

## Tony Hoare

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**From:** Kees van Reeuwijk [reeuwijk@PDS.TWI.TUdelft.NL] on behalf of C. van Reeuwijk [C.vanReeuwijk@its.tudelft.nl]  
**Sent:** 30 April 2003 22:57  
**To:** Tony Hoare  
**Subject:** Material for your grand challenge project

Dear Sir,

As I promised you at the ETAPS conference, I hereby send you some information about the use of checking tools in the Linux community.

My point during our conversation -- and of this email -- is that the Linux community may well be quite receptive to your suggestion to let open source be the target of your grand-challenge project. I find the following Usenet conversation quite illuminating in this respect:

<<http://www.cs.helsinki.fi/linux/linux-kernel/2001-22/0975.html>>

Note the friendly reception and the lengthy discussion that follows. Of course, most open source projects are happy to receive bug reports that are as detailed as this, but both Linus Torvalds and Alexander Viro go much further than just accepting a bug report.

In fact, nowadays the Standford checker (as it is called on this mailing list), has a special subject tag `[CHECKER]`, indicating that the use of the checker is now routine.

You may also find this discussion thread interesting (sorry for the huge URL):

<<http://groups.google.com/groups?hl=en&lr=&ie=UTF-8&threadm=fa.n6hpddv.1likejgv%40ifi.uio.no&rnum=5&prev=/groups%3Fq%3D%2B%2522type%2Bchecking%2522%2Bauthor:torvalds%26hl%3Den%26lr%3D%26ie%3DUTF-8%26selm%3Dfa.n6hpddv.1likejgv%2540ifi.uio.no%26rnum%3D5>>

Note that this thread is 57 messages long, and that next to Linus himself a number other of important people in the Linux community are participating (e.g. Alan Cox and Alexander Viro). And what are they discussing? The best way to write a fairly minor code fragment as clear as possible, and get the most out of the static type checking of a C compiler. In my humble opinion, people that are willing to have a heated discussion about this subject are also quite willing to consider your grand-challenge project. (Although probably not to the point that they will divert their attention from Linux :-)).

Finally, I like to point out that there an important man in the Linux community that is quite close to you (well, at least he lives in the same country (and even that is debatable: he lives in Wales :-)). That man is Alan Cox, called the number 2 in the Linux hierarchy by Linus himself

See:  
<<http://www.softpanorama.org/People/Cox/index.shtml>>

I hope this information is of some use to you.

Sincerely,

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Kees van Reeuwijk, Delft University of Technology <http://www.pds.twi.tudelft.nl/~reeuwijk>