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Welcome

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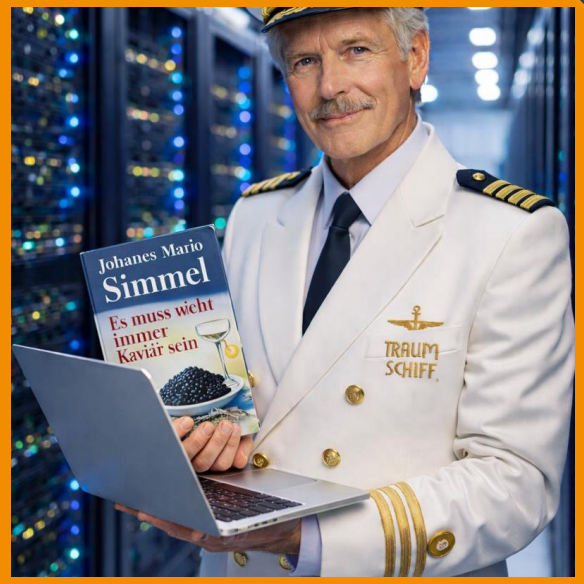


It Doesn't Always Have to Be Caviar:

Enterprise Alternatives and the Challenge of Default Stacks

About me

Amir Zahirovic

- 5+ years of experience
- DevOps/Platform Engineer
- AWS certified, CKA & CKS
- Kubernetes ecosystem

About me

Gergely Szalay

- 15+ years in OPS and DevOps
- Linux, Application Support
- Kubernetes, Container

- 2 Children
- Reading, Series
- Cats

Agenda

- What is this with the caviar?
- How did we find the topic?
- The setup we have delivered
- The mindset behind IT decisions
- The caviar metaphore
- The caviar problem
- Enterprise alternatives

How much did your last enterprise software cost?

Now ask yourself: how much of it did you actually use?

The caviar metaphor

Caviar:

- Expensive & status driven
- Chosen for reputation, not taste
- Small portions (underutilized)
- Signals sophistication

How did we find the topic?

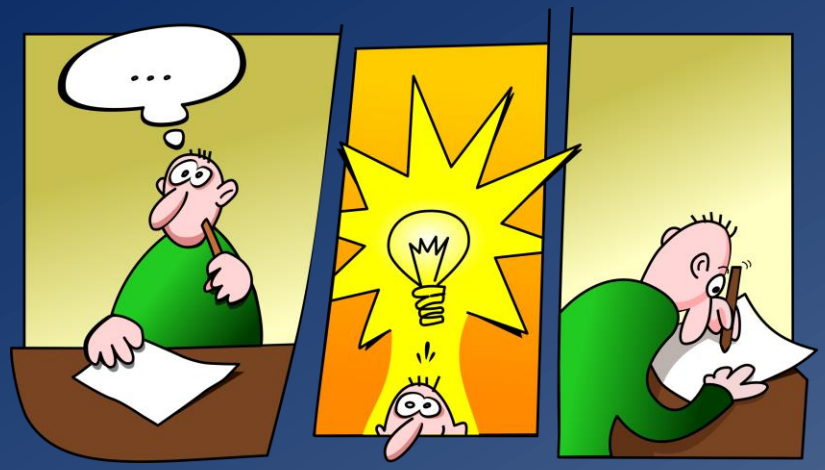
The case with the customer:

- Kubernetes: Cloud or on-prem? Online or air-gapped?
- Image registry and Git
- Containers: Complexity and Security
- Data: aggregation or database?

How did we find the topic?

The actual setup:

- Kubernetes: on-prem, via KubeSpray
  - Straightforward configuration and recovery
- Image registry and Git: Gitea
  - Small footprint
  - Easy maintenance
  - CI/CD



How did we find the topic?

The actual setup:

- Containers: Podman
  - No daemon
  - Rootless setup
  - Clarity in logs
  - Built-in Kubernetes approach
  - Docker compatibility

How did we find the topic?

The actual setup:

- Data: PostgreSQL and TimescaleDB
  - Robust SQL AND NoSQL-like time-series database
  - SQL experience: backup, security
  - Effective data handling, smaller footprint
  - Grafana Integration

The mindset behind the scenes

Why?

"How much did your last enterprise software purchase cost?"

"How much does it cost, solving someone else's problem?"

- The way to solve our problems
- The price we pay

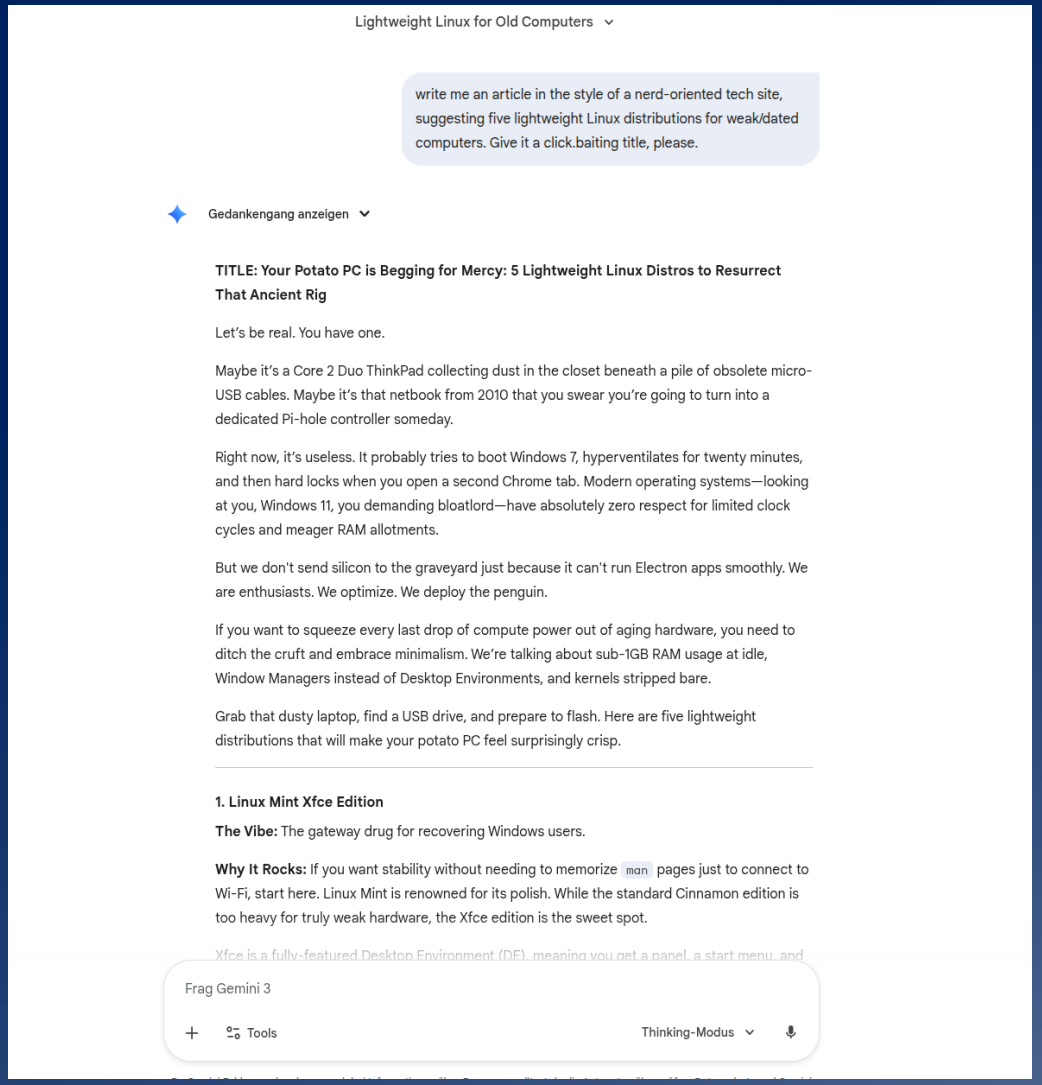
The mindset behind the scenes

"Can I find the right solution?"

"Where does this come from?"

- Search the interwebs, and find always the same answers
- Copy-paste or own experience?
  - *Five reasons to do some obscure thing I'm suggesting*
  - *Five reasons to do the exact opposite*
  - *The very same list about that certain topic, again*
  - *Why you should stop being rational, right now*
- Click-baiting vs. useful help?
  - *Human or AI?*

The mindset behind the scenes



The mindset behind the scenes

"Enterprise questions, enterprise answers?"

- Does it solve *your* problem?
- Does it match *your* challenges?
- Does it consider *your* situation?
  - Do you have the same setup?
  - Do you *know* those applications?
  - Aren't they *too* clever for your needs?
  - Do they match your compliance rules?
  - Are you a startup?

The mindset behind the scenes

The dangers of low hanging fruits

- Do you understand what you're doing?
- Do you implement products or logic?
- Do you lock yourself to something you don't even need?
- Can you trust those solution providers?
- Buzzwords and clichés vs. the right solutions for your very own challenges
- Security: are you providing the typical surfaces to attack?

Back to the metaphor

Caviar and enterprise

The current state

The enterprise default playbook:

- When in doubt, buy the biggest brand
- "Enterprise ready" over "actually suitable"
- Complexity = sophistication
- More features = better value

THE CAVIAR PROBLEM

Fear-based decision making

- "Nobody ever got fired for buying IBM/SUN/..."

- Risk aversion over optimal choice
- Compliance theater
- CYA culture in procurement

Sales & procurement dynamics

- Vendor relationships influencing technical decisions
- Enterprise sales teams selling dreams
- Long-term contracts locking in pricing
- Buying for your company or their sales department?

The real costs – hidden impact

Hidden costs:

- Development velocity slowdown
- Vendor dependency limiting innovation
- Over-complicated architecture
- Team frustration & talent loss
- Opportunity cost

Challenges of default stacks

Technical Debt Accumulation

Following best practices from 2010:

- Legacy patterns that made sense... then
- Architecture decision based on old constraints
- "This is how enterprises do it"

Over-engineering simple problems

Using a tank to kill a mosquito:

- Implementing enterprise patterns for simple use cases
- Six-month projects for two-week problems
- Ceremony > Substance

Vendor Lock-in

"We can't change because..."

- Proprietary APIs and formats
- Specialized skills not transferable
- Data migration nightmares
- Integration dependencies

Performance and bloat

"Why is everything so slow..."

- Generic solutions trying to serve everyone
- Unused features consuming resources
- Heavyweight frameworks
- The "Swiss Army chainsaw" problem

Skills and hiring challenges

The talent problem:

- Niche enterprise skills limit hiring pool
- Younger developers prefer modern stacks
- Training time for complex systems
- Legacy stigma

ENTERPRISE ALTERNATIVES

Better solutions *do* exist

Open-Source Maturity

Enterprise-grade doesn't require enterprise licensing

- PostgreSQL vs closed source solutions
- Kubernetes vs proprietary orchestration
- Kafka vs proprietary messaging
- Grafana/Prometheus vs commercial monitoring

Cloud-Native Approaches

Rethinking architecture for the cloud era

- Microservices/monoliths
- Serverless
- API-first design

The Pragmatic Stack

Example modern enterprise stack:

- PostgreSQL + Redis (data)
- Kubernetes (orchestration)
- API gateways (Kong, Ambassador)
- Observability (Grafana, Prometheus)
- CI/CD (GitLab, ArgoCD)
- *Total licensing cost: $0*

Making better decisions

Start with actual needs

Requirements-first thinking:

- What problem are we actually solving?
- What's the simplest solution?
- What are our actual constraints?
- What do we need vs want?

Total Cost of Ownership

Beyond the sticker price:

- Licensing + maintenance (obvious)
- Implementation services
- Training and learning curve
- Operational overhead
- Opportunity cost and tech debt

When premium IS Worth IT

Legitimate reasons for enterprise solutions:

- Strict regulatory requirements (not always)
- Truly unique capabilities
- Scale beyond OSS maturity
- Risk tolerance and appetite
- Available expertise

Conclusion

Remember:

- Question expensive defaults
- Evaluate actual needs first
- Open-source is enterprise-ready
- Total cost includes more than licensing
- Flexibility and control have value
- Sometimes, the best solution isn't caviar

Questions?

We're happy to answer

Thank You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