Subject: What can be done with little?
Posted by Anonymous on Mon, 14 Sep 2020 21:10:50 GMT
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Originally posted by: gareth evans

The graphical user interface and the world wide web are two
fantastic developments in the field of computing, but why
do they come with so much baggage dragging them down? Have we
forgotten the capabilities of simple OSs?

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Quadibloc on Mon, 14 Sep 2020 23:27:11 GMT
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On Monday, September 14, 2020 at 3:20:24 PM UTC-6, gareth evans wrote:
> The graphical user interface and the world wide web are two
> fantastic developments in the field of computing, but why
> do they come with so much baggage dragging them down? Have we
> forgotten the capabilities of simple OSs?

Plenty of things can be done with much smaller computing systems. Thus, one can
compile and run Fortran programs on a PDP-8.

It's just that on the one hand what many people want to do with computers is
play Fortnite, and on the other hand when they want to do what an older computer
could do, they're probably using a pocket calculator for it.

John Savard

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Anonymous on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 00:30:32 GMT
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Originally posted by: Chris

On 09/14/20 22:10, gareth evans wrote:
> The graphical user interface and the world wide web are two
> fantastic developments in the field of computing, but why
> do they come with so much baggage dragging them down? Have we
> forgotten the capabilities of simple OSs?
>

Quite a lot. Software dev doesn't need a gui for the sort of work
done here, still makefiles and command line, though a gui does

make it seamless for any number of shell windows open at once.
File manager doesmn't need a gui, but the again, you might need
one or more open at once. You can use a text based browser, but
only get a fraction of the content and usability.

The issue here is really the difference between a purely text
interface and a graphical one. Graphical is so much more
capable at formatting data to suit the intended audience, it
communicates better...

Chris

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Joy Beeson on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 03:56:09 GMT
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On Tue, 15 Sep 2020 01:30:32 +0100, Chris <xxx.syseng.yyy@gfsys.co.uk>
wrote:

> Graphical . . .
> communicates better...

If and only if the designer of the interface has communication as a
goal.

--
Joy Beeson
joy beeson at centurylink dot net
http://wlweather.net/PAGEJOY/

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Charlie Gibbs on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 05:17:13 GMT
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On 2020-09-15, Joy Beeson <jbeeson@invalid.net.invalid> wrote:

> On Tue, 15 Sep 2020 01:30:32 +0100, Chris <xxx.syseng.yyy@gfsys.co.uk>
> wrote:
>
>> Graphical . . .
>> communicates better...
>
> If and only if the designer of the interface has communication as a
> goal.

applause

--
```
/~\ Charlie Gibbs            | Microsoft is a dictatorship.
\ / <cgibbs@kltpzyxm.invalid>   | Apple is a cult.
 X  I'm really at ac.dekanfrus   | Linux is anarchy.
/ \ if you read it the right way. | Pick your poison.
```

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Anonymous on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 08:22:35 GMT
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Originally posted by: gareth evans

On 14/09/2020 22:10, gareth evans wrote:
> The graphical user interface and the world wide web are two
> fantastic developments in the field of computing, but why
> do they come with so much baggage dragging them down? Have we
> forgotten the capabilities of simple OSs?
>

Apologies for this; It seemed that my reply was not getting
through to AFC, so I sent it again as a new thread, and it
still did not seem to be getting through. Certainly, last night,
neither appeared in my SENT ITEMS folder, so I'm surprised
this morning to see them both (as are, no doubt, the
rest of you :-)   )

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Anonymous on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 11:47:16 GMT
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Originally posted by: Carlos E.R.

On 15/09/2020 02.30, Chris wrote:
> On 09/14/20 22:10, gareth evans wrote:
>> The graphical user interface and the world wide web are two
>> fantastic developments in the field of computing, but why
>> do they come with so much baggage dragging them down? Have we
>> forgotten the capabilities of simple OSs?
>>
>
> Quite a lot. Software dev doesn't need a gui for the sort of work
> done here, still makefiles and command line, though a gui does
> make it seamless for any number of shell windows open at once.

> File manager doesmn't need a gui, but the again, you might need
> one or more open at once. You can use a text based browser, but
> only get a fraction of the content and usability.

Huh. I find that Midnight Commander (aka 'mc') as text based file
browser is more powerful than any GUI based browser I have tested,
except on one respect: showing graphical content of the files, like
photos or videos.

I would gladly use a GUI tool for doing the same, but there ain't any,
there are always missing features.

Of course, I talk of using 'mc' inside a GUI session in an emulated
terminal, so that I can have dozens in sight, not in a pure text terminal.

> The issue here is really the difference between a purely text
> interface and a graphical one. Graphical is so much more
> capable at formatting data to suit the intended audience, it
> communicates better...

Usually, yes. :-)

On the other hand, they often run slower than equivalent text tools,
because a large part of the computing time is used on drawing those nice
graphics :-p

--
Cheers, Carlos.

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Anonymous on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 11:49:20 GMT
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Originally posted by: J. Clarke

On Tue, 15 Sep 2020 01:30:32 +0100, Chris <xxx.syseng.yyy@gfsys.co.uk>
wrote:

> On 09/14/20 22:10, gareth evans wrote:
>> The graphical user interface and the world wide web are two
>> fantastic developments in the field of computing, but why
>> do they come with so much baggage dragging them down? Have we
>> forgotten the capabilities of simple OSs?
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>
> Quite a lot. Software dev doesn't need a gui for the sort of work
> done here, still makefiles and command line, though a gui does

> make it seamless for any number of shell windows open at once.
> File manager doesmn't need a gui, but the again, you might need
> one or more open at once. You can use a text based browser, but
> only get a fraction of the content and usability.
>
> The issue here is really the difference between a purely text
> interface and a graphical one. Graphical is so much more
> capable at formatting data to suit the intended audience, it
> communicates better...

It gets down to "what are you doing and who will be running it".

Even Microsoft has dumped the GUI for file servers--to get the
Microsoft certification for network administrator you have to be able
to run servers from the command line.

I was reading somebody's instructions for making an alarm clock with a
Raspberry Pi the other day. He has you writing the code in Python. I
agree totally that that's the _easy_ way to do it, but it means having
enough Linux to run the Python interpreter, which in principle is
gross overkill for something whose user interface is 54 LEDs and a few
switches.

There's danger in using more software than is needed for the job.
Something in my car times out every few months and when it does the
car has to be jump started. Note that it's an electric car and does
this even if it has been parked with the charger connected the whole
time. No, it's not a Tesla--don't buy an electric Ford. It's my
understanding that it's actually something in the entertainment system
(aka "radio") that causes the problem but there's no fix for it other
than pulling the fuse on the entertainment system and leaving it
pulled.

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Anonymous on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 11:52:09 GMT
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Originally posted by: J. Clarke

On 15 Sep 2020 05:17:13 GMT, Charlie Gibbs <cgibbs@kltpzyxm.invalid>
wrote:

> On 2020-09-15, Joy Beeson <jbeeson@invalid.net.invalid> wrote:
>
>> On Tue, 15 Sep 2020 01:30:32 +0100, Chris <xxx.syseng.yyy@gfsys.co.uk>
>> wrote:
>>

>>> Graphical . . .
>>> communicates better...
>>
>> If and only if the designer of the interface has communication as a
>> goal.
>
> *applause*

And it depends on what you're communicating. A GUI is not really all
that much help if what you're trying to communicate is "WAKE UP YOU
LAZY <BEEP>". Not the most dependable system for "FIRE FIRE FIRE"
either--you want something that will get your attention even if you're
not looking at it.

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Anonymous on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 12:46:34 GMT
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Originally posted by: gareth evans

On 15/09/2020 12:52, J. Clarke wrote:
> On 15 Sep 2020 05:17:13 GMT, Charlie Gibbs <cgibbs@kltpzyxm.invalid>
> wrote:
>
>> On 2020-09-15, Joy Beeson <jbeeson@invalid.net.invalid> wrote:
>>
>>> On Tue, 15 Sep 2020 01:30:32 +0100, Chris <xxx.syseng.yyy@gfsys.co.uk>
>>> wrote:
>>>
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>>>> communicates better...
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>>> goal.
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>> *applause*
>
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> that much help if what you're trying to communicate is "WAKE UP YOU
> LAZY <BEEP>". Not the most dependable system for "FIRE FIRE FIRE"
> either--you want something that will get your attention even if you're
> not looking at it.
>

I wonder what OSs the NSA (Yanks) and GCHQ (Brits) use ?

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Niklas Karlsson on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 12:48:38 GMT

On 2020-09-15, gareth evans <headstone255@yahoo.com> wrote:
> I wonder what OSs the NSA (Yanks) and GCHQ (Brits) use ?

The NSA wrote SELinux (a kernel-level system for enforcing detailed
policy on who and what can do what), so I'd guess they use a lot of
Linux, probably a pretty stripped-down distro.

Niklas
--
If you demonstrate that you can cook superior food using an induction
stove, is that an instance of proof by induction?

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Peter Flass on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 13:16:11 GMT

gareth evans <headstone255@yahoo.com> wrote:
> On 15/09/2020 12:52, J. Clarke wrote:
>> On 15 Sep 2020 05:17:13 GMT, Charlie Gibbs <cgibbs@kltpzyxm.invalid>
>> wrote:
>>
>>> On 2020-09-15, Joy Beeson <jbeeson@invalid.net.invalid> wrote:
>>>
>>>> On Tue, 15 Sep 2020 01:30:32 +0100, Chris <xxx.syseng.yyy@gfsys.co.uk>
>>>> wrote:
>>>>
>>>> > Graphical . . .
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>>>> If and only if the designer of the interface has communication as a
>>>> goal.
>>>
>>> *applause*
>>
>> And it depends on what you're communicating. A GUI is not really all
>> that much help if what you're trying to communicate is "WAKE UP YOU
>> LAZY <BEEP>". Not the most dependable system for "FIRE FIRE FIRE"
>> either--you want something that will get your attention even if you're
>> not looking at it.
>>
>
> I wonder what OSs the NSA (Yanks) and GCHQ (Brits) use ?
>

>

Probably something they bought from a small startup in Saint Petersburg.
;-)

--
Pete

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Peter Flass on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 13:16:12 GMT

Niklas Karlsson <anksil@yahoo.se> wrote:
> On 2020-09-15, gareth evans <headstone255@yahoo.com> wrote:
>> I wonder what OSs the NSA (Yanks) and GCHQ (Brits) use ?
>
> The NSA wrote SELinux (a kernel-level system for enforcing detailed
> policy on who and what can do what), so I'd guess they use a lot of
> Linux, probably a pretty stripped-down distro.
>

Aren't many other distros now based on SELinux?

--
Pete

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Niklas Karlsson on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 13:38:08 GMT

On 2020-09-15, Peter Flass <peter_flass@yahoo.com> wrote:
> Niklas Karlsson <anksil@yahoo.se> wrote:
>> On 2020-09-15, gareth evans <headstone255@yahoo.com> wrote:
>>> I wonder what OSs the NSA (Yanks) and GCHQ (Brits) use ?
>>
>> The NSA wrote SELinux (a kernel-level system for enforcing detailed
>> policy on who and what can do what), so I'd guess they use a lot of
>> Linux, probably a pretty stripped-down distro.
>>
>
> Aren't many other distros now based on SELinux?

SELinux isn't a distro, just a kernel subsystem. But yes - the Red Hat

family (RHEL itself, CentOS, presumably Scientific Linux, Fedora)
certainly supports SELinux, as probably do many others.

Ubuntu seems to use one of the alternatives, AppArmor. I was involved in
a Red Hat-based project recently where we were using SELinux but found
it extremely cumbersome, so we investigated AppArmor as an alternative.
Unfortunately, the stock RH kernels don't have AppArmor support compiled
in, and building our own would have voided access to Red Hat's support.

Niklas
--
You've been autopsied twice?!? And you're still posting?
              -- Steve VanDevender

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Anonymous on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 15:01:51 GMT
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Originally posted by: JimP

On Tue, 15 Sep 2020 09:22:35 +0100, gareth evans
<headstone255@yahoo.com> wrote:
> On 14/09/2020 22:10, gareth evans wrote:
>> The graphical user interface and the world wide web are two
>> fantastic developments in the field of computing, but why
>> do they come with so much baggage dragging them down? Have we
>> forgotten the capabilities of simple OSs?
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>
> Apologies for this; It seemed that my reply was not getting
> through to AFC, so I sent it again as a new thread, and it
> still did not seem to be getting through. Certainly, last night,
> neither appeared in my SENT ITEMS folder, so I'm surprised
> this morning to see them both (as are, no doubt, the
> rest of you :-)   )

Sometimes computers, and Usenet servers, do what they please.

--
Jim

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Anonymous on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 17:07:48 GMT
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Originally posted by: drb

> Ubuntu seems to use one of the alternatives, AppArmor.

AppArmor and SELinux aren't exactly either-or. Debian ships both.

De

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Niklas Karlsson on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 17:19:12 GMT
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On 2020-09-15, Dennis Boone <drb@ihatespam.msu.edu> wrote:
>> Ubuntu seems to use one of the alternatives, AppArmor.
>
> AppArmor and SELinux aren't exactly either-or. Debian ships both.

I sit corrected. That's good to hear.

Niklas
--
Actually I think that "fucking off" is an idempotent operation.
                -- Alan J Rosenthal

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Quadibloc on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 19:28:05 GMT
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On Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 6:48:40 AM UTC-6, Niklas Karlsson wrote:
> On 2020-09-15, gareth evans <headstone255@yahoo.com> wrote:

>> I wonder what OSs the NSA (Yanks) and GCHQ (Brits) use ?

> The NSA wrote SELinux (a kernel-level system for enforcing detailed
> policy on who and what can do what), so I'd guess they use a lot of
> Linux, probably a pretty stripped-down distro.

And _given_ the big security enhancement of SELinux, one can guess that at one
time they had been using Multics in order to get such ideas...

John Savard

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?

Posted by Quadibloc on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 19:30:47 GMT
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On Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 7:16:14 AM UTC-6, Peter Flass wrote:
> gareth evans <headstone255@yahoo.com> wrote:

>> I wonder what OSs the NSA (Yanks) and GCHQ (Brits) use ?

> Probably something they bought from a small startup in Saint Petersburg.
> ;-)

Oh, wait. There _is_ another St. Petersburg besides the one that used to be called Leningrad.

I don't know about the NSA, but *NASA* used to use a lot of computers from the
only computer company based in Florida that I can think of offhand, SEL. Systems
Engineering Laboratories, nothing to do with SELinux.

John Savard

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Anonymous on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 19:31:50 GMT
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Originally posted by: drb

> And _given_ the big security enhancement of SELinux, one can guess that
 > at one time they had been using Multics in order to get such ideas...

Well, they did. Dockmaster comes to mind. But that's certainly not
the only way they could have come by such ideas, even assuming they
were unable to do basic security research for all these decades.

De

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by scott on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 19:56:06 GMT
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drb@ihatespam.msu.edu (Dennis Boone) writes:
>> And _given_ the big security enhancement of SELinux, one can guess that
>> at one time they had been using Multics in order to get such ideas...
>
> Well, they did. Dockmaster comes to mind. But that's certainly not
> the only way they could have come by such ideas, even assuming they
> were unable to do basic security research for all these decades.
>

Indeed, the orange book was published in 1983 (although we had preprint copies a couple of years earlier).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trusted_Computer_System_Evalua tion_Criteria

---

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by usenet on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 20:31:04 GMT
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On Mon, 14 Sep 2020 22:10:50 +0100, gareth evans <headstone255@yahoo.com> wrote:
> The graphical user interface and the world wide web are two
> fantastic developments in the field of computing, but why
> do they come with so much baggage dragging them down? Have we
> forgotten the capabilities of simple OSs?

Anyone who has used the Geoworks Ensemble product from the early 1990s knows that a GUI is not the problem. Like early versions of Windows, Ensemble was a graphic environment that ran on top of MS-DOS/DR-DOS/PC-DOS. It included a WYSIWYG word processor and drawing program, a terminal emulator, and the usual collection of utility applications: address book, calculator, calendar, notepad, etc. There was a game package and additional clipart. The printing model had fine control that produced near letter-quality output even with nine-pin dot matrix printers. The code was tight, object-oriented, and based on their own extensions to C.

It ran well on a 286 PC with one megabyte of RAM. By discarding unneeded drivers and other files, some enthusiasts managed to fit a working copy onto a single 1.44MB floppy. (A typical installation was closer to 6 MB.) A lot of users were churches and small organizations that used Ensemble to create their own newsletters with sophisticated graphics. All this in 1991.

There are a lot of reasons why Geoworks never made it in the broader personal computer market, but code bloat and poor performance are not among them.

The Geoworks example makes clear that the bloat and baggage being associated with GUIs and web browsing are not strictly necessary. They are the result of design decisions, such that code size and efficiency are not high on the list of considerations.

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Anonymous on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 21:20:29 GMT
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Originally posted by: J. Clarke

On Tue, 15 Sep 2020 12:30:47 -0700 (PDT), Quadibloc
<jsavard@ecn.ab.ca> wrote:

> On Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 7:16:14 AM UTC-6, Peter Flass wrote:
>> gareth evans <headstone255@yahoo.com> wrote:
>
>>> I wonder what OSs the NSA (Yanks) and GCHQ (Brits) use ?
>
>> Probably something they bought from a small startup in Saint Petersburg.
>> ;-)
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> Oh, wait. There _is_ another St. Petersburg besides the one that used to be called Leningrad.
>
> I don't know about the NSA, but *NASA* used to use a lot of computers from the
> only computer company based in Florida that I can think of offhand, SEL. Systems
> Engineering Laboratories, nothing to do with SELinux.

Well, there was that little outfit in Boca Raton, but they were a
division of a bigger company . . .

Subject: Re: What can be done with little?
Posted by Quadibloc on Tue, 15 Sep 2020 23:10:22 GMT

On Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 3:20:33 PM UTC-6, J. Clarke wrote:

> Well, there was that little outfit in Boca Raton, but they were a
> division of a bigger company . . .

Ah, yes. I associate that company with Poughkeepsie in the state of New York. NASA certainly did use a lot of their computers.

John Savard