

Wayne Out There (.com)

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Stuff that matters to Wayne

Building the ubuntu Brand

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"I run Mac Unix." "I run Windows Dos" "I run ubuntu Linux" "I run a Ford carburator." "I run Android Linux" What the heck? Come again? None of these sentences should be occurring because these sentences contain significant branding and social fails. But we are all a little under-educated, so I'm going to go easy on you because many people in the past have gone easy on me - including all the people referenced in this post. I'm going to put lots of reference links so we can keep coming back here as a one-stop shop. This can be your 'Why We don't say Linux in Social Gatherings' post. First a bit of a background. I have a ham radio license. That's right. A ham radio license. And I'm proud of it. I will be able to call my ham friends when all of your telecom is down. But just because I'm a ham operator does not mean I will drop that info in just any old conversation. Nor would a lawyer admit that he was a lawyer if he was enjoying a few drinks with normal people. Get it? This ain't the 80s any more. In fact, it's not even the 90s any more. We can drop the L word. Let's begin our journey with [Randall Ross' article](#) on exactly that topic. But it wasn't just Randall and myself who dropped the L word. Canonical also [dropped the L word](#) from all their material. So Canonical, who has an actual marketing department, who has made ubuntu the best OS on the planet, and who has build relationships with some of the biggest companies on the planet has dropped the L word. As per the intro of this post, you don't see users of other operating systems walking around talking about the core engine of their operating system. It's unneeded. It screws up the brand and the message of simplicity and complicates it. Still not convinced? No problem. Many people who don't drop the L word are called '1337'. Don't ask me. Apparently this is not the numbers 1337 but instead means 'leet' or 'elite'. In essence, it means 'I'm arrogantly higher tech than you.' Joe Liau wrote extensively on '[1337](#)' [here](#) if you'd like to learn more and laugh a bit. It would be perhaps someone who is a 'geek and proud of it' in all the wrong ways. Perhaps it would be the guy who brags that he's missing the party to go to the computer club in high school. Not cool. It's cool that you are going to the computer club but it's not cool that you are missing the party and it's even more uncool that you are bragging about it. So, people who say 'ubuntu Linux' are technologically arrogant. Perhaps another analogy would be the two guys talking about the latest Porsche engine components or the details of the baseball players batting average. It's obvious that very few people in front of you are going to know or care about the lingo. Engaging them in lingo you know they won't know, you are wilfully looking big in front of someone and showing off perhaps to compensate some other insecurity. You're disrespecting them. Now for you folks who say 'ubuntu is linux' - no. It's not. Linux is a kernel. It has taken me a while and a bunch of emails back and forth to cement this and be able to talk confidently about it but here is the analogy from a few friends of mine: 1. Linux is a kernel, not an operating system. Go to www.linux.org, get a copy of Linux and try to boot it on your computer. Hint: good luck and make sure you pack a lunch! 2. Saying "I run Linux on my computer" is analogous to saying "I took my carburator to work." Yes, the carb was under the hood and part of the engine that got you to work, but it was the rest of the engine, the design team on the body, the seatbelts and airbags, and stellar surround sound stereo with lots of bass that got you to work in style.

"Linux is the 'carb'. Ubuntu is the 'car'."

And you can quote that and give me zero credit if you want because the revelation was built on the back

of many. Although I'm very thankful for the carb, I don't ever talk about it unless I'm at a mechanics shop or with a group of car enthusiasts out of ear shot of anyone who wouldn't give a crap about car talk. If you really want to see ubuntu become greater, you'll need to take an active concern about changing some habits. We're all guilty of misrepresenting someone or something at some point, including ubuntu. But this ain't the 80s or 90s any more. Ubuntu is mainstream. Let's take ubuntu from mainstream to all stream by becoming better ambassadors for the brand. For ten simple tips to improve the way you represent ubuntu see [this series by Randall](#). Final note since we're talking about brand: I started using lower case 'u' for ubuntu since I've noticed that's what the brand does. Unless it finds itself at the beginning of a sentence in which case I feel it deserves a capital. One last time, class:

"Linux is the 'carb'. Ubuntu is the 'car'.

And just to be clear:

ubuntu is a Ferrari. The rest are just Pintos.

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