Year	Version	Est. Number Users	Est. SLOC
1991	0.01	100	10,000
1992	0.96	1000	40,000
1993	0.99	20,000	100,000
1994	1.0	100,000	170,000
1995	1.2	500,000	250,000
1996	2.0	1,500,000	400,000
1997	2.1	3,500,000	800,000
1998	2.1.110	7,500,000	1,500,000
2000	RedHat 6.2	NA	1,500,000/17,000,000
2001	RedHat 7.1	NA	2,400,000/30,000,000

Table 4.7: The early growth of Linux. The estimate for the number of lines of source code for period 1991-1998 are for the entire distribution, while the estimates for 2000 and 2001 are for only the Linux kernel, as well as for the entire distribution. Sources: [86], [156], and [157].

The first release of Linux was in 1991 and within five years there were over 1,000,000 users.

This is amazing for several reasons. The first release of Linux was written by a student and later versions (to this day) are written by a community of volunteers. Linux is an example of what today is usually called open source software, since the operating system (and its source code) can be downloaded free of charge. Linux was able to reach 1,000,000 end users and Main Street in less than five years despite some significant disadvantages: 1) it competed against operating systems developed and maintained by professional engineers working at Microsoft and Sun Microsystems; 2) it had essentially no marketing budget and could not hire expensive consultants to help it reach Main Street; and 3) several vendors launched campaigns to discredit it and open source software in general.