Finding Aid to the Berkeley Software Distribution Records, bulk 1974-2005

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Collection Number: CU-551

University Archives, The Bancroft Library

University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California

Finding Aid Written By:
Josh Schneider

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Collection Summary

Collection Title: Berkeley Software Distribution records

Date (bulk): bulk 1974-2005

Collection Number: CU-551


Extent: Number of containers: 10 cartons Linear feet: 12.5

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Abstract: The Berkeley Software Distribution records, 1974-2005, comprise technical manuals, drafts, and notes pertaining to the Berkeley Software Distribution (BSD) operating system, a UNIX derivative developed at the University of California, Berkeley, from 1974-1995. A limited number of inscribed published materials are included, as are a vast quantity of magnetic data reels and CD-ROMs containing complete distributions of the operating system from various stages in its development.

Languages Represented: Collection materials are in English

Physical Location: Many of the Bancroft Library collections are stored offsite and advance notice may be required for use. For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Access

Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Berkeley Software Distribution Records, CU-551, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Alternate Forms Available

There are no alternate forms of this collection.

Related Collections
Records of the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. (CU-39.3)

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
Berkeley BSD (Computer file)
FreeBSD
Haley, Charles B
Jolitz, William Frederick
Joy, Bill, 1954-
McKusick, Marshall Kirk
OpenBSD (Electronic resource)
Open source software--Law and legislation--United States
Quarterman, John S., 1954-
University of California, Berkeley.--Computer Systems Research Group
UNIX (Computer File)

Acquisition Information
The Berkeley Software Distribution Records were given to the Bancroft Library by Marshall Kirk McKusick on October 27, 2005.

Accruals
No additions are expected.

System of Arrangement
Arranged to the container level.

Processing Information
Processed by Josh Schneider in 2006.

Organizational History
AT&T's Bell Labs began development on the UNIX operating system in 1969. In 1973 an early release was distributed free-of-charge to a number of educational and research institutions, including UC Berkeley. Berkeley Software Distribution (BSD) began as a UNIX derivative, created by researchers and students at the University of California, Berkeley, as supplements to the UNIX operating system developed at AT&T's Bell Labs.

Between 1977-1980, UC Berkeley released four software distributions. While the first two releases (known as 1BSD and 2BSD) contained mostly additions to AT&T's UNIX architecture, the next release, 3BSD was a full-fledged operating system, although it still depended heavily on AT&T's proprietary UNIX source code.

In 1980, based on the success of the 3BSD operating system, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) agreed to provide UC Berkeley with funding to develop a standard UNIX platform for future DARPA research. The Computer Systems Research Group (CSRG) was formed to lend greater organization to the existing effort. From 1980-1992, a number of major software distributions were released by the CSRG, including 4BSD, 4.1BSD, and 4.2BSD, as well as Net/1 and Net/2.

Over time, less and less of the operating system depended upon the original AT&T source code. By the release of Net/2 in 1991, CSRG developers believed that it was no longer necessary for users of their operating system to also buy UNIX licenses from AT&T, which had been a requirement in earlier releases. AT&T disagreed, and in 1992 (the same year BSD was ported to the Intel 80386 architecture) they sued BSDi, a corporation founded by several former members of CSRG which had distributed, sold licenses to, and provided commercially support for a version of the BSD operating system. AT&T claimed BSDi's distribution included proprietary code and trade secrets. Soon after, AT&T filed a second suit, against the University of California. Following Novell's purchase of the AT&T subsidized laboratory that specialized in UNIX in 1993, the suit was settled in 1994. As part of the settlement, two forms of 4.4BSD were released in June of that year: the freely distributable 4.4BSD-Lite containing no AT&T source code, and 4.4BSD-Encumbered, available only to those who had purchased AT&T licenses.

In 1995, following the release of 4.4BSD-Lite Release 2, the Computer Systems Research Group was dissolved, ending development of BSD at UC Berkeley. Although official university development halted in 1995, a number of unaffiliated user groups around the world continued to develop BSD code under a variety of projects, including FreeBSD, NetBSD, and OpenBSD.
1969  AT&T's Bell Labs begins to develop the UNIX operating system under the direction of Dennis Ritchie and Ken Thompson.

1973  Bell Labs distributes earliest version of UNIX operating system along with the source code. It is free to academic and research institutions.

1974  Under the direction of Professor Bob Fabry, UC Berkeley orders and installs Version 4 UNIX on its first UNIX-ready computer system, a PDP-11/45.

1977  Graduate Student Bill Joy assembles and distributes tapes containing the first Berkeley Software Distribution (1BSD), an add-on to Version 6 UNIX.

1978  Second Berkeley Software Distribution (2BSD) is released.

1979  Third Berkeley Software Distribution (3BSD) is released. Although it owes much to the initial port of UNIX to the VAX architecture, UNIX/32V, it is the first complete BSD operating system developed and distributed by the University of California Berkeley. AT&T begins to sell UNIX commercially.

1980  UC Berkeley becomes new center of non-commercial UNIX research.

1981  4.1BSD is released in June.

1982  Bill Joy leaves CSRG to co-found Sun Microsystems.

1983  4.2BSD released in August. It contains a modified version of BBN's preliminary TCP/IP implementation, as well as the new Berkeley Fast File System created by Marshall Kirk McKusick.

1986  4.3BSD released in June. Following release, a decision is made to move away from VAX platform.

1989  Networking Release 1 (Net/1) is released. It is the first UC Berkeley-developed operating system that does not require users to obtain a separate license from AT&T.

1991  Networking Release 2 (Net/2) is released following an eighteen month effort led by BSD developers Keith Bostic, Mike Karels, and Marshall Kirk McKusick to replace all AT&T elements of the BSD operating system, which would allow the entire system to be freely redistributable. All but 6 files are free of AT&T code at time of release.

1992  BSD is ported to the Intel 80386 architecture.

1993  Novell purchases the AT&T subsidiary lab specializing in UNIX.

1994  University reaches settlement with Novell.

1995  4.4BSD-Lite Release 2 marks final release from UC Berkeley. Computer Systems Research Group dissolves, ending development of BSD at UC Berkeley. Unaffiliated user groups continue to develop BSD code under a variety of projects, including FreeBSD, NetBSD, and OpenBSD.

Scope and Content of Collection

The Berkeley Software Distribution records, 1974-2005, comprise technical manuals, drafts, and notes pertaining to the Berkeley Software Distribution (BSD) operating system, a UNIX derivative developed at the University of California, Berkeley, from 1974-1995. A limited number of inscribed published materials are included, as are a vast quantity of magnetic data reels and CD-ROMs containing complete distributions of the operating system from various stages in its development.

Many of the materials in this collection derive from a relatively early period in the history of computer software research and development in the San Francisco Bay Area and at the University of California, Berkeley, in particular. The BSD project at the University of California, Berkeley, produced a groundbreaking operating system, whose longevity and list of descendants underscore its many innovative technological achievements. As a product of cooperation between the University of California, Berkeley, and AT&T, BSD served as a testing ground for the legal implications of...
university/corporate relationships in computer software development.

Series 1 Distribution materials 1974-1994
Physical Description: Carton 1-4
Arrangement
Arranged hierarchically by distribution. Further arranged chronologically.
Scope and Content Note
This series comprises the bulk of print materials in the collection. It consists mainly of research data, printouts, and technical reports documenting the development of the Berkeley Software Distribution operating system at the University of California, Berkeley from 1974-1994.

Subseries 1 4.1 BSD 1974-1981
Physical Description: Carton 1
Arrangement
Arranged hierarchically.

Subseries 2 4.2 BSD 1982-1985
Physical Description: Carton 2
Arrangement
Arranged hierarchically.

Subseries 3 4.3 BSD 1986-1990
Physical Description: Carton 3
Arrangement
Arranged hierarchically.

Subseries 4 4.4 BSD 1988-1994
Physical Description: Carton 4
Arrangement
Arranged hierarchically.

Series 2 BSD manual drafts and miscellaneous files 1985-1994
Physical Description: Carton 5
Arrangement
Arranged hierarchically. Further arranged chronologically.
Scope and Content Note
This series includes drafts of BSD programming/operating manuals in various states of completion, as well as miscellaneous files covering a limited range of topics.
Series 3 Published print materials 1989-2005
   Physical Description: Carton 6
   Arrangement
   Arranged chronologically.
   Scope and Content Note
   This series includes published BSD programming/operating manuals inscribed by their respective authors.

Series 4 Non-print materials Circa 1980-2000
   Physical Description: Carton 7-10
   Arrangement
   Arranged as received.