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Release criteria for the Linux kernel

by David G. Glance

Abstract

Release criteria for the Linux kernel by David G. Glance

Before software is released to its users, software developers will ensure that the
met specified functional and technical requirements and that it is as free from b
possible. Users should be able to have a high degree of confidence that the softv
perform as specified and without fault. With open source development practices
employed on the Linux kernel project, there are no detailed specifications and lit
testing processes. The questions, then, are what criteria, if any, are used in dete
suitability for release of a particular version of this software, and do users have
confidence in the quality of that release of software? These questions were exan
study using information from the Linux Kernel Mailing List (LKML), the primary f
discussion of development issues of the Linux kernel, and change logs submitted
releases of the Linux kernel. It was determined that very little planning is emplc
determining the release of a particular version of the software and that a versior
software is essentially a collection of source patches released at regular intervals
stabilisation of the code base before each release. Very little attempt is made to
code is bug free, and consequently, the code released is of a largely unknown le
End users are left to decide for themselves the suitability and robustness of a pa
of the software.

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Linux kernel development process
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Introduction

From a software engineering perspective, most software projects incorporate so
have to be met before software is released to users. Typically, this will be a com
number of factors including the fulfilment of the functional and technical require
testing and removal of bugs and defects in the code and other less software eng

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