

**Some things I would hope to highlight when talking about Ubuntu to schools:
(the first few things might apply to many Linuxes)**

- 1) Its Free. Totally. This might seem obvious, but is still a hard concept for the average consumer to grasp. At your average school, parents and teachers will have a very joe public understanding of the wonders of Free Software. Its important to emphasise the Freedom.
- 2) Its Open. You can't beat this from an educational standpoint. Imagine the students getting to the point of looking under the hood? What do they find, but more freedom! Open Source means an education is but a download away.
- 3) The range of software available under the above terms is simply massive, and constantly growing. Reference Freshmeat, etc. There are also specialist education sites and other specialist tools. (others might chime in with some links etc)

Now onto Ubuntu in particular:

- 4) High polished desktop distro, with the legacy of Debian to back it up. You will need to give some history of where Ubuntu came from and why Mark created it. I also like to tell something about Mark - hes a character that is interesting, and thats important to get them remembering.
- 5) Ubuntu has a whole fork Edubuntu, just for the education sector. Its great, got features for school principals down to kindergarten. Did I mention it didn't cost anything? Also reference SchoolTool and Moodle (you might need to look these up)
- 6) Ubuntu has great free support. Check out the activity on the forums and the wiki. These are two other open mediums, where there is a real path forward for schools to get help, and also to contribute and colloborate. Many schools feel alone with their computers, and often the teachers lack direction from the curriculum as to what to do with them. Ubuntu also has great paid for support if they are desperate, but I would suggest they can get away without it, and make sure you emphasise that millions of people and organisations manage without paying a cent for anything (licenses or support). You can point them at the Ubuntu marketplace or OSIA for paid support if they need it.
- 7) Ubuntu is great from the server room to the desktop. I always try convert the server room first. Its easier and I am more comfortable there. Then start the desktop in a 'pilot' deployment, maybe in the library, then establish a crude way to measure the success of the pilot, then convince the powers that be for a phased deployment. (thats the briefest plan i have ever seen, but you get the idea) Samba with ldap and LAM or phpldapadmin gives teachers control over basic administration tasks. phpldapadmin can be fairly easily coaxed into providing email addresses and other stuff on account creation.

8) You will find that most schools have a few technical people, maybe teachers or parents, who have at least a basic level of technical understanding and skill. It's important to identify these people early. They are often 'stakeholders' in the decision making process, so converting these people to your point of view, firstly and separately might be a better way to go. Give them a chance to try out, and special attention, probably before you even try to talk to a more general population. It's also important to identify other stakeholders in decisions. I have found they lurk in the most unusual places. You need to identify them subtly and figure out what it is they need. An example might be the school receptionist, who is friends with the principal. They may be a stakeholder because of their influence, and their motive may be that they had to organise 200 sausage sizzles to pay for the computers and licenses, and they'll be damned if anyone else has any control over them. This area is going to be the hardest to conquer I reckon. Once you win all the stakeholders, a decision is natural, everyone thinks the whole thing was their idea, and it all just falls into place. Never mind about the dept of education, or the NSW govt, they are often too far away from the local politics even in Sydney schools to be involved. Although in NSW schools at least there is a regional computer coordinator who may be involved, depending on the person.