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# Introduction to CentOS and its history

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CentOS, which stands for Community Enterprise Operating System, is a Linux distribution known for its stability, reliability, and long-term support. It is based on the source code of Red Hat Enterprise Linux (RHEL) and aims to provide a free and open-source alternative to RHEL, while maintaining compatibility with its upstream source.

**History:**

1. **Origins in RHEL:**

   - CentOS traces its roots back to RHEL, which is developed and maintained by Red Hat, Inc.
   - RHEL is a commercial Linux distribution known for its stability and support, primarily targeted at enterprise customers.
   - Red Hat releases the source code of RHEL under the GNU General Public License (GPL), allowing anyone to redistribute and modify it.

2. **Creation of CentOS:**

   - CentOS was created in 2004 by a small group of developers led by Gregory Kurtzer, who aimed to provide a freely available alternative to RHEL.
   - The CentOS project takes the freely available source code of RHEL, removes Red Hat's trademarks and branding, and rebuilds it to create a compatible distribution.
   - The goal of CentOS is to provide a stable and community-supported operating system suitable for use in production environments.

3. **Versioning and Release Cycle:**

   - CentOS follows a versioning scheme that mirrors RHEL's version numbers. For example, CentOS 7 corresponds to RHEL 7.
   - CentOS typically lags behind RHEL releases by a few months due to the time required to rebuild and test the distribution.
   - CentOS releases updates and security patches regularly, ensuring ongoing support and stability.

4. **Popularity and Adoption:**

   - CentOS has gained significant popularity among users and organizations seeking a reliable and cost-effective Linux distribution.
   - It is widely used for web hosting, server deployments, virtualization, and various other

applications where stability and long-term support are essential.
  - Many businesses and enterprises rely on CentOS for their critical infrastructure needs, thanks to its compatibility with RHEL and its reputation for stability.

5. **Acquisition by Red Hat:**

  - In 2014, Red Hat announced its acquisition of CentOS, with plans to integrate CentOS more closely into its ecosystem.
  - As part of this integration, Red Hat introduced CentOS Stream, a rolling-release version of CentOS that serves as a testing ground for future RHEL releases.
  - Despite the acquisition, CentOS continues to be maintained as a separate project with a focus on community-driven development and support.