

Operating- System Structures



An operating system provides the environment within which programs are executed. Internally, operating systems vary greatly in their makeup, since they are organized along many different lines. The design of a new operating system is a major task. It is important that the goals of the system be well defined before the design begins. These goals form the basis for choices among various algorithms and strategies.

We can view an operating system from several vantage points. One view focuses on the services that the system provides; another, on the interface that it makes available to users and programmers; a third, on its components and their interconnections. In this chapter, we explore all three aspects of operating systems, showing the viewpoints of users, programmers, and operating system designers. We consider what services an operating system provides, how they are provided, how they are debugged, and what the various methodologies are for designing such systems. Finally, we describe how operating systems are created and how a computer starts its operating system.

Bibliographical Notes

[Dijkstra (1968)] advocated the layered approach to operating-system design. [Brinch-Hansen (1970)] was an early proponent of constructing an operating system as a kernel (or nucleus) on which more complete systems could be built. [Tarkoma and Lagerspetz (2011)] provides an overview of various mobile operating systems, including Android and iOS.

MS-DOS, Version 3.1, is described in [Microsoft (1986)]. Windows NT and Windows 2000 are described by [Solomon (1998)] and [Solomon and Russinovich (2000)]. Windows XP internals are described in [Russinovich and Solomon (2009)]. [Hart (2005)] covers Windows systems programming in detail. BSD UNIX is described in [McKusick et al. (1996)]. [Love (2010)] and [Mauerer (2008)] thoroughly discuss the Linux kernel. In particular, [Love (2010)] covers Linux kernel modules as well as kernel data structures. Several UNIX systems—including Mach—are treated in detail in [Vahalia (1996)]. Mac OS X is presented at <http://www.apple.com/macosx> and in [Singh (2007)]. Solaris is fully described in [McDougall and Mauro (2007)].

DTrace is discussed in [Gregg and Mauro (2011)]. The DTrace source code is available at <http://src.opensolaris.org/source/>.

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