I have a younger brother and sister (both teenagers). When I was home over Christmas and New Year, I managed to acquire a laptop, about three years old. It was in a bad way (Windows...) and so I thought, if the parts are still working OK, I'd put Ubuntu on it. Sure enough, the plan worked flawlessly. Everything works, no driver issues at all. Job done.

I then just used it normally, but noticed my brother and sister, who share a Windows 7 laptop, were intrigued by what was going on on this new laptop. They liked the look of it. So I said to them I'd make them both accounts.

Once I'd made the account, I left them to it to see whether they'd even bother using it. It didn't take long before my brother had logged in, brought up Firefox and was doing all the usual Facebook stuff that kids do these days. So I then showed him how to use Empathy, and within minutes he had a seamless integration of Windows Live Messenger and Facebook Chat. In truth, he then sat on that for a couple of hours, doing nothing other than jumping from tab to tab, talking to people. He was very impressed.

My sister had a go the following day. Similar, logged in with no problems, using Firefox with no issues. Tried out Empathy, all good. Then, as she's a keen Twitter (because all her favourite non-entity celebrities are on there) I showed her how to use Gwibber. Now all the tweets she could care to read just appeared on the right hand side without her having to open a browser. She was most pleased with the look and feel of Ubuntu and the GNOME desktop. It has that cool slickness that I think a lot of kids would appreciate.

I left the laptop there so they could keep using it. I'm next visiting this weekend, so I'll get an update on what they thought of it.

The lesson I think I can draw from it is that targeting the youth market for Ubuntu would very probably be pushing at an open door. While most of them just assume computers always just look like a Windows OS (because of school), they have been taught by the rise of Apple that "cool" alternatives exist outside what they are being told is normal. Exploiting that psychology of "difference" for this market would be interesting.

But the bonus is that, having been brought up with this technology, they're all very competent. OK, they might not know how to fix it when it goes wrong, but they are certainly at ease with computers, and exploring to find things, trying different pieces of software to see what fits. All very Linux ways of seeing computers.

Most of all though, they are a generation that sees almost no difference between a computer and the internet. To them, a computer without internet might as well not exist. And because the net is so wonderfully platform-neutral, there's almost no reason why Ubuntu can't be the platform on which they do all their Facebooking and Twittering.

If even some of this could be worked into the potential for the cinema campaign (because the cinema will hit this market right in the face) then I think we could spark a genuine rush of curiosity.