

Geek to Gus



Some observations from 35 years in tech

Hugh Blemings - Everything Open 2023 - #hughhalf

Geek to Gus



aka “Learn from my mistakes that you might avoid repeating them...”

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Introductions



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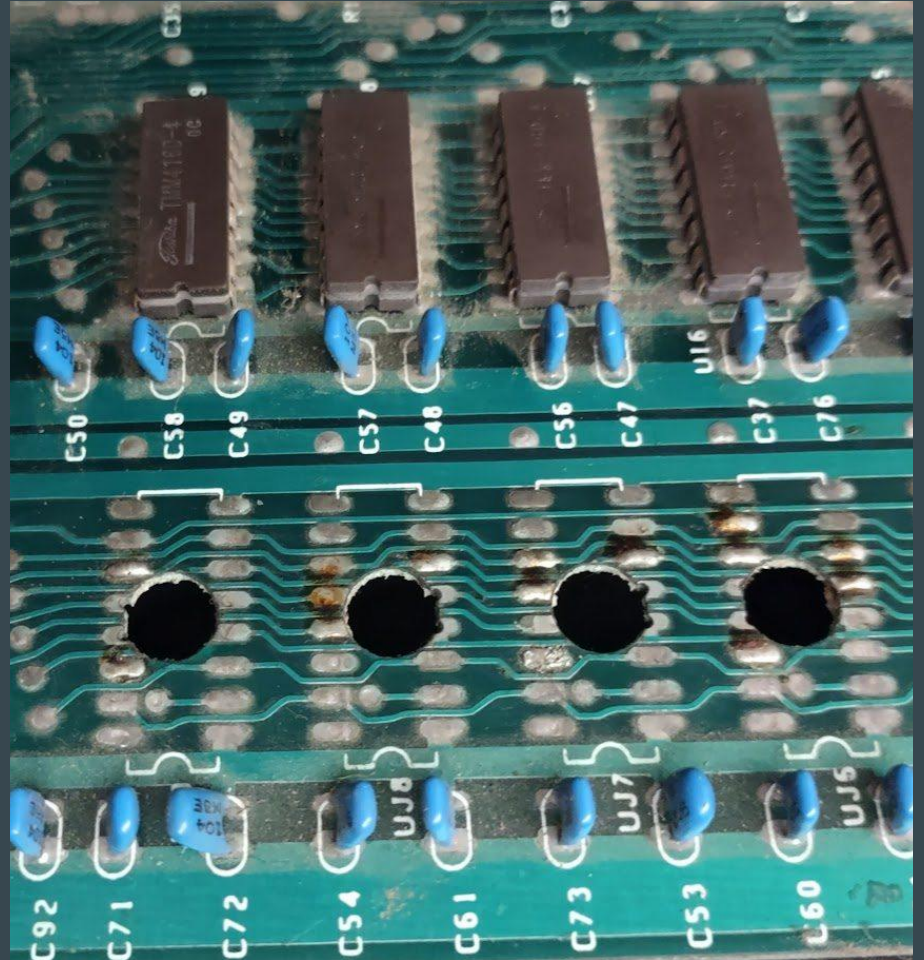


Photo courtesy of Ethan Dicks

Introductions

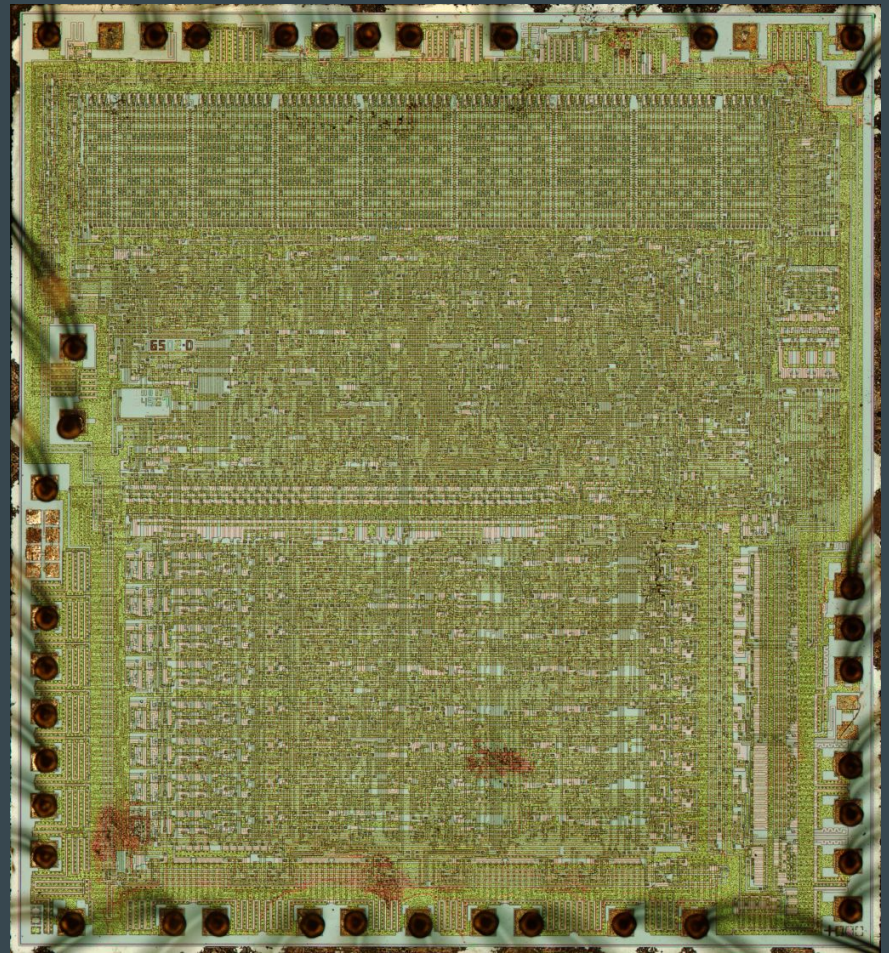


Photo source: visual6502.org

Linux Australia - A Brief History



Linux Australia

(The Linux Organisation of Australia)

[What is Linux?](#)  [Help! I have a Problem!](#)

Organisation Details Information about Linux Australia

- ▶ [Charter](#)
What we are about and hope to achieve.
- ▶ [Action Plan](#)
What we are currently doing, or planning on doing.
- ▶ [Mailing List/Resources](#)
A description of the resources we have available for you online and those we have for our use.
- ▶ [Help Us](#)
How you can help contribute to Linux Australia.
- ▶ [Penguin](#)
What does "TuX" the penguin have to do with Australia? Linus himself tells us. "Penguinitis is contagious".
- ▶ [Acknowledgements](#)
People or Organisations we'd like to publicly thank for their direct contributions to Linux Australia.

Linux Resources Online sources of Linux related information

- ▶ [Events calendar](#)
A calendar of Australian Linux related events. Find out what is happening near you!
- ▶ [Australian contribution](#)
Who are the Australians that have contributed to Linux? Here are the people we know, feel free to nominate anyone else you think deserving of our local "Hall of Fame".
- ▶ [Linux Clubs and User Groups](#)
Find the Linux club or user group nearest you.

CALU 1999 Melbourne



Photo: Origin lost in mists of time...

Linux AustraliaTM

>> linux.conf.au <<



What is Linux?

What is this Linux thing anyway?

Usergroups

Find your local Linux Usergroup.

Jobs

Looking for Linux related work? Find the work you're after here.

Community News

What is new with Linux Australia and Linux in Australia generally?

Services and Information

The services and information that Linux Australia provides, and links to our local mirrors.

Sponsors

A number of generous individuals and organisations support Linux Australia through their donations. Find out who they are.

Search

Search Australian Linux sites for whatever you are looking for.

Help! I have a Problem!

Check this for some ideas and advice on how to find answers to your questions.

Vendors/Consultants

Want to hire some Linux skills or buy some Linux merchandise? Find your local Linux consultant or vendor here.

Events Calendar

Find out what Linux events are happening in and near Australia. List your event here.

Organisation Details

What is Linux Australia? What is it trying to do?

"TuX" the Penguin

You've all seen "TuX" the Penguin, but what is his connection with Australia? Linus himself tells us. *"Penguinitis is contagious"*

Linux Australia Tux

The winning entry in our "Design a T-Shirt competition".

linux.conf.au 2001 Sydney



Photo: Courtesy Marc Merlin

- October 21, 2004 - **LA website is live!**

The Linux Australia new website commenced live as of 4am today. I still has some random messy tags that need cleaning up from the old site, and all feedback would be very welcome. Please email web-team@linux.org.au with any suggestions or issues. Cheers to everyone that contributed, especially to Stewart, Anand and Jeff who were there for the last few hours :) Also especially to Janet Reid who contributed the wonderful icons for our new look.

- October 21, 2004 - **Get all the reports**

Linux Australia now publishes all of its reports, as well as its minutes to the website. Find all monthly, half-yearly, President and other reports at <http://linux.org.au/about/reports/>

- October 21, 2004 - **Linux Australia News RSS feed**

La now has a shiny new [RSS feed](#) for news, for your viewing pleasure. Contact the LA cttee on: committee@linux.org.au

- October 20, 2004 - **Software Patents Forum**

Linux Australia in collaboration with the Open Source Industry Association (OSIA) and the Baker & McKenzie Cyberspace Law and Policy Centre at UNSW is proud to present the first Open Source Forum, which will deal with the increasingly important, but often misunderstood, issue of software patents. This event will take place on Nov 3, 2004.

See <http://www.bakercyberlawcentre.org/software/patents.htm> for more details.



linux.conf.au 2004 Adelaide



Photo: LWN / Jon Corbet

- January 16, 2005 - **Notice of 2005 AGM**

The Notice of 2005 AGM

(<http://www.linux.org.au/about/notices/2005AGM.html>) that was sent to members is viewable online.

- December 13, 2004 - **Election Nominations are open!**

We are now accepting nominations for positions on the Linux Australia Committee for 2005. Nominations (and voting) are handled by our online membership system. You must be a member to nominate, and membership is free. Click the membership link at the top of every Linux Australia page to find out more.

- November 19, 2004 - **Upcoming Gold Coast LUG InstallFest**

The Gold Coast LUG is holding an Install Fest for existing/potential GNU/Linux users.

Details:

Saturday 20th November

Start: 9:30 am

Last Install: 4:30 pm



linux.conf.au 2005 Canberra



Photo: Unknown

linux.conf.au 2006 Dunedin



Photo: Simon Lyall

- June 13, 2006 - **Linux Australia Urges the Federal Govt. Not to Abandon Consumer and Competition Interests**

Linux Australia, Australia's peak Free and Open Source Software community group, announced the launch of a petition today calling on the federal government to resist pressure to abandon consumer and competition rights when drafting anti-circumvention laws. New laws are required under the terms of the Free Trade Agreement negotiated between Australia and the United States.

"The treaty doesn't force us to implement this like the US, where these laws have driven litigation to suppress academic publications, prevent third-party printer cartridge manufacturers, and eliminate competition by Open Source software. But naturally some large business interests are pressing for the same restrictions on legitimate access to digital material here." said Rusty Russell, Linux Australia's IP Policy Adviser.

"Consumers should continue to enjoy full use of their legitimately purchased digital material, whether it be playing DVDs, copying CDs onto their iPods, using computer programs of their choice, or playing iTunes-bought songs on non-iPod MP3 players. You've paid for it, you use it as you see fit."

Gen Zumeris, a director with the Open Source Industry Association



about
us



about
linux &
open source



linux in
australia



press
room

Proud supporters of:



So what else has Linux Australia done ?

DrupalSouth DrupalGov Pycon AU WordCamps Healthhack
ISW Hackathon Open Source Developers' Conference
Planet Linux Australia Linux Australia Grants Scheme Joomla!day
Member Surveys Rusty Wrench Award Advocacy

Thank the volunteers

`<rant> Show some kindness </rant>`

FOSS/OH in Australia & New Zealand

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Between Australia and New Zealand we have, for our population, one of the most wonderfully vibrant FOSS communities in the world. Not without its flaws and wobbles to be sure, but we have a positive impact out of proportion to our number.

A sampling of Australian/New Zealand FOSS Projects, People and Companies

Linux Kernel Merridy Marshall Silvia Pfeiffer Paul Mackerras STEM Open Government rsync ArduPilot Moodle
Anthony Towns Open Source Law Quirky Tim Ansell Scott Ludlam Martin Pool Puppy Linux Roland Gesthuizen
Anna Gerber Peter Chubb Donna Benjamin Martin Schwenke John Lions Vik Olliver LSB Alexy Kardashevsky
Richard Keech Sae Ra Germaine Steve Hanley Scott Penrose Open Access Dave Lane Eloise Ducky Clinton Roy
Michael Davies Pia Andrews Gary Allpike Audrey Lobo-Pulo David Bell CODEC2 Everything Open Andrew Tridgell
Gelato Benjamin Herrenschmidt OpenStack Hackerspaces Peter Miller Michael Neuling Ben Mitra-Khan Jeff Waugh
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All the User Groups
...and many others...

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Foss in Australia & New Zealand

Between Australia and New Zealand we have, for our population, one of the most wonderfully vibrant FOSS communities in the world. Not without its flaws and wobbles to be sure, but we have a positive impact out of proportion to our number.

A great community to be a part of, grow in and, for that matter, work in...

Working in FOSS / OH

Finding the ideal FOSS role

- Use your (human) networks
- Local User Groups
- Conferences
- Linux Australia Jobs section
- The FOSS project(s) you work on
- Think about where would fit for *you*
 - Does their core business align with your values ?
 - Local vs Remote vs Hybrid
 - Culture

Getting ready to apply..

- Be visible in projects of relevance
 - You'll be typed into search engines, looked for on GitHub etc.
- Be yourself
 - But be business friendly
- Have an accurate LinkedIn presence
 - Recruiters do look at it
 - Basic better than none

Applications & Negotiations

- Do your homework about the organisation
 - Talk to people that work there if you can
- Spend time on interview prep
 - Know your stuff, if you don't know, just say so
 - Don't sweat it
- Think about your salary expectations and stick to them
 - Valerie Aurora's page on this is excellent
- Ask to keep copyright on your code
 - Should be a no brainer for a FOSS/OH company

In the job, now what ?

- It takes time to get into a groove, don't sweat it
- Get out every now and then particularly if working from home...
- Be mindful of work/life balance - tricky if you're passionate about the tech
- Know when to jump
 - Poisonous workplaces
 - We tend to stay longer than we should

Looking after You

Your physical and mental wellbeing are paramount and inexorably linked

- Ours is, in the main, a sedentary and solitary pursuit
 - So, exercise, maybe with friends!
- Sitting or standing all day in front of computer screens is bad
 - Take breaks!
- Eat more vegetables, no really...
- Depression is a real thing for many many of us
 - Beyond Blue & Bluehackers are excellent resources



Photo - Author (taken by)



Photo - Author (taken by and also a reasonable likeness of my brain some days...)

I'm not / we are not broken...

For People Managers

- The “people” bit should be first and foremost
- Protect flow time of your team
- Culture is pretty much the only point of differentiation now
- Statistically, your team are introverts
- Please do it well, or perhaps don't do it...

Learn cool tricks from colleagues

- Look over a colleagues shoulder (with their permission, naturally)
 - Here's one such tip

```
$ echo "Incredibly arcane and long command that you spend five minutes working out only to realise you need to do something else in the shell first before you can hit return..."
```

Go back to the start of the line (Ctrl-A in most shells), type a # in there making it a comment and hit return. It's in your history for you to come back to and continue editing

```
$ #echo "Incredibly arcane and long command that you spend five minutes working out only to realise you need to do something else in the shell first before you can hit return..."
```

Do something in the another part of the stack

- Do something that's not part of your regular job, on your own time if necessary
 - Some embedded/low level programming
 - Tinker with larger systems, web enabled things, metrics, logs, traces even!
 - Play round with stuff in the middle like ESP32/ESP8266
- Stay up to date with security blogs and the like
 - Many of the attack vectors have generic relevance, know how to avoid them
- Take the lid off/tinker with hardware
 - If you're soldering iron/screwdriver shy, seek out videos of the teardowns of modern gear

Make hay while the sun shines...

- Or at least stash away a few bob for a rainy day
- Keep your (people) networks ticking over
- Keep an eye out for next steps
- Learn completely new skills
- Things do, alas, happen...

You're Fired... Now What ? - In the moment

- Don't panic!
 - Going out in a twitterstorm probably won't help anyone
- It's not personal
 - It's the position that is no longer needed, not you
- Is it legal ?
 - If you think it's an unfair dismissal, seek further advice before responding

You're Fired... Now What ? - The Aftermath

- Yes, it's normal for it to feel a bit rubbish
 - Self care more important than ever
- Don't assume people will remember you
 - It's not personal, just everyone gets busy
 - It's ok to (politely, naturally) follow up periodically
- Consider keeping your search discreet for first week or two
- Beware Impostor Syndrome
 - Self doubt can creep in

Backing Yourself

1984



1984



2022



Photo courtesy of Maja Pearson

Learning to sing...



Photo courtesy of Maja Pearson

Who's Gus



Photo courtesy of Maja Pearson

Who's Gus



Photo courtesy of Greta Punch

Two quick shout outs...

Still doing cool things - check it out...



The (actually useful) free forever plan



One last thing, on taking the odd risk...

I have played in my time, every possible part,
And I used to know seventy speeches by heart.
I'd extemporize back-chat, I knew how to gag,
And I knew how to let the cat out of the bag.
I knew how to act with my back and my tail;
With an hour of rehearsal, I never could fail.
I'd a voice that would soften the hardest of hearts,
Whether I took the lead, or in character parts.

I have sat by the bedside of poor Little Nell;
When the Curfew was rung, then I swung on the bell.
In the Pantomime season I never fell flat,
And I once understudied Dick Whittington's Cat.
But my grandest creation, as history will tell,
Was Fireforefiddle, the Fiend of the Fell...



Photo courtesy of Maja Pearson

Back yourself, you'll be pleasantly surprised...

Thank you!

Hugh Blemings

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<https://hugh.blemings.id.au>

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Puppy photo © Hugh Blemings

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