

BUSINESS NEWS

FREE STANDARDS GROUP ANNOUNCES PACKAGING WORKGROUP

The Free Standards Group has started a new working group tasked with creating a universal Linux application installation API (application programming interface). The Linux Standards Base (LSB) Packaging Workgroup is the result of an FSG-sponsored meeting in Berlin that brought ISVs (independent software vendors) and key Linux software packaging and installation tool developers together to discuss how to improve installing applications on Linux. The application installation process can easily be the most frustrating and difficult task for new Linux users, and it is further complicated by varieties of installers linked to specific distributions. The LSB Packaging Workgroup sees a brighter future ahead and has chosen to construct a single API that will operate with the variety of existing packaging systems, such as RPM, yum, klick, and alien.

Ian Murdock, Debian creator, CTO of the Free Standards Group, and chairman for the LSB said that the ISVs really want “to treat Linux as a single platform, which means they want to offer a single package for Linux, much as they do for Windows.” He also added, “a single API could be implemented across the various package systems, because APIs make for nice evolutionary steps and can, done right, mask underlying implementation differences.”



Ian Murdock, Debian creator, CTO of the Free Standards Group, and chairman for the Linux Standards Base.

According to Murdock, the working assumption is that if a distribution is Linux Standards Base compliant, “We don’t have to worry about dependencies, because everything is covered by the single LSB dependency, and dependency management is 95% of the package systems right there. We still need minimal dependency support – components can extend the LSB, and applications can depend on those other components being installed – but we’re talking on the order of a handful of components, not the tens of thousands of components typical package systems have to deal with.” <http://www.freestandards.org/en/Packaging>

GROWTH IN BUSINESS-CRITICAL ROLE FOR LINUX

A research alert published by analysts at Saugatuck Research of Westport, Connecticut predicts that more than half of all companies will be running mission-critical business applications on Linux within five years. A research survey polled IT directors, vice presidents, and CIOs from 133 businesses worldwide on their plans for using Linux.

Saugatuck analysts Bruce Guptill and Bill McNee found that only 18% of businesses will be using Linux in business-critical roles by the end of 2007. However, their analysis of survey responses predict that the number of companies in “early or full deployment” of mission-critical applications on Linux would grow by 40% in 2007 to 2009 and would further accelerate to growth levels of 80% in 2009 to 2011. Guptill and McNee state, “By now it should be obvious to even the most casual industry observers

that Linux operating systems – and open source-based software in general – have reached critical marketplace mass.

Recent Linux deals and announcements by Oracle and Microsoft have only reinforced the ‘open source is enterprise-grade’ message that IBM, Unisys, and other ‘Master Brand’ hardware, software, and services vendors have been preaching for years.” IT executives, independent software vendors, and service providers should take notice of the trend and reposition their work to meet the trend, claim the researchers. The research was conducted by Saugatuck Technology in December 2006 in conjunction with research partner Business-Week Research Services and is freely available in a report entitled, “Booming Support for Mission-Critical Application Workloads on Linux.” <http://www.saugatech.com/>

SUPPORT FOR MICROSOFT LAWSUIT

The Software Freedom Law Center (SFLC) filed a friend-of-the-court brief with the United States Supreme Court arguing against the patenting of software in a Microsoft Corp. case. The interesting twist here is that the SFLC brief supports Microsoft’s case against the use of software patents outside the U.S.

In the case of Microsoft vs. AT&T, the Supreme Court will decide whether U.S. patents can apply to software copied and distributed outside the U.S. A Federal Circuit Court of Appeals decided in favor of AT&T, expanding the international reach of U.S. software patents. Microsoft appealed, and the Supreme Court agreed to hear the case. Arguments were presented before the high court in February and a ruling is expected by May 2007. <http://www.softwarefreedom.org/publications/msvatt.html>

MORE APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR IBM Z/LINUX

IBM has reached a milestone, reporting that more than 1,000 ISV applications are available for System z customers running Linux. This is a 100% increase compared to a year ago. IBM recently reported that all the ISV



interest is resulting from a 390% jump in mainframe sites running Linux. It also is reporting that more than 60% of its mainframe revenue is now coming from new workloads, with 20% of that revenue and 30% of the MIPS coming from z/Linux customers. The increase in Linux application development for the mainframe is being driven by a variety of factors, including the eager acceptance of partitioned Linux virtual

servers, largely due to performance/price ratio, and the rock-solid stability of the System z platform. IBM sees this as motivating customers to migrate Linux workloads over to System z.

IBM also says that venture capital start-ups running on System z mainframes have tripled in the last two years, but they won't say whether those start-ups are all working with IBM. IBM's total mainframe revenues were up 25% in Q3 2006. IBM has made its entire Systems product line Linux-enabled and has been an active partner in the development and adoption of open standards.

<http://www-1.ibm.com/linux/>

AMSTERDAM CONSIDERS LINUX AND OPEN SOURCE

Amsterdam is the latest European city to move towards adopting Linux and open source software. The city will be conducting tests of OpenOffice on Linux desktops along with other open source software in two departments during the first half of 2007. The city's desktop software contract with Microsoft expires at the end of 2008 and the city sees the tests as a path to restoring competitive leverage. According to city authority spokeswoman, Marjolijn van Goethem, the two departments running the evaluations are the city's housing service and the local authority for the borough of Zeeburg.

In 2006, the city council commissioned a study of open software usefulness. The study showed that open source software ensures better exchange and long-term storage of digital information. The Amsterdam city council announced the evaluation project stating, "A business case has been established this year, which shows that an open software strategy leads to more supplier independence. The use of open software can ensure better exchange of data and storage of information without unacceptable financial or logistical risks." Amsterdam is not planning to stop using Microsoft software entirely, but wants to spend less on proprietary software, and phase out closed-source software.

<http://www.amsterdam.nl/>

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