

Helping Computer Scientists in Romania

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As a Professor in the Computer Science Department of the Polytechnical Institute of Bucharest, Romania, I would like to bring to your attention the effort of a group of professionals, researchers, students and professors around the world. This effort, called "Free UNIX for Romania", has been initiated and coordinated by Marius Hancu, an advisor at the Parallel Architectures Group, Center de Recherche Informatique de Montreal, Montreal, Canada.

The purpose of this effort is to help Computer Science Departments in Romanian universities to obtain educational literature and software. The past communist regime left the Computer Science Departments in Romania without basic educational literature and software. At present, bad economic circumstances leave Romanian universities unable to afford buying any materials for hard currency. Moreover, universities cannot obtain even 'free software' due to their very poor telecommunications equipment. In order to be able to catch up with advances in computer science, Romanian universities and research institutes need professional literature and complete Unix systems with advanced programming environments. Especially needed are Linux and 386BSD that can be obtained without fee or authorization and therefore can be distributed with no restrictions or copyright infringements. These systems run on 386/486 PCs, which are the most ubiquitous computing platforms in Romania.

In response to Marius Hancu's appeal, volunteers around the world have helped by obtaining, recording and shipping to Romania public domain soft-

ware; by donating disketes, magnetic tapes, terminals and other equipment; by making financial contributions which have been used mainly for sending computer science literature to Romanian universities; by distributing, installing and testing software in Romania; and by offering technical advice to computer scientists in Romania. As a result of this effort, Linux and 386BSD have been installed at over 20 locations, such as universities, research institutes, etc. Professional literature is made available by departmental libraries to all interested borrowers in Romania.

However, there is still a tremendous need for more educational literature, software and documentation. Any help would be greatly appreciated. Financial help, donations, suggestions, ideas from individuals, professional organizations such as ACM and IEEE, and private companies are welcome. Public domain software can be sent through electronic media such as electronic mail, the newsgroup soc.culture.romanian on the Internet, and the mailgroup romanians@sep.-stanford.edu (based at Stanford University, also on the Internet).

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