

The OpenBSD Culture

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OpenBSD

fundamentally OpenBSD is just some software

it has a long and interesting history

all of us use software in one form or another

everyone here has a fair idea of what OpenBSD is and what it can do

some of us develop OpenBSD as well

Culture

culture has several definitions, some of which are relevant here

the ones i like:

the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group

the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively

OpenBSD and culture

the definitions of culture refer to people

so to talk about OpenBSD and culture, you're really talking about the people and their relationship to the software

- users
- developers
- everyone else

OpenBSD users (me)

i identify more strongly with the developer group

however, i was a user once upon a time

what attracted me to the software are the customs of the developers

- documentation
- regular and quality releases

OpenBSD users (you)

im sure you're all very nice people

thank you for testing my code

so tell me about your experiences with openbsd

OpenBSD developers

114 people have accounts

- some are slackers
- maybe 89 are actual developers

located all over the world, doing lots of different jobs

a lot of us became developers without meeting another developer

OpenBSD developers

we're not known for our warm and fuzzy people skills

more generally known as a bunch of insensitive arseholes

we're not big on hugs (except for bob)

the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group

OpenBSD developers

“I'm mostly a FreeBSD person but all the OBSD people I briefly met were extremely friendly and smart in that scary sort of way. These people so aren't the NYLUG nerds.”

- CS on undeadly.org talking about meeting developers at NYCBSDCon

Customs

the 6 monthly release cycle

- we do active development for 4 or 5 months
- we test and stabilize for a month or two
- a release is tagged, and development starts again
- the release is shipped to the cd printers
- the release is available after we get the cds back

Customs

the development process

- something annoys you
- you try to fix it
- you show your fix to people who are knowledgeable in that area
- you get their ok and commit it (this bit can take a while)

Customs

we try to be as correct as possible

- adherence to standards where reasonable (e.g, large parts of POSIX, X/Open)
- incorrect documentation is a bug
- once a bug is identified, the rest of the tree is swept for it
- we check the return codes

Customs

pro-active security

- the technologies are covered by other talks
- if the api sucks, we try to make a better one
- we do it whenever and wherever we can, even if it means changing everything from locore.s all the way up to the compiler
- we don't do it if it costs way too much

Customs

we only use free licenses

- there is no “try to” here
- mostly BSD licensed
- new code uses `/usr/share/misc/license.template`
- GPL as an exception, but there are no new ones
- pro-actively replacing GPLed code

Customs

“evolution, not revolution”

“commit early, commit often”

peer review

education about bad practices or patterns

“knobs are for knobs” / “stupid buttons are stupid”

submissions are accepted on merit

Social institutions

email is important

- most is from person to person to get code reviewed
- there is only one private list, mostly for shaming people who don't review emails sent privately

icb for quick discussions

a diff means more than 1000s of words

Social institutions

email and icb are still slow compared to face to face conversation

sip/h323 sucks, and miod hasn't got the cpu cycles for it, so occasionally we get together

we have a hackathon in calgary every year

recently there have been hackathons focused on specific areas: ipsec, routing, slacking, ports, hardware

Achievements

we are the first operating system to

- develop and use anoncvs
- use randomness for more than keys
- ship ipsec in the base install
- make ipsec useful for mortals
- remove obsolete code and knobs

Achievements

we are the first operating system to

- provide enterprise level routing support in a general purpose os
- make pro-police work and ship it on by default
- provide open drivers for a metric buttload of 802.11 gear
- replace GNU software whenever possible

Achievements

we are the first operating system to

- fix C string handling with strncpy/strncat
- include spam control in the base (spamd)
- many many more things

Achievements

we still

- support one floppy for installs
- use gcc 2.95
- consider C++ a disease
- run on the vax

Achievements

openssh is the most widely used open source software

we understand copyright

Achievements

we run on the same number of architectures we compile for

we have more users than developers

we are still free

we ship complete source, despite having open in our name

Arts

guitar playing and contemporary russian poetry

our release artwork is distinctive, compared to the
offensively inoffensive artwork other projects lean to

we have GOOD music

we have BAD music

Users of other software

aren't really users who don't use openbsd

- EVERYONE uses ssh

however, they must be masochists since they run it on
crappy operating systems

In conclusion

the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively