other hand, if this moron is actually teaching anything except for an art or cooking class, she really needs to be fired.

12/10/08 10:49 AM

Troy Tempest said...

All the schools my daughter has attended and all the universities I've taught at were predominantly Apple Shops. Your statements re: windows and education do not cohere with my experience.

12/10/08 10:54 AM

Zeffan said...

Anyone who has worked very much with teachers realizes that once they're out teaching, most of them actively avoid learning anything new. After all - they already know it all!Teachers make the worst students, just like doctors make the worst patients. If she honestly believes her statement that Linux is illegal, and she "tried it in college", then she's admitting to committing a crime!

12/10/08 10:55 AM

Michael said...

I got an email today from another school district in Texas about their policy for holiday gifts and such. It was more about religion than Linux (although lines blur, don't they?) but it makes me think that Karen may have acted against policy in not allowing your child to give out Linux CDs. It may not have been appropriate for her to stop your child from handing out those CDs.It might be something to look into...

12/10/08 10:57 AM

Anonymous said...

This certainly does not dispel the concept that most teachers are glorified babysitters.Too bad far too many of these no-talent losers are put in charge of the youngsters of society.If you cannot garner respect from your peers, you should not be anywhere near kids.Those linking school board directories is rather pointless.For all we know it could be somebody other than "Karen" who wrote the original drivel.

12/10/08 10:59 AM

Anonymous said...

Makes me quite glad that my computer sciences teacher handed out linux discs when I was in school.

12/10/08 10:59 AM

Pete Lee said...

Hi Ken,Well done, sir! I was especially saddened to hear that a teacher thinks that Windows runs on "virtually every computer". I guess the huge presence of Mac OS on college campuses, creative agencies, the an ever-growing base of Linux in schools/governments worldwide, and even on the nascent OLPC means nothing to this instructor.Please note that Portland has a fantastic organization known as Free Geek that provides Linux to people who would be otherwise "held back" because they do not have the means to purchase their own computer. Without an efficient and utilitarian Linux software package, the older computers this organization distributes would be virtually worthless.I applaud your audacity in responding personally to this teacher. Best regards, -Pete

LeeN.B. I do not represent Free Geek--I'm merely an avid supporter.

12/10/08 11:00 AM

NoDough said...

Dear Karen,You stated:>> "At this point, I am not sure what you are doing is legal.">> "I along with many others tried Linux during college..."You have clearly confused Linux with brain altering drugs. Depending on the extent of your use, you confusion may be perfectly natural.Regards,NoDough

12/10/08 11:01 AM

Kevin said...

What?! Learn quite a bit using Windows?! Are you a crackpot? Windows is one of the largest reasons why everyone coming out of school into the real world are ignorant. Windows continues to hide the actual technical mechanics behind how your PC operates. Knowing this information promotes problem solving and analytical abilities. Windows as of current does NOT. Point... Double-Click... WOW! Yet the student will never know the word "execute" which is what the "application" does when you double-click, instead I imagine a teacher saying "Alright class "DOUBLE-CLICK" on "Wordpad"... yeah thats real educational...

12/10/08 11:02 AM

speff said...

"confrence"? This person is not an educator. And I thought Austin was just about the most progressive part of Texas.

12/10/08 11:02 AM

krandor said...

Wow, i must say this has brought a smile to my face. Especially the last paragraph. I hope your meeting goes well!

12/10/08 11:03 AM

Anonymous said...

Nothing any of us say or do about this "teacher" matter.The unions will protect her. And the NEA is a *major* Democratic supporter. They're bought and paid for with NEA union dues. So no amount of political pressure matters.If you voted 'D' last month, this is what you get. We can only tell you so many times.Stop complaining.

12/10/08 11:07 AM

Anonymous said...

I suspect what she tried in college was neither Linux nor BSD, it must have been LSD. I didn't know trolls exist offline and can become teachers.

12/10/08 11:14 AM

SubSonica said...

Dear Helios, after the deserved irate reply to the teacher maybe you can try to turn the hostility of the poor clueless teacher towards Gnu/Linux at the school into an opportunity for her to improve her knowledge and also for the school: you can refer the teacher to this website (according to what you wrote I'm maybe being overoptimistic here but I think it's positive and worth the try):http://www.getgnulinux.org/linux/misunderstanding_free_software/and here afterwards:http://www.getgnulinux.org/linux/If she has acknowledges her error you can turn your conter-attack into an oportunity for her to improve her set of skills and provide her and the school with a toolset for education.Why not trying to turn this incident into an opportunity to introduce awareness of Gnu/Linux and Freedom Software in the school? Maybe you can even find some other kid's parents who are aware of Gnu/Linux

and organize a project/proposal to enhance the systems of the school... hmmm!....Who knows, in the end maybe she will be able to find free software is indeed most useful for her classroom:http://edubuntu.org/http://edu.kde.org/I'm sure you can impress the teaching staff with things like kalzium, kig, celestia...The higher staff and the shcool can find Gnu/Linux and free software of much help in other education-related areas beneficial for both pupils and staff:http://www.moodle.orghttp://www.claroline.net/index.php?lang=enhttp://www.openbiblio.orgThe school can save scarce funds and much valuable resources by implementing free technologies there.http://www.schooltool.org/the-schooltool-project/view?set_language=enhttps://help.ubuntu.com/community/UbuntuLTSPhttp://www.k12ltsp.org/contents.htmlEven if the school insist in keeping using windows (remind them of the perils of virus, malware, proprietary licence infringement, wasted energy and e-waste generation etc...) there is plenty of Freedom Software avaliable for education:http://www.theopendisc.com/education/Even if that particular teacher is not receptive I am sure you can find some other people among the staff (science teaachers, for example) or the parents association that can know better...Keep fighting the good fight!

12/10/08 11:14 AM

Stephanie said...

Found your post via the Chugalug Digest. Haven't been very active due to time constraints, but I do enjoy reading the messages.As a former public school teacher I understand exactly where you are coming from and this is just one example of why I had to leave the profession.I promoted Linux (Edubuntu) as often as I could and I even set up a computer donation program. Luckily I did have some support, but many of my ideas were squashed.Although I do miss teaching and I miss the kids, I couldn't sleep at night knowing that I couldn't follow my heart's desire and REALLY make a difference. I will continue to fight though. Thank you for your efforts!

12/10/08 11:18 AM

SubSonica said...

Dear Helios, after the deserved irate reply to the teacher maybe you can turn it into an opportunity for Gnu/Linux at the school: you can refer the teacher to this website:http://www.getgnulinux.org/linux/misunderstanding_free_software/and here afterwards:http://www.getgnulinux.org/linux/If once she has acknowledged her error you can turn your conter-attack into an oportunity for her to improve her set of skills and provide her and the school with a toolset for education.Why not trying to turn this incident into an opportunity to introduce awareness of Gnu/Linux and Freedom Software in the school? Maybe you can even find some other kid's parents who are aware of Gnu/Linux and organize a project/proposal to enhance the systems of the school... hmmm!....Who knows, in the end maybe she will be able to find free software is indeed most useful for her classroom:http://edubuntu.org/http://edu.kde.org/I'm sure you can impress them with things like kalzium, kig, celestia...The higher staff and the shcool can find Gnu/Linux and free software of much help in other education-related areas beneficial for both pupils and staff:http://www.moodle.orghttp://www.claroline.net/index.php?lang=enhttp://www.openbiblio.orgThe school can save scarce funds and much valuable resources by implementing free technologies there.http://www.schooltool.org/the-schooltool-project/view?set_language=enhttps://help.ubuntu.com/community/UbuntuLTSPhttp://www.k12ltsp.org/contents.htmlEven if the school insist in keeping using windows (remind them of the perils of virus, malware, proprietary licence infringement, wasted energy and e-waste generation etc...) there is plenty of Freedom Software avaliable for education:http://www.theopendisc.com/education/There is a region called Extremadura on our country where thanks to Gnu/Linux the schools have been able to provide a computer for every two pupils.http://www.iosn.net/government/case-studies/extremadura/http://lwn.net/Articles/41738/Best regards from Spain andKeep fighting the good fight!

12/10/08 11:23 AM

Post a Comment

Not a Podcast - Real Radio!

Not a Podcast - Real Radio! The ONLY talk radio show that features Linux and Free Software. Are you listening?

A child's exposure to technology should never be predicated on an ability to afford it

[The HeliOS Project Donation Point - Bringing Linux and Technology To Kids Who Need It Most.](#)

Only one hard and fast rule here

Many of the kids we build computers for visit this blog. Please post anything you want but do it with the thought of an 11 year old child sitting next to you. Our kids get exposed to enough garbage in the world, let's not add to it here. We can't "clean up" the internet, but we can do our part not to add to the garbage pile. - Thanks for being part of what we do. - h

World of Goo

Finally...someone gets it: Linux users play games and they don't mind paying a fair price for them.The 2D boys have created World of Goo for Linux! Now maybe the "big boys" will figure it out.Support those who support us by clicking something purple. Go get yours today.

The HeliOS Project Now Has It's Own Blog

As The HeliOS Project has expanded, we needed to give it room to grow. You can see **The HeliOS Project Blog here**. We also have a website devoted to this effort. You can **go here to see** what we are doing at any given time. Thanks for being part of what we do.

Purchase of these great animals supports FOSS - thanks

OPEN ANIMALS
Where All the Animals Roam Free

can be trained as an attack penguin

Wanna keep up with BOH?

☐ Posts ⌄

☐ Comments ⌄

Zareason: Linux Computers That Work First Time - Every Time.

Support those who fully support Open Source by choice, not by profit motive.

Things of immense interest...or not

- **The HeliOS Project Donation Point**
- **Linux Computers done right...and at a great price**
- **Zareason**
- **Lindependence 2008**
- **The Best Linux News Site Available**
- **Devnet's Guide to Linux Communities (New User Help)**

- **Linux News and Views - some great investigative reporting from time to time**
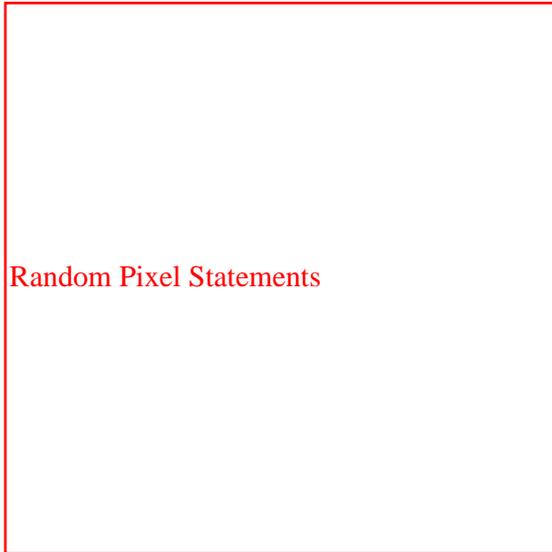
Who IS this guy?

Ken Starks

You've entered into the realm of someone who thinks the proliferation of Linux on the desktop is worth the hard work and sacrifice. There are few things in life aside from my family I have found worth fighting for. On these pages, you will discover that for me...there is one other.

View my complete profile

Random Pixel Statements

Random Pixel Statements

Meet Frazzle...Our Mascot during HeliOS Solution Business Meetings

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