

A mix of two halves

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A UNIX course
holly war 101: interpretation of
intention & implementation without
documentation.

Note: Best fought over code 35 years or older

“Often the reason for a particular implementation technique becomes clear when the historical reasons are described”

*–Richard Stevens
(Advanced Programming in UNIX Environment)*

“Quality happens only when someone is responsible for it.”

*–Poul-Henning Kamp
(A Generation Lost in the Bazaar)*

“A good programmer is someone who looks both ways before crossing a one-way street.”

–Doug Linder

Reading

- An Oral history of Unix
- A Research UNIX Reader: Annotated Excerpts from the Programmer's Manual, 1971-1986
- Design of design - Frederick P Brooks
- The Fifth Discipline - Peter Senghe



Norman Wilson

@oclsc

Following



Old enough to remember when BSD meant the big complex overfeatured member of the UNIX family, rather than the slim trim one.

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57

118



An Oral History of Unix (Michael S. Mahoney)
- Your Highlight Location 633-641

If you look at the Berkeley Unix system and some of the commands that are similar, the same in Berkeley as what we have here but you look at the Berkeley manual they've added 85 flags to the Cat command or something. It was a very simple elegant thing that did a very simple job. I guess we've always had the attitude that it has to be really useful to be worthwhile putting in. Maybe just 'cause it was a smaller group than at Berkeley or maybe people in Berkeley, everybody needs to find a niche so they've got to put a flag on something, I don't know what the environment is there. But I think it was here to prevent featurism. I think that's the difference between the two systems. And I think that undoubtedly has to do with the university environment where everybody has to do something as opposed to the environment where in some sense everybody had to justify what it is they were doing to your cause. And there is also some hesitancy 'cause if you touched it you owned it, you thought hard about whether you needed to add that flag or whether there was some other way around it. Whether there was some program. You said "I'll find some other way to do this 'cause I don't want to own this program." - Lorinda Cherry

Watching

- Brett Victor - Inventing on Principle
- Alan Kay - Inventing the future (most recently, many more)
- Bryan Cantrill - Leadership Without Management: Scaling Organisations by Scaling Engineers

Resources

- TUHS archive
- Éric Lévénez history of Unix
- man.cat-v.org

Fail
fast
and
try
AGAIN

IBM

10
50
PICA

6 7 8 9 0

Subtleties

- Testing and test suites
- Bad systems harbour bad habits
- Respect for the time of others
- Filing in the whole picture
- Evolution of ideas vs Trash & replace