

What the big names say

We asked prominent developers and project leaders in the FOSS world what they thought of 2014, and what they're most looking forward to this year.

Boudewijn Rempt

Lead developer of Krita, a powerful graphics editor for KDE.

LV What was your biggest highlight of 2014?

BR: Oh gosh! We had so many – we released *Krita* in Valve's Steam app store, we did a really successful Kickstarter for the Krita Foundation, and we had a booth at Siggraph! [computer graphics conference] And then we got a five-star review in an artists' magazine, *ImagineFX*, so *Krita* is getting noticed outside the FOSS world too.

LV What are you most looking forward to in 2015?

BR: The next release of *Krita*, with all the Kickstarter features... our next Kickstarter,

full support for creating animations, and the port to the Qt 5 graphical toolkit. No, I'm lying, I'm not looking forward to that port, but by March it'll be done.

LV What are the biggest challenges that face GNU/Linux and FOSS in the upcoming year?

BR: GNU/Linux will probably be fine: the kernel is well-funded, has a broad contributor base and, yeah, it'll do fine. FOSS in general too, apart from the usual patents challenge. I think the big challenge is all the divisiveness. All the hate people feel when someone comes up with a new idea. It's taking the fun



out of working on FOSS! If only everyone who feels the need to write a hateful mail or post would pledge to also write one love letter to a project of choice, maybe it'd balance out?

Ben Nuttall

Education, development and outreach for the Raspberry Pi Foundation.

LV What was your biggest highlight of 2014?

BN: Personally speaking, I'd say attending PyConUK. With the Raspberry Pi Foundation running the education track, introducing kids and teachers to open computing; Carrie Anne's keynote thanking the community for its efforts; and the wealth of presentations and lightning talks all rounding up to demonstrate what a great time this is to be involved in making a change through open source in education and industry.

LV What are you most looking forward to in 2015?

BN: FOSS is more than just a warm tingle, or knowing you're sticking it to The Man, it's a viable alternative. We've seen such growth in activity and community engagement in the FOSS community over the last few years, with more people using Linux in different flavours, and open source software libraries being ever more prevalent. We're seeing fantastic examples of what can be achieved in the free & open source world, and in many

areas what we have is pushing the limits of the proprietary alternatives, we're at a tipping point where I see FOSS being the preferable option in more and more cases. That's exciting, and I'm looking forward to what comes in 2015.

LV What are the biggest challenges that face GNU/Linux and FOSS in the upcoming year?

BN: We still suffer from a lack of choice for consumers. In the high street, people have the choice between buying a Windows laptop and a Macbook, there's just no awareness of an alternative. The addition of Apple is a huge step forward in diversity – now people know there isn't just one type of computer with one interface they should expect everywhere. However in the mobile phone market, when smartphones arrived, Linux (though Android) ended up taking the majority of market share without anyone even noticing.

Proprietary software vendors know they're losing out to FOSS, especially in areas like



web servers where Linux is king. They know they're slipping behind and they're worried. What they do to combat that could be good for everyone, if they become more open or start using open standards, or it could be competitive. In recent months we've seen Microsoft open source the .NET core and welcome contributions on GitHub, and we've seen them make Docker available for Windows. A concern could be that with open source tools available, it takes an edge off the attraction for some to use Linux.

/DEV/RANDOM/

Final thoughts, musings and reflections



Nick Veitch was the original editor of *Linux Format*, a role he played until he got bored and went to work at Canonical instead. Splitter!

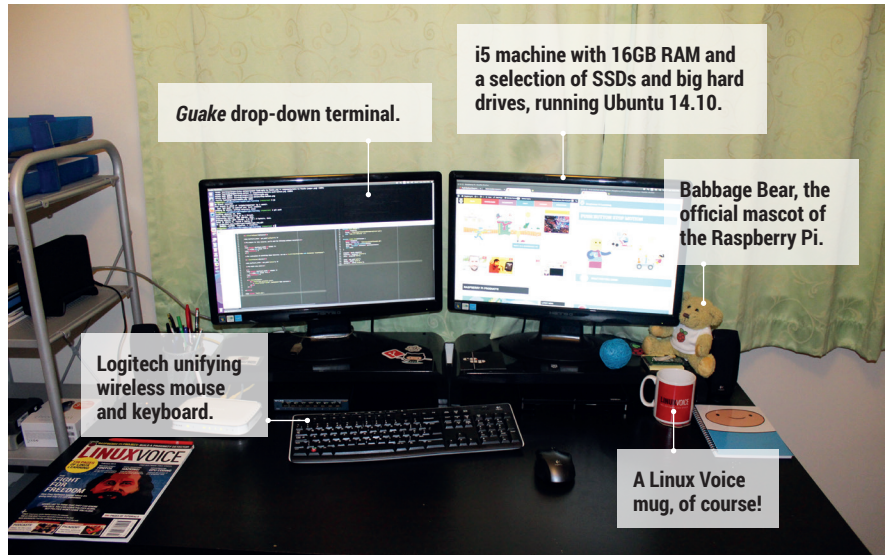
One of the very great things about Linux is the many splendid flavours available. Some of them cropped up at the recent CES show, where Intel unveiled its “PC on a stick”, a dongle-sized quad Atom thing (running Ubuntu) for next to no money. I am still thinking about what I would use it for. Maybe I need more than one.

Of course, Linux featured heavily in the TV section too. Not just the endless Android powered devices (it still runs a sort-of-Linux kernel after all), but the latest Samsung Smart TV (which uses the Tizen OS it originally shipped with some phones), and one or two featuring Roku (the operating system that’s also available in some media boxes of the same name). It is a bit of a wonder that nobody has tried to put *MythTV* into an actual TV.

Supreme Leader’s distro

There seems to be a Linux for everything. Unless you are in North Korea, in which case there is only one Linux deemed suitable for the Sony-hating masses – Red Star Linux, which in its latest incarnation seems to have borrowed quite a lot of look and feel from somewhere else – surely they don’t take field-trips to Cupertino? Anyway, it is testament to what one can do with KDE (see for yourself – <http://goo.gl/DxOPSu> courtesy of Wikimedia), but I think you may have to travel there to actually buy a copy.

Of course, this celebration of distros can’t miss out on one of my favourites (or should that be three of my favourites, since the development team decided to split it up into bits?): Fedora. While the new versions are all very exciting, I did notice some “end of life” messages for an older version. Yes, release 19, codenamed “Schrödinger’s cat”, is officially dead.



My Linux Setup Ben Nuttall

Education and outreach human at the Raspberry Pi Foundation.

Q What version of Linux are you using at the moment?

A I have a desktop at home and a laptop for work – both running the latest Ubuntu release. I also have a little HP ARM Chromebook, which is great for when I’m travelling. Chrome OS is nice for browsing (and even SSH), but I can switch to an Ubuntu container with *crouton* if I need to hack at something.

Q What was the first Linux setup you ever used?

A I ran my computer solely from an Ubuntu live disc for a good few weeks once when my hard drive was playing up, back in around 2007. A couple of years later I started using it more, and by then I’d met a bunch of people who used it day-to-day so I had more support, and that’s really important.

Q What Free Software/open source can’t you live without?

A One of the first things I install on a new machine is *Guake* – a simple

drop-down terminal. It suits the way I work really well, as I like to have focus on some window, like a web browser, and have quick access to a terminal or three, without juggling different windows.

Q What do other people love, but you can get on without?

A A lot of people use the GitHub desktop GUI, but I guess that’s Windows and Mac only anyway. I’m perfectly happy using *git* from the command line.

Q Is there one single piece of proprietary software you wish were open source?

A I’m a fan of the *Sublime Text* editor, and although you can download it for free it’s not open source. I’m starting to use GitHub’s open source editor *Atom* more, which is still in beta but it’s more feature heavy and really nice to use. Having said that, I probably use *Vim* more than anything – but graphical editors definitely have a place. 🐧