

Dutch government turns to NixOS for a sovereign desktop

DAWO combines a Linux-based client with open source tools for cloud, communications, and collaborative work

The Dutch government is backing an effort to build a FOSS workplace for public administration, including a desktop operating system based on NixOS.

The [DAWO Project](#) has been gestating for some months, but it just got a lot more visible thanks to an [in-depth report](#) on Dutch tech news site Tweakers.net.

DAWO stands for "Digitaal Autonome Werkomgeving Overheid," or "Digital Autonomous Government Work Environment." Rather than a single product, its blueprint combines replaceable components for the operating system, cloud infrastructure, AI, communications, and collaborative working. Development remains at an early stage, but small-scale pilots are already under way within Dutch public bodies.

The work acquired official status in July, when the Dutch government's [ICBR](#) – the Interdepartmental Committee on Government Operations – commissioned three government IT providers to develop a standardized, more sovereign digital workplace: [DICTU](#), [SSC-ICT](#) and the ICT division of DUO, the Education Executive Agency.

The wider blueprint comes from the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, or BZK. Its components include [MijnBureau](#), a self-hosted workplace suite built from projects including Nextcloud, Collabora, Element and OpenProject. The MijnBureau developers are also collaborating with France's [La Suite](#) and aligning their work with Germany's [open-Desk](#).

Regular *Register* readers will





Personalised advertising and content, advertising and content measurement, audience research and services development



Store and/or access information on a device



Learn more

Your personal data will be processed and information from your device (cookies, unique identifiers, and other device data) may be stored by, accessed by and shared with 219 partners, or used specifically by this site. We and our partners may use precise geolocation data. [List of partners](#).

Some vendors may process your personal data on the basis of legitimate interest, which you can object to by managing your options below. Look for a link at the bottom of this page or in the site menu to manage or withdraw consent in privacy and cookie settings.

Manage options

Consent

July, and those in Switzerland which we [covered earlier this month](#).

Back in April, the [Association of Netherlands Municipalities](#), or VNG, [announced](#) that four municipalities were taking part in the trials. Tweakers reports that the number has since doubled to eight – still a small fraction of the country's hundreds of municipalities.

The project publishes code through the BZK's [government-hosted Forgejo instance](#), with repositories also available through [Codeberg](#) for outside contributors.

For its client OS, the project initially experimented with openSUSE, then Fedora, before settling on NixOS. *The Reg* FOSS desk has written about NixOS several times, including [its radical approach to package management](#) and the arrival of [NixOS 22.11](#).

NixOS offers more than a conveniently Dutch pedigree. It is not controlled by a commercial vendor, while its declarative configuration and reproducible deployments make it attractive for managing and auditing large fleets of machines. The Nix packaging system project was founded by a Dutchman, [Felco Dolstra](#); the first version of the NixOS distro built with it by another, [Armijn Hemel](#); and the [NixOS Foundation](#) is based in the Netherlands.

The Nix community has not been without controversy. In 2023, conference organizers withdrew sponsorship from US [autonomous weapons vendor Anduril](#) following objections from contributors. The dispute fed into a broader argument over project governance that culminated the following year in [a fork called Auxolotl](#).

FOSS projects have little control over who uses their code, while attempts to restrict particular users can create problems of their own. Government interest does, however, bring money and momentum. As we noted following [the launch of Euro-Office](#) in April and [Collabora's AI-infused CODE suite](#) in June, the scent of public sector cash is proving

READ MORE

Google hearts Apple's Swift so much it's pumping out server-side support

10 hours ago

Flight delayed? So are these codec updates

22 hours ago

Microsoft catches hackers exploiting Zimbra bug before disclosure

1 day ago

Azure maintenance mess disrupted hybrid clouds, VPNs, cloudy VMware services

2 days ago

16-year-old researcher found a Microsoft bug, got admin access to databases with 17.3 trillion rows

2 days ago



Google hearts Apple's Swift so much it's pumping out server-side support

After a decade of false starts, Swift is showing backend appeal

Shut up and take our money: Amazon plows \$1B into quashing datacenter dissent

Thou shalt love the datacenter! Verily, thou shalt rejoice in the house of the datacenter!

The VMware exit is a protection upgrade

PARTNER CONTENT: VergelO says an exit is also an opportunity

arXiv imposes rate limit on paper submissions to stem the AI slop tide

Two a month per submitter, starting now, and you can thank science slop for the change

OpenAI apes AWS Marketplace while Anthropic remains stubbornly Microsoftian

By including Baseten in its marketplace, OpenAI signals it wants its models to win on the merits, not through coercion

OpenAI alerts 100+ orgs that its 'misaligned models' attempted to break in - or worse

Mostly 'routine research tasks,' and 'some involved government websites, which our models often use,' AI giant tells The Reg

TOP STORIES

1

AI models keep posting screen-shots showing sensitive data from inside tech companies

2

Astronomer watches Starlink satellites sinking to build a 'planetary barometer'

3

Stanford prof is beating the drum for a new protocol to replace TCP

4

Microsoft tells non-profits their deleted M365 data isn't coming back

5

Google ending ChromeOS support two years early

6

Microsoft makes Windows settings backup the default in 26H2

AI

Power approves delay Oracle's AI datacenter

Grid connection and regulatory approval planned 2027 customer delivery at risk

Nvidia debuts DGX Spark with 800GB RAM and storage memory crunch

Meanwhile 128 GB jumps to \$6,950, well above its launch price

Pi coding agency adds 180 and adds Linux support

To maintain minimalism, a new harness layer has been folded into a separate component

Stanford prof is beating the drum for a new protocol to replace TCP

Homa is a rethink of networks for the AI age

Hot Dog! America's new chatbot is packed with wieners

Just ask America.gov and you'll receive a favorite July 4th food.

The Register®

The Register asks for your consent to use your personal data to:

Personalised advertising and content, advertising and content measurement, audience research and services development

Store and/or access information on a device

Your personal data will be processed and information from your device (cookies, unique identifiers, and other device data) may be stored by, accessed by and shared with 219 partners, or used specifically by this site. We and our partners may use precise geolocation data. [List of partners.](#)

Some vendors may process your personal data on the basis of legitimate interest, which you can object to by managing your options below. Look for a link at the bottom of this page or in the site menu to manage or withdraw consent in privacy and cookie settings.

7: Could bold

just what

eds?*

new version of

a significant

30 and

brought an

desktop

ck imagines

sembling itself

sonal model of

tends lifeline

as vibe

coding erodes web dev platform's bottom line

Acquisition gives open source CSS framework 'a stable long-term home'

Switzerland tests a FOSS escape route from Microsoft 365

Swiss Army sticks a knife in American cloud apps with its own FOSS push

Feel peak Windows was 7? You might like Kumander Linux

Debian and Xfce – solid, sensible choices – with a pretty skin

Canonical shuttering some of its legacy chat channels

The Ubuntu Pastebin went in June, IRC gets demoted next

Biting the hand that feeds IT

About Us

Contact us
Advertise with us
Who we are
Newsletter

Our Websites

The Next
Platform
DevClass
Blocks and Files
Situation
Publishing

Your Privacy

Cookies Policy
Privacy Policy
Ts & Cs
Do not share my
personal informa-
tion
Your Consent
Options

Archives

27 years of articles

Copyright.
All rights
reserved ©
1998-2026.