DON'T PANIC!

It's only **FUD**

FUD – Contents

- Definition of FUD
- History of FUD
  - 70s – 80s – 90s
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- Anatomy of FUD
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FUD – A definition

- Term coined by Gene Amdahl (ex-IBM)
  - "FUD is the fear, uncertainty, and doubt that IBM sales people instill in the minds of potential customers who might be considering [Amdahl] products."
- Basic idea
  - "Nobody ever got fired for buying IBM".

The on-line hacker Jargon File, version 4.3.1, 29 JUN 2001

FUD – A definition

♦ After 1990

– The term FUD was associated increasingly frequently with Microsoft, and has become generalized to refer to any kind of disinformation used as a competitive weapon.

The on-line hacker Jargon File, version 4.3.1, 29 JUN 2001

– Used to promote inferior products

FUD – History

- 1970s
  - FUD first practiced on a large scale by IBM (against Amdahl)
- 1980s – Early 1990s
  - Amstrad PC power supply fan
  - Microsoft picks up the art
    - MS-DOS vs DR-DOS
    - Windows 3.1 vs OS/2 (IBM FUD-ded)

FUD – History

♦ Late 1990s – Early 2000s

– Late October 1998 – "Halloween" Documents

• Eric S. Raymond publicises leaked Microsoft Memos

• FUD strategies outlined

– October 4, 1999 – Linux Myths

• Microsoft website against Linux

• Taken off-line after untruth pointed out

Halloween Documents

- Acknowledged by Microsoft
  - Vinod Valloppillil and Josh Cohen - authors
- Describe possible FUD techniques
- Outline why Linux is a threat
  - FUD refuted by Microsoft itself.
  - Inferior systems do not pose a threat

The anatomy of FUD

♦ Confuse the public by bending the facts and leaving the rest to their imagination

1. Exaggerate opponent's weaknesses
2. Invent weaknesses that don't exist
3. 'Spin' or dismiss opponent's strengths
4. Associate opponent with undesirable elements

Distraction Techniques

♦ How to hide FUD

1. Sandwich between two truths
2. 'What if?'/ leading questions imply their topic
3. Accuse victims of being your sworn enemies
4. Disguise as an observer's pitying criticism

Dealing with FUD

- ♦ Separate repeaters from originators
- ♦ Explain truth in simple language
- ♦ Keep calm
  - Strong denial may imply FUD is true
- ♦ Use hard facts
- ♦ 'Spin' FUD around
  - Present weaknesses as strengths & vice versa

FUD – A conclusion

- Companies fighting – no standardisation
  - Netscape vs Microsoft vs W3C

- Does not benefit software progress
  - Criticism invalid

- Aids monopolies
  - First IBM, then Microsoft