

# 2014: The year of the Linux car?

**Summary:** *You read that right: Not the year of the Linux desktop, the year of the Linux car. Major automotive companies are investing in making Linux their cars' operating system of choice.*

By [Steven J. Vaughan-Nichols](#) for [Linux and Open Source](#) | April 16, 2013 -- 19:40 GMT (12:40 PDT)

When you think about Linux, you probably think about servers, desktops, and Android smartphones and tablets. What you almost certainly don't think about is cars, but Linux is already running under the hood of many cars, and it may play a much larger role soon, too.



*Say hello to Linux running under the hood of your car. (Image: Linux)*

That was the message Matt Jones brought to the [Linux Foundation](http://events.linuxfoundation.org) (<http://events.linuxfoundation.org>) 's [Linux Collaboration Summit](http://events.linuxfoundation.org/events/collaboration-summit) (<http://events.linuxfoundation.org/events/collaboration-summit>) in San Francisco, California. Jones is a senior technical specialist for [Jaguar Land Rover](http://www.jaguarlandrover.com/index.html) (<http://www.jaguarlandrover.com/index.html>) infotainment systems and VP of a non-profit automotive industry group driving adoption of an In-Vehicle Infotainment (IVI) open-source development platform, [GenIVI Alliance](http://www.genivi.org/) (<http://www.genivi.org/>) .

Jones said that Jaguar Land Rover had asked their customers what they wanted, and they didn't want much — just a full-featured home entertainment network in their cars. Of course, while you can put a HDTV-quality display on the front-dashboard, providing the high-speed networking in city traffic is a problem well outside the automobile industry's purview .

What the automotive businesses can do, and are working toward in the [Automotive Grade Linux \(AGL\)](http://automotive.linuxfoundation.org) (<http://automotive.linuxfoundation.org>) , a Linux Foundation sub group, is providing a common operating system and application programming interfaces (APIs). With this, car manufacturers can focus on delivering applications and not worry about operating system infrastructure. After all, as Jones said, "When was the last time you bought a car based on its operating system?"

During his keynote, Jones announced that AGL had released a prototype [IVI & remote vehicle interaction operating system and application development package](http://automotive.linuxfoundation.org/agl-demonstrator) (<http://automotive.linuxfoundation.org/agl-demonstrator>) . This is a Linux-based open-source image for creating an IVI system along with a controller area network (CAN), a vehicle bus standard, API; a HTML5 application framework; and sample user interface.

Jones said, "We [Jaguar Land Rover] are involved with AGL to enable open source and Linux within automotive as a whole, and focus on making it easier for developers with reference hardware and software platforms. Such technology has long been available in lots of vehicles, but nobody has given it away before". So if you're ready to "hack" a car, the AGL has the tools you'll need.

AGL and Jaguar Land Rover are also giving developers reason to start car hacking. The pair have announced a developer contest: [2013 AGL User Experience Contest](http://automotive.linuxfoundation.org/2013-agl-user-experience-contest) (<http://automotive.linuxfoundation.org/2013-agl-user-experience-contest>) . The winner will get the chance to work with the AGL and Jaguar Land Rover.

There are three categories: Best user experience, best visual appearance, and best new concept or additional feature. The contest runs April 15 — May 17, and winners will be announced at the [Automotive Linux Summit](http://events.linuxfoundation.org/events/automotive-linux-summit-spring) (<http://events.linuxfoundation.org/events/automotive-linux-summit-spring>) in Tokyo at the end of May. If you want to work with Linux and cars, this seems like an ideal chance to get in on the ground floor.

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### About [Steven J. Vaughan-Nichols](#)

Steven J. Vaughan-Nichols, aka sjvn, has been writing about technology and the business of technology since CP/M-80 was the cutting edge PC operating system. SJVN covers networking, Linux, open source, and operating systems.

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