

# 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](http://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, slackening, 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 `strlcpy`/`strlcat`
- 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*