



**CentOS**

is not dead

Ben Porter

# About Me

- I work for Red Hat
- I am not involved professionally with CentOS (just a community member)
- I use CentOS for personal infrastructure, including some production websites
- Nothing I say is official - just my opinion alone

Based on the article:

<https://freedomben.medium.com/centos-is-not-dead-please-stop-saying-it-is-at-least-until-you-read-this-4b26b5c44877?sk=e500c2f16403d634ff8a4ea17d705252>

# Initial Reactions

- Anger
- More anger at them denying they were killing CentOS
- The quote that made me mad:

If you are using CentOS Linux 8 in a production environment, and are concerned that CentOS Stream will not meet your needs, we encourage you to contact Red Hat about options.

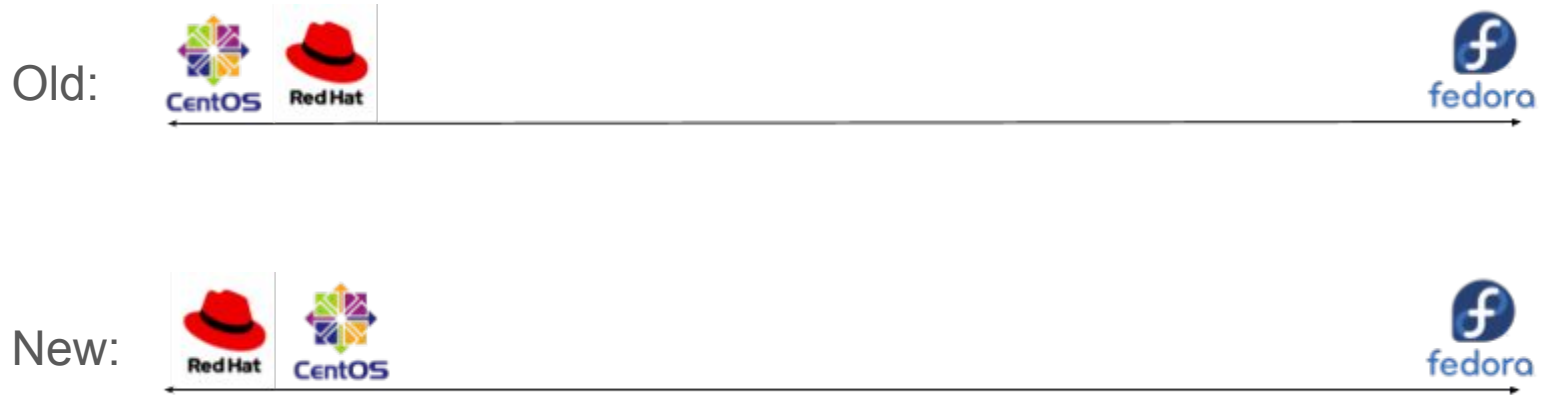


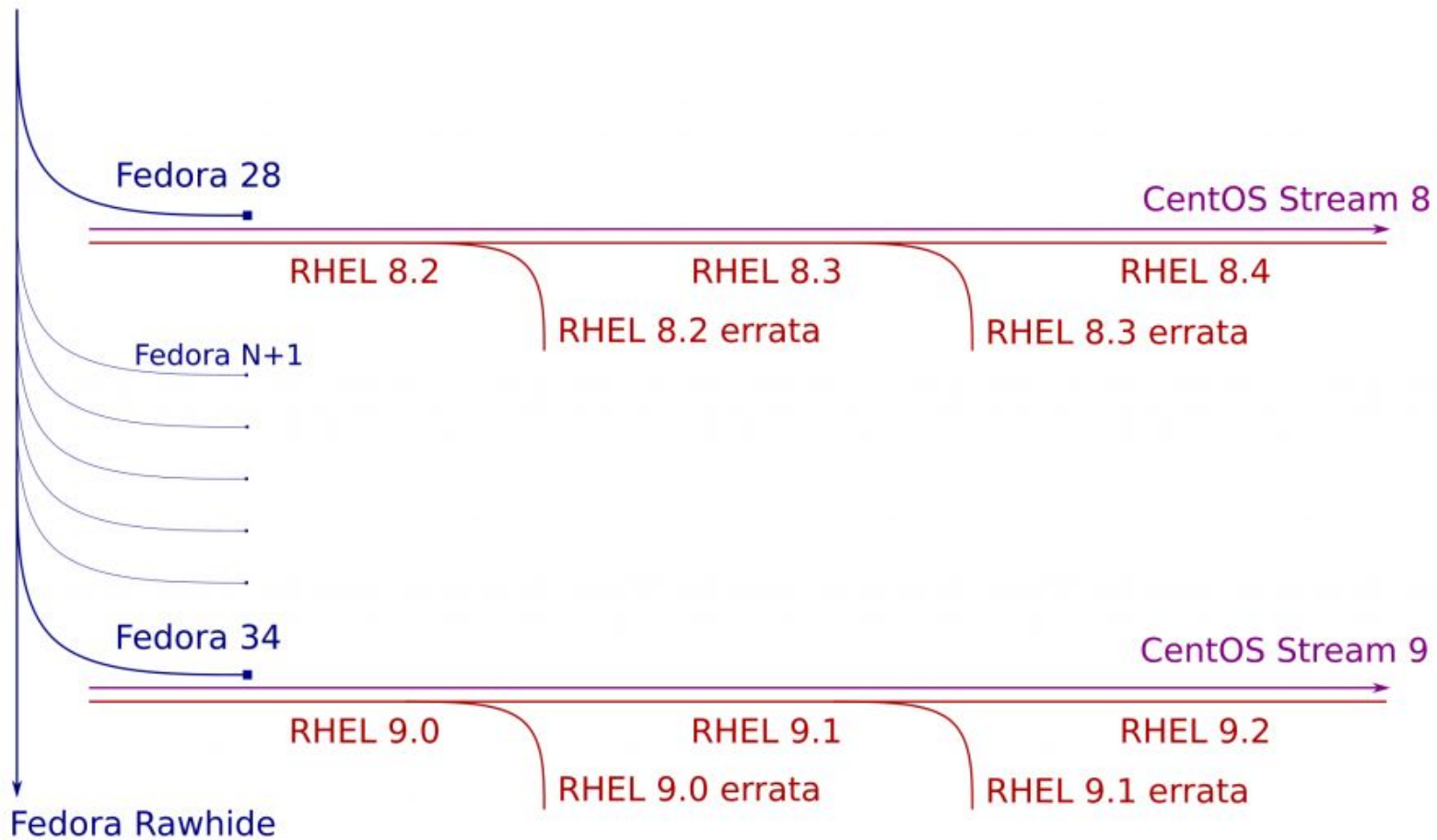
# What happened next

- Luckily first impressions were not correct
- Initial communication was horribly bungled by CentOS project leaders
- Many of the terms they use (like “rolling release”) have a different meaning to the Linux community at large

# So what's the truth?

- CentOS will no longer be downstream of RHEL as it was previously.
- CentOS is not the “new Fedora”





# So what's the truth?

- CentOS and RHEL traded places
- Was RHEL the CentOS beta?
- Because CentOS is earlier in the chain, it no longer languishes on updates
  - Especially relevant for security patches
- Updates hitting CentOS would have previously gone *straight to RHEL*
- That means everything has fully passed RHEL CI and QA

# So what's the truth?

- CentOS will no longer be old, crusty, and barely alive, trailing RHEL by months at times
- CentOS will now play a valuable role in the ecosystem, which means more Red Hat resources will be allocated to it
  - Red Hat is a for profit company - and we should all care about its success given that so much open source is funded by Red Hat employed developers
  - CentOS competes with RHEL
  - This model changes the structure to where CentOS is more clearly an asset (I would argue it always has been, but that's the perspective of an engineer rather than a salesperson)



# So what's the truth?

- The CentOS community has been bogus for a long time
- It's completely managed by two people
- People rarely if ever contribute back to it, which is a *terrible* model for an open source project
- Much of that is a result of the way Red Hat used to manage the project
- When RHEL just dumps source RPMs after release, and closes bugs that only affect CentOS, there's not much the community can even do
- Fixing that stuff was a bit part of the goal with CentOS Stream

# Any Downsides?

- Incentives are better aligned, but still not perfect
  - Red Hat could get more lax with CI/QA now with CentOS as a buffer
  - I think that is unlikely though
- Binary compatibility is no longer guaranteed
- Possibility of bugs goes down due to more bug fixes getting released sooner, but probably goes up a bit too for the same reason. Time will tell if it is net positive or negative
- CentOS 8 support window greatly reduced. I think this sucks, although maintaining two separate distros with two people is quite a load

# Some Questions You May Have

- Where do I migrate to if I'm not convinced? Keep an eye on the Rocky Linux project. Also maybe Alma Linux
- Did IBM do this?
- Is Red Hat required to release source RPMs publicly to allow for projects like Rocky and Alma Linux?
  - No. GPL only requires provided sources to *customers*. It does not require making them public and hosting them on a public FTP server
  - Not everything is GPL (about  $\frac{1}{3}$  from what I've heard)
  - Customers would be allowed to redistribute under the terms of the GPL, but Red Hat could easily drop them as a customer for doing so if Red Hat were going evil

# New RHEL options!

- No-cost RHEL for small production workloads
  - Up to 16 instances
  - Even includes public clouds
- No-cost RHEL for customer development teams
- Additional announcements coming mid-February



Any Additional Questions?

