

# Sysadministrivia

## Linux, Lagers, and Late Nights

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# S3E3: "Ranting Lunatics"

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Quicklisten:

In which we expound upon mentoring and choosing enterprise distros. We also deliver the as-promised language-package-manager rant.

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## News

- Oracle won against Google in round two of their lawsuit.
- The CPU vulns just don't stop, now there's Total Meltdown.
- Facebook's management of privacy is atrocious.
  - But tell us something we didn't know.
  - They claim that they don't do any tracking.
  - And their best defense is you agreed to it.
- Microsoft now seeks to use bad words on Skype as justifications for bans, possibly related to FOSTA (see next point).
  - I mention Tox as a privacy-centric opensource alternative to Skype.
- FOSTA now holds "site operators/owners" **responsible** for illicit activity on their network, potentially.
  - Per Jthan, findasexslave dot com is not registered.
  - But a user was banned on Reddit for sharing an article **about the bill being passed**.
- Police have been petitioning Google for data about all mobile devices close to certain crimes.
- Firefox's password management is under heavy fire.

## Notes

Starts at **27m7s**.

I was drinking Jefferson's Reserve. Paden was drinking Miller Lite. Jthan was drinking Stranahan's American Single Malt whiskey.

- Mentoring (pt. II)
  - I mention (again) ESR's guide to asking smart questions, which is fantastic for a process to follow.
  - Finding a mentor
    - Look for people who contribute a lot. Bug reports for projects you're in, share a lot of (**useful**) code, offer a lot of good input on mailing lists/IRC channels/etc.
    - They're usually at the more technical (and less flashy/less "fun") conventions/conferences.
  - Finding an apprentice
    - Passion/invested interest/curiosity is a hardline **requirement**.
    - Compatible personality that matches yours is ideal.
- Why you should do both
  - There will always be someone that knows more than you about something, and the goal is to never stop learning.
  - Teaching others helps you learn.

- Having an apprentice exposes you to newer tech/implementations coming out.
  - Being both master and apprentice helps keep our industry alive.
- Choosing an enterprise distro (pt. II) (Thanks, raindev!) **(42m32s)**
    - What makes something a “good” enterprise distro; what requirements are generally needed for this (and what do you have at your organization)?
      - Stability and point release are big factors, with scalability being a close third.
      - Jthan brings up a great requirement, enterprise support available from the distro publishers themselves (i.e. not community support).
    - Why rolling release isn’t the best model for an enterprise organization.
      - Version-pinning – known set of bugs and vulns to account for and work around, helps you treat the fleet as “cattle, not pets”.
      - Rolling release is, by nature, more prone to breakage as new package releases come out.
        - This doesn’t make it **bad**, inherently, it just requires far more attention than should be applied to an entire server release.
    - What needs might be considered specific to your organization?
      - The specifics of your environment is going to be the primary deciding factor.
      - “The production environment is not a place to learn; it’s a place to *do*.”
      - Debian vs. RHEL vs. SUSE?
        - CentOS lacks enterprise support. It’d be fine for a small-medium business, but not for an enterprise platform.
        - SLES (SUSE Linux Enterprise Server) is MUCH more popular in e.g. Germany than in the US, where RHEL is more popular. If you’re in Germany, you should probably go with SLES because it’ll be easier to staff the operations team that is comfortable with SUSE-specific implementation.
        - The *culture* and region around your enterprise’s heart should be congruent with your enterprise’s implementation.
  - Our rant about independent package managers (pip, npm, etc.) **(59m47s)**
    - The “developer mindset” is to favor the language-specific package manager over the system package manager, **even when available from the distro repos**.
      - This creates an ugly mess between distro-provided modules and out-of-band packages.
    - Jthan thinks “in this day and age” where we have virtualenv, that should be used always. I disagree; this is part of the overcomplicated and messy “developer mindset” and Jthan’s use case is by no means standard experience.
    - We mention FHS.
    - This is what disagreements between Jthan and myself *off-air* usually look like.
    - R sucks because it’s much harder to version pin.
    - We at least all agree that Node.js/NPM sucks.

## Sysadministration Award

In this segment, we highlight system administration mistakes. Think of them as the IT equivalent of the Darwin Awards. **(1h36m19s)**

Drupal released a critical security update. Great! Except they failed to have an infrastructure that could support everyone downloading it at the time of release.

## Errata

- Jthan, venv is very different from virtualenv. They are entirely separate projects.

## Music

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**Categories** Season Three

## Comments

There are currently no comments on this article.