Week Four

Task 1:

Various flavours of Microsoft Windows dominate the PC Operating System (OS) market place. However, Windows isn’t the only type of OS, and it doesn’t operate on all computer architectures. Your task is to find out what other operating systems exist. In doing so:

1. Find out when the OS was developed and who by
2. What hardware platform(s) it runs on
3. Who uses the OS

Task 2:

“Linux” is an OS that run on the PC architecture (amongst others). However, when we talk about “Linux”, we usually talk about a particular “Linux distribution”. Using the web, research the following questions:

1. What is meant by the term “Linux distribution”?
2. What are some of the common/popular Linux distributions and what makes them different from one another?

Discussion point 1:

The dominance of Microsoft in the PC OS market has long been a source of debate. With the “recent” rise in popularity of OSes such as Linux, some people believe this will erode away at the Microsoft market. Do you agree or disagree with this belief? Why?

What are the benefits of using an OS such as Linux? What are the problems? Similarly, what are the benefits and problems of having one dominant commercial OS?

Why is this debate not as relevant for other hardware platforms, for example, Sun and HP?

Task 3:

Using the web, research the following questions:

1. What are some recent examples of OS security problems (try to find examples over different OSes)?
2. What damage or threat did these problems lead to?
3. What remedies were required?

Discussion point 2:

Who do you think is responsible for OS security? Does the main responsibility for securing an OS fall on users, system administrators or the company who produced the OS?