

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

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- *From:* Dave <foo@xxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Sun, 13 Jul 2008 19:03:02 +0100
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none wrote:

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.

I understand where you are coming from, but long long ago Unix systems came with a C compiler so one could produce ones own code. It was only more recent years the trend was to not include a C compiler. Now of course things have changed around again, with gcc being free on any platform, Sun Studio 12 free on Linux and Solaris. I don't know about other C compilers (on HP-UX, AIX, IRIX etc). Last I knew they were all still commercial, but it's a long time since I've used those OS's.

The availability of a free C compiler meant a lot of code was available on Unix systems for free. I am well aware there was (and still is) expensive commercial code for Unix, but a lot more high quality software was available for Unix systems.

I'm not so sure Linux was the start of the free stuff. Linux would not have existed had it not been for all free "computer science" tools which were around at the time.

How many people pay for a word processor on Unix now? I don't think it is that many. This culture on Unix

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(and to a greater extent Linux systems), might make it more difficult to sell things like word processors.