

Here's a joke that has been making the rounds of the Internet lately (with apologies to the authors for not being able to identify them and give them proper credit):

IF AIRLINES WERE BASED ON COMPUTER OPERATING SYSTEMS:

DOS Air: The passengers go out to the runway, grab the plane, push it until it lifts off, hop on, then jump off again when it comes back down.

Mac Airways: Cashiers, flight attendants, and pilots all look and act alike. Asked about the flight, they reply that you don't want to know, don't need to know, and would you please return to your seat and watch the movie?

Windows Airlines: The terminals are very neat and clean, the attendants very attractive, the pilots very capable. The carrier's fleet of Learjets is immense. Your jet takes off without a hitch, pushing above the clouds, and at 20,000 feet it explodes.

OS/2 Skyways: The terminal is almost empty, with only a few prospective passengers milling about. Although an announcement notes that a (virtual) flight has just departed and wishes the passengers a good flight, there are no planes on the runway. Airline personnel walk around, apologizing profusely to customers in hushed voices, pointing from time to time to the designs for sleek, powerful jets that decorate the walls. They tell each passenger how good the real flight will be on these new jets and how much safer it will be than Windows Airlines. But they say the passengers will have to wait a little longer for the technicians to finish the flight systems. Maybe until later this year. Maybe longer.

Fly Windows NT: The passengers carry their chairs onto the tarmac, set them down in the outline of a plane, sit down, flap their arms, and make swooshing sounds.

UNIX Express: Each passenger brings a piece of the plane and a box of tools to the airport. They gather on the tarmac, arguing constantly about what kind of plane they want to build and how to put it together. Eventually, the passengers split into groups and build several different aircraft, but give them all the same name. Some passengers actually reach their destinations. All passengers believe they got there.

Wings of OS/400: The airline has bought ancient DC-3s, arguably the best and safest planes that ever flew, and painted "747" on their tails to make them look as if they were fast. The flight crew, of course, attend to your every need, though the drinks cost \$15 a pop and ice is extra. Stupid questions cost \$230 per hour, unless you have SupportLine, which requires a firstclass ticket and membership in the frequent-flier club. Then they cost \$500, but your accounting department can call it overhead.

MVS Air Lines: The passengers gather in the hangar, watching hundreds of technicians check the flight systems on an immense luxury aircraft. This plane has at least 10 engines and seats over 1,000 passengers. Bigger models in the fleet have more engines than anyone can count and could fly more passengers than there are people on Earth. It is claimed that it costs less per passenger mile to operate these planes than any other aircraft ever built, unless you personally have to pay for the ticket. All the passengers scramble aboard, as do the 200 technicians needed to keep it from crashing. The pilot takes his place in the glass cockpit. He guns the engines, only to realize that the plane is too big to get through the hangar doors.