

The Transitional Operating System

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The Operating System (OS) is the most important piece of software on your computer. From a user perspective, the OS provides the interface with which the users interact. Behind the scenes, an operating system carries out many additional functions. The OS recognizes drives and communicates between applications and the processor. The OS manages a directory of files, and manages resources such as fonts and system sounds. Without the operating system nothing happens! In this article we will explore what we can expect from operating systems of the future.

When the OS evolved from command-line interfaces to graphical user interfaces, many tasks that computer users routinely carried out became much easier and user friendly. The graphical user interface or GUIs made possible by the invention of Xerox PARC was the major step toward making the computers accessible to the average computer user not just computer geeks.

In recent years, the standard GUI began to show signs of age. Hardware and software have become increasingly complex. To the rescue, came the wizard--a simple piece of software that converts complicated tasks into an automated procedure. In the future, you can expect to see more wizards incorporated into operating systems.

As various kinds of media were formerly separate--such as mail, television, radio, and telephony--converge on the desktop, expect operating systems to evolve to deal with these seamlessly. Operating systems in the future will easily operate these multiple systems which will be merged with the operating systems in the future.

The ideal OS is one that we never have to think about. It will function as an obedient Victorian era servant who knows our wishes better than we do. We will see voice activation and instruction continue to develop and be integrated into future operating systems. Jeeves, our OS butler, may well take care of most of our commands.

I am speaking to my OS, "Write me an article for the Computer Hysteria column for the eMonitor." Nothing is happening. Well, if my OS cannot do that I will try something else. "Fix my supper and clean my apartment!" Nothing is happening. I guess I will have to wait for future developments of the operating system.