

Re: Does anyone else think Wolfram Research are unfair to Unixusers?

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.math.symbolic/2008-07/msg00065.html>

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- *From:* none <none@xxxxxxx>
  - *Date:* Sat, 12 Jul 2008 23:56:39 +0100
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On Sat, 12 Jul 2008 23:37:07 +0100, Dave wrote:

Unix software was historically free, and to a good extent still is free. At the most basic level, the operating system is often free (i.e. Linux and Solaris), whereas Windows is not free.

That *might* make people less inclined to pay for such software on Unix than they would on Windows, where most useful software has to be paid for.

There is an expectation on Unix for software to be free, but an expectation for it to be paid for on Windows. I realise this is a bit of a simplification, so I'm not suggesting it will hold in every case.

Interesting, as for *Unix*, as against Linux, my experience was that most software was not only commercial, but expensive – and the companies refused to port to PCs for a long time, arguing that DOS, then Windows 3.1, was not up to handling the memory requirements, while the PC lacked the floating point speed. What software? CFD, wastewater process simulation, river modelling, sewer modelling, coastal modelling. What prices were they looking at? CFD wanted £10,000 annual licence; wastewater processes wanted £25,000 + 15% annual licence thereafter; the various hydraulic packages were also steep, in the £8,000 – £30,000 area.

It may be that 'Computer Science' types were expecting free software; engineers were not! As for Unix being 'free', that was because it was tied to not-so-cheap hardware, in exactly the same way as most buyers of PCs, for a long time, regarded DOS/Windows as 'free'. *Linux* was really the start of the revolution. Sun & their competitors were not offering Solaris, ?Iris?, etc., as platforms for open-source products.

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