



Review by Jeff “SKI” Kinsey

If one were born into the technology sector last night, that might be a legitimate reason to not recognize the name “Red Hat.” Otherwise, most everyone should know about this upstart software company from North Carolina. They sell and support free software. Yes, they “sell” free software. Actually, they sell the packaging of free software—that is to say, they sell software that is readily available to everyone if everyone had the time to look for it and harness it. Red Hat takes the universe of “Open Source” software and bundles segments of it that are designed to achieve specific results. Red Hat’s IPO (Initial Public Offering) of its stock [RHAT] made quite a showing. This is a good time to mention the royalties from the book are being donated to the Free Software Foundation.

The text is designed to document a new business model. Although it is not a

Under the Radar

How Red Hat Changed the Software Business— And Took Microsoft by Surprise

By Robert Young, CEO of Red Hat, Inc.
And Wendy Goldman Rohm

history treatise, it starts off with an excellent overview of Internet history from the 1968 founding of ARPANET. It documents how ARPANET begat DARPA which begat the “Internet” as we now know it today.

Why highlight this particular book in TOCReview? Three reasons come to mind. First, it is a business text documenting a new business model. TOC experts should be receptive to hearing about the latest fads in management trends. Second, eDivision.net LLC [parent of TOCReview] combined a lot of the concepts in Goldratt’s texts with the “Open Source” approach in several areas, most notably staffing, to create breakthroughs. Everyone in our organizations is either a partner or subcontractor: no employees! Third, if we did not point out this landmark text, you might never have discovered it!

Red Hat, Inc. markets a distribution of a UNIX like Operating System (OS) known as Linux. Under the Radar does a great job of explaining the cosmic tumbling that started with ARPANET that made UNIX popular that in turn made Linux possible. Rohm is credited with doing the research to make the book an accurate representation of the events that were reported. It is not all-inclusive and does not attempt to be so.

Most interesting is the thorough explanations of the “Open Source” movement—as a continuous revolution that has redefined how software is created. The authors deserve high marks for staying focused on the task at hand, to document this new business model known as the “Open Source” movement. Examples that are used extensively throughout the book serve to drive the point home. Inside details of Intel’s involvement, first with “Open Source” tools and then, later, as an initial investor in Red Hat [to Microsoft’s disappointment] are fast paced and extremely insightful. Netscape’s decision to jump on the “Open Source” movement, and the disappointing results to date, are among a host of “insider” examples.

“IN THE SPRING OF 1998, Red Hat stood between two worlds: the avant garde of rebel hackers Editor’s Note the book explains well-earned respect for the term “hacker” its rightful use, and decries the press for subverting this term and using it to represent criminal misconduct] and the establishment—the venture capitalists, corporate investors, and industry giants like Intel, who were now courting the company.”

To understand how businesses will be funded in the future, one needs to consume this text. Are you considering working for a start-up company? Again, better read and understand Under the Radar. There will be a test! One such test is called the job interview!

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