# 100 Things You Didn’t Know About Linux

**Fun (and less fun) facts**

*Linux now runs practically everything, from Mars to your microwave — while still not quite managing to take over your mother’s computer.*

**100 facts · 9 chapters** · Compiled July 2026 · SplitZrate.com

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## 1. Origins & Naming Chaos

**1.1 It was almost called Freax** Linus didn't actually want to call his little hobby project "Linux" at all — it felt too self-important. His own preferred name was "Freax" (freak + free + the obligatory X). History went a different way for purely administrative reasons, which, incidentally, is how a surprising amount of human history actually gets decided.

**1.2 Linus didn't even name it himself** Ari Lemmke, who ran the FTP server where version 0.01 was uploaded in September 1991, simply didn't like the name "Freax." He created the folder `/pub/OS/Linux` without asking Linus for permission. The name was thus settled by someone who just wanted to organize his file server the way he liked it.

**1.3 Version 0.01 had, practically speaking, no home** That same late night in September 1991, Linux existed in a single folder, on a single server, managed by someone who wasn't even Linus. Today the same codebase runs everything from the stock exchange to your router's login screen — a trajectory nobody involved had any reasonable way to predict.

**1.4 Someone tried to own the word "Linux"** In 1995, a lawyer named William Della Croce Jr. registered the trademark "Linux" in his own name and, starting in 1996, began sending letters to Linux distributors demanding a ten percent royalty on everything they sold. After pressure from the entire Linux community — including Linus himself — he agreed to transfer the trademark in 1997. Bureaucracy lost, for once.

**1.5 Linux now literally owns its own name** After the trademark battle, the Linux Mark Institute was founded to administer the "Linux" name on Linus's behalf. These days the license is handed out for free to anyone who asks nicely — a rare case of trademark ownership that actually ends well for everyone except the lawyer.

**1.6 The GNU/Linux debate that never ends** Richard Stallman and the Free Software Foundation argue the system should be called "GNU/Linux," since large parts of a typical Linux system are actually GNU tools that existed before the kernel itself. The debate has now been running for over thirty years with no clear winner, which says something lovely about humanity's ability to stick to an opinion.

**1.7 Tux only exists because a penguin bit Linus** According to Linus's own account, he visited a zoo in Canberra in 1993 and was bitten by a small penguin — which he jokingly called "penguinitis." His fixation on penguins as a mascot, by his own telling, traces directly back to that encounter.

**1.8 The mascot was designed in a program that barely existed yet** Artist Larry Ewing created the official Tux image in 1996 in GIMP version 0.54 — an early, fragile version of the very tool that would go on to become the standard for free image editing. Linus specifically asked for "a fat penguin sitting down after having had a great meal."

**1.9 Tux actually never won the logo contest it was entered in** Despite being impossible to confuse with anything else today, the penguin never won any of the three official Linux logo contests. Officially, Tux is therefore only a "brand character," not a logo — a technicality no one outside a meeting room has ever cared about.

**1.10 The name Tux is a three-letter pun** James Hughes coined the name as short for "Torvalds UniX," with the happy side effect that it also happens to resemble "tuxedo" — the formalwear whose black-and-white color scheme happens to suit a penguin perfectly.

**1.11 Nobody asked permission to call him "Linus Benedict Torvalds"** His full name honors Linus Pauling, the chemistry and peace Nobel laureate — making Linux probably the only billion-user operating system named after someone who is, in turn, named after a Nobel Prize winner.

**1.12 The first release fit on a handful of floppy disks** Linux 0.01 was originally distributed on floppy disk, at a time when "downloading the operating system" meant physically swapping disks several times during installation — a process today's cloud server deployments bear surprisingly little resemblance to.

**1.13 Linux originally needed a different operating system just to be built** The very first versions of Linux had to be compiled using Minix, the teaching operating system Linus originally used at university — the kernel, in other words, literally bit the hand that once fed it.

**1.14 It all started as a terminal program to dial into the school's computer** Linus's first lines of code had nothing to do with building an operating system — he just wanted to write his own terminal program to dial into the university's Unix machine over modem. Everything else grew from there, in his own words, more or less by accident.

**1.15 The original announcement is a masterpiece of understatement** In his famous post to the newsgroup comp.os.minix in August 1991, Linus wrote: "I'm doing a (free) operating system (just a hobby, won't be big and professional like gnu)." History has since been unusually unkind to that prediction.

**1.16 The license changed direction after just a few months** The very earliest versions of Linux were released under Linus's own, more restrictive license that forbade commercial distribution. Starting with version 0.12 in February 1992, the kernel was released under the GPL instead — a decision that, in hindsight, had a modest bit of influence on how the rest of the internet would end up being built.

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## 2. Linus, the Man & the Myth

**2.1 He wrote the book about himself and called it "Just for Fun"** The title of Linus's autobiography pretty much sums up the entire project's origin story: a university project with no grand plan, built mostly because it was more fun than studying for exams.

**2.2 "Given enough eyeballs, all bugs are shallow"** This principle, coined by Eric S. Raymond and named after Linus ("Linus's Law"), sums up the entire open source philosophy in one sentence. It does assume, though, that enough eyeballs are actually looking — an assumption that turned out to have a few serious exceptions, more on that later.

**2.3 The Tanenbaum-Torvalds debate: a Usenet flame war from 1992** Operating systems professor Andrew Tanenbaum called Linux "obsolete" by design because it used a monolithic kernel instead of a more modern microkernel. The resulting discussion thread became one of the most cited flame wars in computing history — and the monolithic kernel ended up winning the market anyway.

**2.4 "Nvidia, fuck you"** In 2012, during a public Q&A, Linus raised his middle finger directly at the camera in response to a question about Nvidia's poor open-source support for its graphics drivers. The clip still lives on as one of the more concise summaries of the relationship between kernel developers and GPU makers.

**2.5 Linus apologized and took a break in 2018** After years of criticism for his unusually harsh tone in code reviews, Linus announced in 2018 that he'd take a break from development to "understand emotions better," and the Linux project simultaneously adopted its first code of conduct. A reminder that even the person steering an entire planet's server infrastructure can need some personal growth.

**2.6 He still has the final word, if less often now** Despite decades of delegating to hundreds of maintainers, Linus is still the one who formally approves every new kernel release — a structure that's surprisingly hierarchical for a project often described as an anarchist success story.

**2.7 He moved to Silicon Valley for a different operating system** Linus left Finland for the US in 1997 to work at Transmeta, a semiconductor company, rather than for Linux itself — the kernel came along as a kind of side project he kept maintaining in his spare time for years before he could work on it full-time.

**2.8 He also invented Git, basically as a break from Linux** In 2005, following a heated conflict over the tool BitKeeper, Linus sat down and wrote Git — the version control system now used by

practically the entire software world — in roughly a couple of weeks, as a byproduct of solving his own problem.

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## 3. Very Large Numbers

**3.1 The kernel's source code has passed 40 million lines** The Linux kernel has more than doubled in size over a decade and passed 40 million lines of code in early 2025. No single human being has plausibly read all of it, which puts the "given enough eyeballs" principle in a somewhat humbler light.

**3.2 100% of the world's 500 fastest supercomputers run Linux** Since November 2017, Linux has held total dominance on the Top500 list of the world's most powerful supercomputers — all five hundred of them. No other software in human history has managed such a complete, and simultaneously so invisible, takeover.

**3.3 Android is, technically, also Linux** Every Android phone runs a Linux kernel under the hood, making Linux the most widely deployed operating system on the planet's smartphones too — a victory rarely celebrated in the same breath as "the year Linux takes over the desktop."

**3.4 The kernel supports more processor architectures than almost any other OS** From massive server processors to obscure embedded chips in washing machines — the Linux kernel has been ported to more types of hardware than most operating systems even attempt to support, partly because nobody has ever said no to a contributor wanting to add support for yet another odd processor.

**3.5 Thousands of paid developers build "the free operating system"** A large share of contributions to the Linux kernel now come from employees at major companies — Intel, Red Hat, Google, and others — rather than independent hobbyists in their basements. "Free software" has become one of the most corporate-funded grassroots movements that's ever existed.

**3.6 A new kernel version ships roughly every ten weeks, like clockwork** The Linux kernel has kept a remarkably predictable release cadence for over two decades — a new stable version roughly every nine to ten weeks, no matter how chaotic the development process behind the scenes actually looks to those involved.

**3.7 A couple thousand developers, a handful of megacorporations, one kernel** Every kernel release now contains contributions from several thousand individual developers and several hundred different companies at once — probably one of the most coordinated, decentralized engineering projects any species on this planet has ever pulled off.

**3.8 The kernel has never had a single nickname in 34 years** Unlike Ubuntu, which names every release after an animal and adjective in alphabetical order, the Linux kernel has never had anything like that — just numbers, dots, and occasionally a loose codename Linus makes up for fun that hardly anyone remembers six months later.

**3.9 An entire industry of container technology emerged to fix Linux's own "works on my machine" joke** Docker and similar container tools grew directly out of how historically difficult it's been to package a Linux application so it behaves identically on a different Linux machine — a problem Linux largely created for itself through its own diversity.

**3.10 Linus describes himself as fundamentally lazy** In interviews over the years, Linus has repeatedly insisted his primary motivation was never ambition but plain laziness — a wish to avoid doing the same job twice, which happened to result in one of the most labor-intensive software projects that's ever existed.

**3.11 These days Linus barely writes any code at all** After three-plus decades, Linus's role has effectively shifted from writing code to reviewing, merging, and saying no to other people's code — a person whose main tool today is judgment rather than a keyboard.

**3.12 An entire subgenre of free games exists just so the penguin can go skiing** Extreme Tux Racer, a free 3D game where Tux races downhill at breakneck speed, has for decades served as an informal technical demonstration of what free software can achieve graphically — and a surprisingly addictive little distraction for millions of users over the years.

**3.13 The number of active Linux distributions is still being counted; nobody's given up** The website DistroWatch has spent over twenty years trying to keep track of every actively maintained Linux distribution, with regular lists counting several hundred at once — a number that seems to neither shrink nor stop growing.

**3.14 "It's not a bug, it's a feature" is older than Linux itself** The phrase is a classic piece of hacker jargon that was circulating long before Linux existed, documented as early as "The Jargon File" from early internet culture — Linux just inherited the humor along with the source code.

**3.15 The package manager wars have their own devoted fanbases** Which package manager is "best" — apt, dnf, pacman, or something else entirely — gets debated with a fervor that can seem disproportionate to outsiders, but within the community is treated with nearly the same seriousness as the ultimate meaning of the universe.

**3.16 A penguin has traveled farther than most humans ever will** Thanks to the Linux kernel's presence in satellites, space probes, and rovers on other planets, the code underlying the Tux mascot has technically traveled farther from Earth than almost any human alive today.

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## 4. Security Drama

**4.1 The backdoor that nearly fooled the entire internet** In March 2024, Microsoft employee Andres Freund discovered, more or less by accident during a performance investigation, a carefully hidden backdoor in the compression library XZ Utils — planted by someone who had spent years systematically building trust as a co-maintainer. Security researchers described it as potentially "the most widespread and effective backdoor ever planted." It was caught days, not years, before it would have reached stable releases.

**4.2 A single, burned-out maintainer stood between the world and disaster** The XZ Utils vulnerability could burrow in so deep precisely because the project had long been maintained by one single, overworked volunteer — a pattern that turned out to be far more common than most people would like to admit about the digital infrastructure billions of people rely on every day.

**4.3 The kernel's own website got hacked in 2011** kernel.org, the server that distributes the actual Linux source code, was compromised in 2011, and attackers gained root access to the infrastructure. No malicious code was found to have made it into the kernel source itself, but the incident forced the entire developer community to verify every single cryptographic signature in the system — a process everyone would have rather skipped.

**4.4 Heartbleed got its own brand, logo, and press coverage** In 2014, a serious vulnerability was discovered in OpenSSL — the library protecting an enormous share of encrypted traffic on the web, including many Linux-based servers. The bug got its own name, its own logo, and coverage from mainstream news outlets, setting a new standard for just how dramatically a security bug can be marketed.

**4.5 Shellshock showed that a 25-year-old shell could still surprise everyone** That same year, 2014, Shellshock was discovered — a vulnerability in Bash that had been hiding in the shell since essentially its early years in the 1990s. A command interpreter millions of servers had blindly trusted for decades turned out to have a hole big enough to run arbitrary code through.

**4.6 SCO sued half the industry and lost almost everything** In the early 2000s, the SCO Group claimed large parts of the Linux kernel illegally contained their copyrighted Unix code, and sued IBM, among others, for billions. After nearly two decades of litigation, SCO's core claims fell

apart in court — a reminder that legal threats against open source sometimes take longer to dismiss than it would have taken to just rewrite the code in question.

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## 5. Linux Where You'd Least Expect It

**5.1 A Linux-powered helicopter flew around on Mars** NASA's Ingenuity helicopter drone, which made the first powered flights on another planet, ran Linux on top of off-the-shelf hardware not dramatically different from a capable smartphone — software written for terrestrial servers, relocated to an entirely different celestial body. Ingenuity flew for the last time on January 18, 2024, after sustaining rotor damage, and NASA formally ended the mission later that month; the helicopter remains on the Martian surface as the first aircraft to have flown on another world.

**5.2 The Perseverance rover carries its own Linux-based subsystems** Perseverance's main flight computer runs the real-time operating system VxWorks, not Linux — but the rover isn't a single-computer system. Its Mastcam-Z and other imaging/compute hardware, along with the ground-facing side of the now-retired Ingenuity downlink relay, run on Linux-based compute modules, meaning Linux still rides along on the rover even though it isn't driving the wheels.

**5.3 The International Space Station switched to Linux for the sake of stability** Around 2013, parts of the ISS crew computers migrated from Windows to Linux, explicitly citing the desire for a more stable and reliable system for critical onboard functions — a fairly telling vote of confidence from an organization that literally cannot afford a blue screen.

**5.4 Stock exchanges, ATMs, and traffic lights — all behind the scenes** Most of the world's financial trading systems, a large share of ATMs, and countless municipal infrastructure systems run Linux behind the scenes, without a single end user ever seeing a terminal prompt or even knowing about it.

**5.5 The Tesla you might drive has a Linux heart in its dashboard** The infotainment systems in modern electric cars, including Tesla's, are largely built on Linux — meaning that driving today often means sitting inside a moving Linux terminal equipped with seats and airbags.

**5.6 Valve built an entire game console around Linux** The Steam Deck, Valve's handheld game console, runs SteamOS — a Linux distribution built specifically to run Windows games through a compatibility layer, a project that sounded like a joke on paper and in practice became one of the most critically acclaimed consoles in years.

**5.7 Your smart fridge probably has a Linux kernel in it** Embedded Linux powers a significant share of today's "smart" appliances, routers, set-top boxes, and car infotainment systems — meaning the number of Linux installations in an average household today probably outnumbers the people living in it.

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## 6. Jokes, Myths & Folklore

**6.1 "The year Linux takes over the desktop" has been declared for over 25 years** The phrase has been a running joke within the community since the late 1990s — every year is solemnly declared "the year," without desktop market share ever moving very much. One of the most durable, self-deprecating running gags in software history.

**6.2 apt-get moo is still an easter egg after all these years** Type `apt-get moo` on a Debian or Ubuntu system and an ASCII cow asks whether you've "mooed today." A completely pointless command that has nonetheless survived through countless major upgrades of the entire package management system.

**6.3 systemd split an entire community into two camps** The adoption of systemd as the default init system around the 2010s triggered one of the longest-running and most passionate technical

schisms in Linux history — a debate whose intensity hardly took a back seat to the fight over whether tabs or spaces are the correct choice in code.

**6.4 There are more distributions than most people have had dinners in their life** The exact number of active Linux distributions is hard to pin down, but lists with several hundred active variants aren't unusual — most differ in surprisingly subtle details like package format and default color theme rather than anything fundamental.

**6.5 The fork bomb that became a running gag in security courses** The infamous bash one-liner that duplicates itself endlessly until the system crashes from resource exhaustion is still taught as a cautionary, half-joking example in introductory courses about why process limits exist — a command whose sole practical purpose these days is pedagogical.

**6.6 "RTFM" is essentially the Linux community's core value expressed as an acronym** Few subcultures have insisted so consistently, and for so long, that all the answers already exist in the manual, if you'd just read it — a stance that's both built incredibly good documentation and scared off a fair share of newcomers over four decades.

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## 7. Less Fun Truths

**7.1 Desktop market share is still ridiculously small** Despite total dominance in supercomputers, cloud servers, phones, and spacecraft, Linux's share of the world's desktop computers still sits at a low single-digit percentage. The most widely deployed operating system on the planet is, paradoxically, one of the least used on the very device most people actually sit in front of every day.

**7.2 Critical global infrastructure often rests on unpaid, solo volunteer labor** The XZ Utils incident revealed something uncomfortable: enormous parts of the internet's backbone are maintained by individual, often unpaid people in their spare time, while billion-dollar companies build their entire businesses on top of that work without necessarily giving back a comparable amount.

**7.3 No single person understands the whole system anymore** With over 40 million lines of code, thousands of contributors, and four decades of accumulated history, there's reasonably no living human being who fully grasps every part of the system that now keeps a significant chunk of civilization running — a mildly uncomfortable thought, but hardly unique to Linux.

**7.4 "Free software" is now largely funded by the same giants it once challenged** The companies contributing the most code to the Linux kernel today are, to a large extent, the same kind of big, profit-driven tech giants that the original free-software movement once saw as adversaries — a development almost nobody in the movement's early days would have confidently predicted, and not everyone is entirely comfortable with it.

**7.5 Even open source code can hide in plain sight for years** The person who planted the XZ backdoor spent more than two years building trust as an apparently helpful, productive co-maintainer — a reminder that "open" source code is only as safe as the number of people who actually bother to review it, which is rarely very many.

**7.6 A book chapter about bazaars got a major browser company to open its source code** Eric S. Raymond's essay "The Cathedral and the Bazaar" (1997) described Linux's development model — chaotic, decentralized, surprisingly effective — and is widely cited as a direct inspiration when Netscape chose to release its browser code freely in 1998, which in turn laid the groundwork for Mozilla and Firefox.

**7.7 Linux has its own arch-rival with its own mascot drama** The BSD family of Unix-like systems has its own mascot, a small red devil named Beastie — a playful, decades-long symbolic rivalry between two sibling movements within free software that's rarely about anything deeper than aesthetics and pride.

**7.8 Distro-hopping is widespread enough to have its own established name** The phenomenon of constantly switching Linux distributions in search of the "perfect" setup, rather than actually using the computer for anything, is so widespread in the community that it's earned its own established term: "distro-hopping."

**7.9 The desktop environment war has raged nearly as long as Linux itself** GNOME and KDE, the two major desktop environments, have developed in parallel since the late 1990s in what's effectively a decades-long, polite but relentless rivalry over design philosophy — over what a Linux computer should actually look and feel like.

**7.10 The transition from X11 to Wayland has taken longer than many entire careers** Wayland was first presented back in 2008 as the successor to the decades-old X11 windowing system — and only around 2026, with Wayland-only releases becoming standard in major distributions, has the transition finally started to feel complete for most users.

**7.11 The name "Linux" exists only because an administrator happened to prefer a different name** The entire brand, the entire identity, the entire cultural weight behind the word "Linux" ultimately rests on one person's arbitrary folder naming one evening in 1991 — perhaps the clearest reminder of how much of history is actually decided by pure chance rather than any grand plan.

**7.12 And all of this because a student didn't want to dial a phone call by hand** At its core, this entire, planet-spanning system was born out of a single reluctance: a Finnish student who couldn't be bothered to dial into the school's computer by hand every time. Strip away all the mythology, and civilization's server infrastructure ultimately rests on plain convenience — which might be the most fitting summary of human technological history as a whole.

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## 8. Distro Names With (Almost) Forgotten Meanings

**8.1 Debian is a name spliced together by a couple who split up long after** Ian Murdock, who founded Debian in 1993, combined his own first name with that of his then-girlfriend (later wife) Debra Lynn — "Deb" plus "Ian." The relationship eventually ended, but the name of one of the world's most influential Linux distributions lives on unaffected.

**8.2 Red Hat is named after a literal red lacrosse cap** Founder Marc Ewing wore a red lacrosse hat given to him by his grandfather during his studies and became known for helping classmates with technical problems while wearing it — a nickname that later became the foundation of one of the most commercially successful Linux companies in history.

**8.3 Ubuntu is named after a philosophy, not a technical principle** The name comes from the Southern African concept of "ubuntu," roughly "humanity toward others" in Zulu and Xhosa — a deliberate contrast to the otherwise fairly technocratic naming tradition within Linux distributions.

**8.4 Slackware is the oldest distribution still alive** Created by Patrick Volkerding in 1993 and still actively maintained — a remarkably long life in an industry where most products from that same year have long since been completely forgotten.

**8.5 Gentoo is named after a penguin species known for its speed** The Gentoo penguin is the world's fastest swimming bird, which suited the distribution's original focus on compiling everything from source, optimized precisely for your own hardware — speed as a philosophy, not just as a mascot.

**8.6 "I use Arch, by the way" is nearly its own personality type** Arch Linux requires the user to configure practically everything by hand from scratch, which has turned "I use Arch btw" into one of the most self-deprecating (and simultaneously genuinely proud) jokes in the entire Linux community.

**8.7 openSUSE's chameleon mascot has a name, just like Tux** The distribution's green chameleon character is officially named "Geeko" — a name that follows exactly the same "animal plus pun" formula that gave us Tux, and which the Linux community apparently finds impossible to resist regardless of distribution.

**8.8 Linux From Scratch exists for people who think a normal install is too easy** The Linux From Scratch project essentially just gives you instructions for building an entire working distribution yourself, command by command, from absolutely nothing — a form of self-inflicted suffering some people explicitly choose as a hobby in their spare time.

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## 9. Words, Sounds & Odd Habits

**9.1 Linus recorded his own pronunciation clip to settle an eternal dispute** After countless arguments about how "Linux" is actually supposed to be pronounced, Linus recorded a short audio clip of himself saying: "Hello, this is Linus Torvalds, and I pronounce Linux as Linux" — a technical solution to a social problem, in true engineering spirit.

**9.2 "sudo" is just two words mashed together** The name stands for "superuser do" — a command you type daily without necessarily stopping to think that it literally just means "do this, as the superuser, please."

**9.3 /dev/null is, philosophically speaking, the universe's most forgiving trash can** Everything sent there disappears permanently and without a trace, with no confirmation, no receipt, and no chance of regret — the closest digital equivalent to shouting your problems into a black hole and feeling slightly better afterward.

**9.4 kill -9 can't even be ignored by the process it targets** Unlike most signals a process can choose to catch or ignore, SIGKILL (signal 9) simply cannot be blocked or handled in any way — the operating system leaves no room for negotiation once that signal is sent.

**9.5 Steve Ballmer called Linux "a cancer" in 2001** The then-Microsoft CEO said in an interview that Linux, because of the GPL license's terms, "in a legal sense attaches itself to everything it touches." Two decades later, the same company ships its own Linux distribution as part of its cloud service.

**9.6 A leaked secret Microsoft document called the open community a threat** The so-called "Halloween Documents," internal Microsoft memos leaked in 1998, specifically described open source and Linux as a long-term strategic threat to the company's business model — a document that, with hindsight, turned out to be entirely correct.

**9.7 The term "open source" was coined at a meeting, partly as a marketing trick** In 1998, shortly after Netscape decided to open-source its browser, a group of advocates gathered in Palo Alto and coined the term "open source" specifically to sound more business-friendly than "free software" — a rebranding decision that effectively defined how the entire industry still talks about it today.

**9.8 "Talk is cheap. Show me the code" is practically the project's whole motto** Linus's most quoted line, coined in an email on the kernel mailing list, neatly sums up the entire culture around Linux development: opinions carry little weight, working patches carry a lot — a stance that's made the project notoriously impatient with mere ideas and platitudes.

**9.9 GNU is, literally, an animal named after a bad pun about itself** The name GNU is a recursive acronym joke meaning "GNU's Not Unix," while the mascot happens to be an actual African gnu (a type of antelope) — a double joke that's existed so long most users have never even noticed the second layer.

**9.10 Recursive acronym jokes are an entire Unix tradition unto themselves** Wine ("Wine Is Not an Emulator") follows exactly the same pattern as GNU: a program named after denying

what it actually resembles. An entire subgenre of software names exists purely for the sake of the in-joke.

**9.11 Btrfs has more accepted pronunciations than most words in the language** "Better FS," "butter FS," "b-tree FS" — the Linux filesystem Btrfs has plagued community discussions for over fifteen years without any official authority ever settling on a single correct pronunciation.

**9.12 An entire filesystem is too legally incompatible to live in the kernel** ZFS, a powerful filesystem originally from Sun Microsystems, can't officially ship built into the Linux kernel because its license (CDDL) is considered legally incompatible with the kernel's GPL — a dispute that's dragged on for over a decade and forced users into workarounds just to get access to the filesystem they want.

**9.13 Munich switched to Linux, had second thoughts, and switched back** Munich's city administration migrated tens of thousands of computers to its own Linux-based "LiMux" around 2004, was hailed internationally as an open source success story — and then decided in 2017 to switch back to Windows, after years of internal political tug-of-war over costs and compatibility.

**9.14 The kernel refused to upgrade its own license** When the Free Software Foundation launched GPLv3 in 2007, with new clauses against so-called "tivoization" among other things (hardware that runs GPL code but technically blocks the user from running their own modifications), Linus and the kernel developers deliberately chose to stay on GPLv2 — a schism within the free software movement that still stands today.

**9.15 The word "tivoization" is named after a TV box** The term was coined specifically because of TiVo, whose recording boxes ran GPL-licensed Linux code but were hardware-locked so users couldn't install their own modified versions — a loophole GPLv3 explicitly tried to close.

**9.16 Microsoft went from calling Linux a cancer to becoming a Platinum member** In 2016, fifteen years after Ballmer's comment, Microsoft joined the Linux Foundation as a paying Platinum member — one of the more complete about-faces in modern corporate history.

**9.17 These days you can run Linux inside Windows, with Microsoft's blessing** Windows Subsystem for Linux (WSL) lets Windows users run a full Linux environment directly inside their operating system — a feature built and maintained by the very same company that once described Linux as an existential threat.

**9.18 ChromeOS is, at its core, just another Linux distribution in disguise** Google's ChromeOS is built on a Linux kernel and originally descended from Gentoo — meaning every Chromebook ever sold, no matter how little it feels like it, is technically just another Linux computer.

**9.19 The Linux Foundation was formed by merging two dully named organizations** In 2007, the Open Source Development Labs and the Free Standards Group merged to form the Linux Foundation — the organization that today handles the trademark, the funding, and a large share of the administrative weight keeping the entire kernel project afloat.

**9.20 The French police switched to Linux and stayed** In sharp contrast to Munich, the French Gendarmerie gradually migrated over 70,000 computers to its own Ubuntu-based distribution ("GendBuntu") and reported saving several million euros in licensing costs — a clear example of how the same strategy can go in completely different directions depending on who carries it out.

**9.21 An extra second sent thousands of Linux servers haywire in 2012** When a so-called leap second was added to global time in June 2012, it exposed a bug in how the Linux kernel handled the time jump, causing a large number of servers worldwide to suddenly spike to 100% CPU load at once — an entire slice of internet infrastructure briefly confused because someone added a single second to the clock.

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