

Free and Open Source Software Movement Gains Momentum in INDIA

The two day workshop was held at ER&DCI, Trivandrum

By Software Freedom Network

The two day workshop on "Free and open software movements in India" was held at ER&DCI, Trivandrum on 7th and 8th of November. The workshop was jointly organized by Ministry of Information technology (Govt of India), Kerala State IT Mission, Indian Institute of Science (Bangalore and Electronics Research and Development Centre of India (Trivandrum). The event was inaugurated by Mr L.Radhakrishnan IAS, Secretary (Industries), Government of Kerala in a function presided over by Mr V.K.Neelakandhan, Executive Director, ER&DCI. About 75 delegates attended the workshop, from the industry, Government, academia and R&D organizations in IT.

The inauguration was followed by a presentation by Mr Satish Babu, Regional Vice President of Computer Society of India on the relevance of free software in India. He explained the terms free and open software, their genesis and the ideological positions of the movements. He stressed on the importance of free and open software movements in India, especially in the E-Governance area.

Mr Amarnath Raja, CEO of InApp Systems, Trivandrum talked on Network Management using Linux. He explained in simple terms and with suitable examples the ease with which network can be managed in all circumstances using simple Linux commands.

Mr C.V.Radhakrishnan, CEO of Focal Image, Trivandrum explained the delegates the business models of running an ITES business using free software. He focused the presentation on TEX, which he has been using very successfully for the past several years for text processing.

Mr Atul Chitnis, CTO of Exocore consulting, Bangalore, explained in simple terms the economics, efficiency simplicity of using Linux desktop. He said that he had been using the same laptop for the last five years for his applications (which are in free and open source) without finding any need to upgrade. This would not have been the case, had he been using proprietary software. He convinced the delegates that there is an equal or even better alternative in open software for all the proprietary software applications of general use.

Mr Nagarjuna from Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, focused his topic on free software options in databases. He explained the database concepts and then went into various options available in free software, examining the pros and cons of each of them in detail.

The last presentation on day 1 was on server side programming by Mr Rajkumar, Vice President of Linuxsystems. He gave the statistics of the free software usage in servers and said it has surpassed all proprietary solutions.

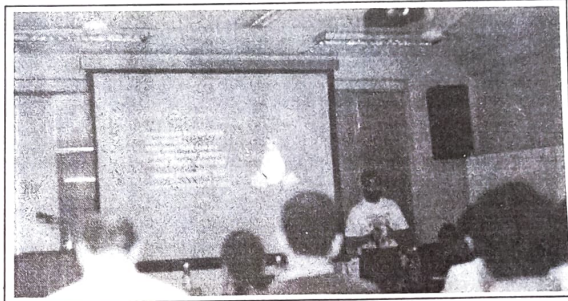
Continue on Page 2, Col 1

Is free and open software a viable alternative for E-Governance?

At a workshop held at Trivandrum which was jointly organised by MIT (Govt Of India), Kerala State IT mission, IISc (Bangalore) and ER&DCI Trivandrum, the panel of the same came to the conclusion that Free & Open Source Solutions are viable for e-Governance. The discussion was moderated by Dr R.C.Tripathi, Director, IPR Cell, Dept of IT, Government of India. The panel unanimously requested support from both the Central and State Governments for the free and open software movements, especially in implementing E-Governance applications

Seminar/WorkShop Conducted at SARAI, Delhi

By Software Freedom Network



Free Software is at the core of their work and philosophy. At Sarai the network and almost all computers run on non proprietary free software.

Sarai conducted a three day workshop/seminar, November 14-16 that included a series of presentations and discussions.

The opening day featured an inaugural speech by Shuddhabrata Sengupta of Sarai who briefed the participants about the workshop and the Sarai. A talk on tactical media

labs was delivered by David Garcia which received an overwhelming response from the audience. Short presentations on different approaches to the tactical media were taken up by Arun Melhta, Partha Prstim Sarkar, Shekar Krishna, Pradeep Shah and Jeesh Bagchi. Followed by presentations bytesforall, network and Sarai, Cybermohalla, Project Delhi, Inyamedia Network, Open Circle, Aur Paar Project and Tellavision in the afternoon session.

The second and the third day was dominated by talks, presentations discussions on free software and open source software. The second day begun with a LAP presentation. Language and localization key issues in free software for non-English language was the topic taken up for discussion in the afternoon. The evening session featured presentation by Arsh Zaini on KDE in Farsi, Ravikant on Free software in hindi, Partha Pratim Sarkar on Computing in Bangla and Gaurab Upadhyay on Computing in Nepali. That followed an open discussion on issues of freedom and Programming Culture by Raju Mathur, Leo Fernandes, Kishore Bharagva.. And finally the day concluded with the screening of a 59 minutes feature "The code story of Linux", a film by Hannu Puttonen, featuring Linus Torvalds and Richard Stallman which left the audience spell bound.

The final day begun with a workshop/ training on GIMP, followed by a discussion by Ravi Sundaram, Arun Mehta, Osama Manzar, Kanti Kumar, Gaurab Upadhyaya. Partha Pratim Sarkar on Presentation of print media and Campaign Workshop. And finally the event came to an end with an open discussion on "towards an Alternative Asian Digital Network".

About SARAI on Page 2, Col 1

Microsoft Divides People : Richard Stallman

By Software Freedom Network

Richard Stallman, the Founder of the GNU Software Project out of which Free Linux Operating System has emerged was in New Delhi on 11th of November. It was the same Monday evening on which Bill Gates had arrived in the capital on his four day visit, when Stallman said that, "Bill Gate's Microsoft is generating systems that threaten the Software freedom. He further stated that, "This is a struggle for freedom and Independence. Non free software like the ones being sold by Microsoft divides people.

On the donations pledged by Gates, Stallman, fondly known as RMS stated "Gates is donating a small fraction out of what he has squeezed out of computer users". When Bill Gates donates computer systems to schools, it is like gifting cigarettes. It is initially free but when you get hooked you have to pay for it. Non-free software programmes are like that. It will be available free of cost but for a couple of years only."

In a very simple way, RMS compared the use of propriety items as, "It is like not being allowed to share your favorite cooking recipes with your friends. One cannot exchange recipes,

one cannot change the cooking nor does one know anything about the ingredients - that is the world of non-free software, developed by Microsoft. Non-free software violates the spirit of goodwill that is so important for human society and civilization. It is akin to the exploitative colonial system".

Talking on the Indian Context, RMS pointed out that India has less than ten percent of the country's personal computers and server computers, although India has an estimated half- million software developers, and there are an estimated four million P.Cs in use in India among the nation's billion people.. He further argued that, "What India should do is to resist against non-free software collectively. The good effects of Globalization can come about only through the use of non-free softwares".

Stallman also released his book "No sir, no monopoly! Free soft ware - A perspective".

Published by Prajashakti Publishers which was released by B.K Keayla, conveyor of national working group of patent laws.



Richard Stallman is the prophet of the free software movement. He understood the dangers of software patents years ago.
- Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World-Wide Web.

Dehra Dun Looks Forward for RMS visit

By Software Freedom Network

Richard Stallman will be visiting India in the month of Feb'03 and then he will be visiting Dehra Dun to deliver talks and share his Ideas.

Sir George Everest Research Society is working to make this visit purposeful and successful by involving Students, Scientists and other IT professionals.

The two day workshop was held at ER&DCI, Trivandrum

Continued from Page 1

The second day's session started with the presentation by Mr Subhash Warriar, Principal Architect of Moksha software, Bangalore on developing Intellectual Property with open source.

Dr Mary Mathew from IISc, Bangalore talked on Intellectual Property and software. Dr T.B.Rajasekhar, Associate Chairman of National Centre for Science Information, Bangalore talked about open source software for digital libraries.

The afternoon session was on SALIS (Software and Licensing Information System), the database of open and free software, mainly in database and networking areas, developed by IISc for Ministry of Information technology, Govt of India.

Dr Gopi Garge of IISc explained the background of SALIS project and gave an introduction on the system. Ms Suvarsha Walters, IISc gave an overview of SALIS, which was followed by the demonstration of the system. The theme of the workshop was to expose nuances of policy framing, software protecting and licensing and consequently the issues related to the use of OSS by end users & developers.

Many countries are ready to exploit the benefits of Open Source software by framing policies encouraging the use of open source software wherever possible. Open source are usually copyrighted or copylefted. While they are generally freely distributable, there are certain redistribution and reusability guidelines that require the attention of every user of that software. India is not only a software user but also a major player in the proprietary software industry. The Ministry of Communication & Information Technology (MCIT), Government of India, acknowledges the complexities of using open source copyrighted software in terms of its use for e-governance and digital divide, including policies, Intellectual Property issues and the technical and economical viability of using Open source software in the Indian context.

The two day workshop addresses the following broad concerns:

- Open Domain software and the digital divide
- Intellectual Property and Patenting
- Case studies on free software
- Software and Licensing Information System (SALIS)

The workshop is targeted towards the following audience:

- SMEs in software development using open source and proprietary software
- Software Developers
- Strategic decision makers and CTOs of IT organizations involved in software product design
- Legal experts in State IT organizations dealing with software licensing and enforcement issues
- Decision makers in Government Departments

About Sarai

Sarai is South Asia's first public initiative on urban culture, media and daily life. Established in 2000, it includes both scholars and practitioners, collaborate with a wider community in generating critical research insights and knowledge in the public domain. Sarai is a programme of Center for Study of Developing Societies, one of the India's best known research centers. Free Software is at the core of their work and philosophy. At sarai network and almost all computers run on non proprietary software. Sarai collaborates with individuals, universities, as well as cultural organizations and NGOs within the broad framework of a commitment to a critical public domain.

SuSE to Debut Office Desktop

SuSE Linux announced a multi-stage product campaign for the corporate desktop deployment of SuSE Linux. Starting January 2003, small and medium-scale enterprises will be able to migrate to Linux on desktops using the "SuSE Linux Office Desktop."

"In numerous desktop projects during the past years, we gained insight into the various needs of enterprises," explains Petra Heinrich, VP Qualified User at SuSE Linux. "The clear increase in the customer demand for corporate Linux desktop solutions has confirmed our conviction that the time has come to carry the accumulated experience to the market in the form of desktop products tuned to the needs of our target groups."

The first element of SuSE's product campaign for the utilization of Linux on workstations will be available January 2003. Using SuSE Linux Office Desktop, companies and private users without any previous Linux experience, will be able to utilize the stability and security of Linux on the desktop. Additionally, SuSE Office desktop allows users to continue the processing of existing data with accustomed applications such as Microsoft Office.

SuSE Linux Office Desktop combines the technology and user-friendliness of SuSE Linux 8.1 with proven tools that facilitate the migration from Windows operating systems and applications. During the installation, SuSE's system assistant YaST2 (Yet another Setup Tool) automatically detects the existing Windows 95/98/ME installation and submits a suitable proposal for the rearrangement of existing hardware space and the Linux software to be installed. Even without any previous technical knowledge and a pre-installed Windows 2000/XP, the migration to Linux performs smoothly due to the partitioning tool, Aconis OS Selector.

SuSE Linux Office Desktop seamlessly enables the continued use of existing data, such as StarOffice 6.0 by Sun Microsystems, which offers text processing, spreadsheet, and presentation applications in Linux, combined with mature filter functions for data exchange. In addition, StarOffice Base provides a powerful database. Codeweaver CrossOver Office 1.2 allows the utilization of accustomed applications such as Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Visio 2000 on the SuSE desktop. For the first time, IBM Lotus Notes can be used from a Linux desktop.

Massively Parallel Processing with GNU/Linux

By Ajay J.Sinai Cuncoliencar
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for Software Freedom

The computing world has seen many changes throughout the last two decades. As applications and related programs become ever more complex, there is increasing demand for better and faster hardware. As manufacturers achieve higher clock rates, increasingly complex process related problems are faced by them. The primary concern is that of heat dissipation and packing density.

As the clock speed is stretched, more dense packing is required (which is not an easy task to achieve) and along with dense packing comes the problem of heat dissipation. It is often said that the miracle of a Cray is not that it runs so fast but that it doesn't melt down!

About the Author...

A young final year undergraduate of computer science from the colorful city of Goa. A multi-farious personality, who enjoys adventure biking and sways to the tunes of metallica, doors, G'n'R, black sabbath, pink floyd, Led zep etc... n the guys at FSF and the whole GNU community... and a wonderful philosophy called GNU/Linux are his driving forces and motivation. This is Ajay J. Sinai Cuncoliencar who at this tender age of 22 dreams of coding for GNU/Linux... and to write applications for clusters. grid computing etc... Finds pleasure in Playing around with his system, coding in c/c++, reading sci-fi stuff, and exploring unix like systems. Presently he is working on Cluster related projects... currently coding an MP3 encoder for PVM on GNU/Linux clusters. Also some frontends with Gik+Web programming... working on a local site listing the available GNsoftware around Goa... for easy exchange

It is evident that to achieve higher performance levels one has to concentrate on Parallel Processing rather than waiting for the hardware manufacturers to churn out a new chip. To build a simple parallel processing machine one doesn't require a billion dollar budget and loads of high-tech equipment. All that is required is some basic know how, a couple of PCs (even 486's will do!) and some essential libraries and packages, which are freely available on the net.

GNU/Linux is a natural choice as the OS for the basic cluster. The freedom offered by GNU/Linux makes it possible to tune the OS for this environment. The most popular model for Parallel Processing is the message passing model in which data is exchanged between processors by passing messages. The Parallel Virtual Machine is one software which implements message passing to build parallel processing machines also known as clusters. It is possible to build a basic parallel processing machine with two PCs which are networked. Although the efficiency would be quite less but it's quite useful for learning and experimenting.

Both KDE 3.0.3 and GNOME 2.0 are available as graphical desktop environments.

With the functionality and appearance of the mail client Evolution, users will not miss Microsoft Outlook. SuSE Linux Office Desktop provides all tools needed for office clients in a small or medium scale network.

The new SuSE Linux Office Desktop will be available from SuSE Linux resellers from January 2003. The recommended retail price per workstation is \$ 129.00, including detailed documentation and 90 days of installation support.

To set up a cluster at home, make sure that the PCs are properly networked. Install PVM on both (or n) machines and configure pvm (which involves setting appropriate environment variables and appending a stub to the bash profile) and construct a virtual machine by adding available nodes to it. (any one node can be designated as "master"). PVM provides some test programs and examples so that you can test the cluster. You can also write your own code by using the calls provided by PVM. To build an efficient machine for some serious processing, one would need better processors and a fast network. One can use powerful processors (1GHz+) and fast (and expensive) network's such as Intel's Gigabit Ethernet solutions. Such clusters have been built and implemented for real life problem solving. An example is "kamadhenu" at the Jawaharlal Nehru Center for Advanced Scientific Research - Bangalore which is a GNU/Linux cluster of 8 Intel PIII's (800 MHz) connected over Gigabit Ethernet.

The Indian super computer PARAM (which means Parallel Machine) is also a cluster of sun sparc processors connected by the indigenous developed PARAMNET network. There are scores of other very fast MPP's all over the world running on GNU/Linux and other off the shelf hardware components.

There are other approaches to making parallel processing more accessible. MOSIX which is a kernel level scheduler doesn't require code to be rewritten to run on parallel machines and hence cuts the tedious task of parallelising code. But in this case there is a trade off between efficiency and convenience.

To conclude, the future of high performance processing lies in MPP's and the fact that this approach gives a fantastic cost to performance ratio, makes it very practical for developing countries like India. It won't be long before popular processor intensive applications are ported to MPP's and the enthusiastic PC user will enter the amazing world of Massively Parallel Processing.

Mumbai based company releases Indian language fonts under the GNU GPL

M/S Cyberspace Multimedia Limited, Mumbai, developers of Akruiti Software for Indian Languages (<http://www.akruiti.com>), have released a set of TTF fonts for nine Indian scripts (Devanagari, Gujarati, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Bengali, Oriya, and Gurmukhi) under the GNU General Public License (GPL).

SuSE 8.1 illustrates MS' fear

By Thomas C Greene in Washington, (tcgreene@bellatlantic.net)

Anyone wondering why MS execs Steve Ballmer and Brian Valentine are so bent out of shape about Linux should check out SuSE's most recent distro, 8.1, for insight. For a desktop PC or small-biz network it's already miles ahead of Win98-SE and ME and closing fast on XP for ease of installation and use by first-timers

Talking with Open Source advocates from Peru and Vietnam

By -Robin Miller, Editor in Chief, OSDN (Linux.com, Slashdot, freshmeat, and other Open Source Web sites) for Software Freedom

Personal site: <http://roblimo.com>



At a conference in Washington, D.C., I listened to a speech by (and had private conversations with) Peruvian Congressman and "Open Source Hero" Edgar Villanueva and an interesting gentleman from Vietnam who both told me, in no uncertain terms, why their countries must switch to Linux and Open Source instead of depending on proprietary software from foreign companies.

Villanueva gave his formal speech through an interpreter, and our private conversations took place using a combination of my negligible Spanish, his negligible English, and casual translation help from multilingual bystanders. He's a charming man, an orator so talented that his skills came through even though he was speaking in a language most of his audience didn't understand. Even though he is often identified as "doctor," his doctorate is in jurisprudence. He described himself as "just a lawyer and politician, not a technical person," and said he first encountered Linux and Software Libre when he was mayor of a small town and wanted to get some computers for the local school so that students could learn what they needed to know to get decent jobs in modern society.

Villanueva's town didn't have money for proprietary operating systems and software. His (then) IT advisor wanted to do what most people in Peru and other low-income countries have always done: make illegal copies of someone else's software. But Villanueva wanted a legal solution if one was available, and it turned out one was out there: Linux, courtesy of some local Software Libre advocates he met more or less by chance. They installed Linux, he tried it, and it worked. Glory be! Suddenly a school in a small, impoverished town had a few old but usable computers up and running, and kids learning how to use them, without breaking any laws — or spending all of the town's tiny education budget on computer hardware and software.

Countries like Peru depend on foreign trade for many necessities, and trade treaties with the U.S. and other "first world" countries that produce most of the world's high-end manufactured goods have intellectual property provisions that have gotten increasingly strict in recent years, so crackdowns on illegal software have become common. There is a strong element of hypocrisy in this crackdown, Villanueva said in his speech, because "Both the prosecutors and the judges are usually using pirated software when they try these cases."

Villanueva pointed out that 25 percent of Peru's national budget goes to pay foreign debt, much of it accrued under "the dictatorship" that preceded the current, elected government in which Villanueva now participates on the national, not just local, level. To much laughter, he said, "This conference is the first thing the World Bank has done that might help us," the irony being that much of Peru's overseas debt is owed to the World Bank, and the World Bank has a reputation as a rather ham-fisted collector, but we were talking about Linux, Open Source, and Software Libre in an audio-

rium at the World Bank building.

The subject of the U.S. ambassador to Peru trying to stall Villanueva's attempt to get Peru's government to pass Open Source preference laws came up. Villanueva was incensed about that act of interference. Don't forget: The U.S. government has a long history of meddling in the internal affairs of Latin American countries on behalf of U.S. companies, and to Villanueva and many other Peruvians the current "carrot and stick" approach Microsoft is taking in its dealings with Peru (and other Latin American nations) is the same colonialism that once had U.S. troops enforcing United Fruit Company policies in the region by

force of arms. Yes, getting a lot of donated software is nice, and Microsoft is donating plenty of software to Peruvian schools and nonprofits, but U.S. companies have built plenty of hospitals and other facilities in Latin America in the past — while taking far more out of the recipient countries in profits than the amounts they donated.

Villanueva also pointed out the hypocrisy of the U.S. government boosting Microsoft overseas "while sanctioning the company at home." Another theme he harped on was "data ownership," meaning that information placed on computers owned by the Peruvian government belonged to the Peruvian people, and should not be held hostage to proprietary file formats owned by any one company, especially a foreign company.

He also noted that his proposed law was not, as Microsoft and its allies have claimed, discriminatory in any way; that as long as vendors are willing to supply source code for all software they sell to the Peruvian government, "we do not want to mandate any one company — or give anyone preference by race, religion, national origin or (brief pause) sexual orientation." (Much laughter.)

Then there's the question of using computers to tally votes. Villanueva believes every line of code used in voting machines and for vote counting must be available for public inspection as an anti-corruption measure. He admits that the average citizen may not understand computer programming, and that he doesn't either, but points out that political parties and interested citizens' groups ought to be able to hire their own programmers to make sure all the election computers are running correctly — and honestly.

Peru is no stranger to "stolen" elections. Villanueva doesn't want to see any more of them there, and believes the only way to keep shady politicians from bribing the people who program and operate the election computers is to have all of their code and other internal functions visible to anyone who wants to look at them.

Later, over coffee, I invited Villanueva to move to the United States and run for Congress here. He politely declined. Aside from citizenship issues, he is happy in Peru, and he'd rather not be overly involved with the U.S. government, thank you.

His final word on the subject of buying lots of proprietary software from U.S. and other foreign companies when there are free (Libre) and Open Source alternatives available was, "Perhaps they can give us some of that software in return for paying down our World Bank debt, eh? That would be much better than doing some software donations while still trying to get us to pay all the debts while trying to sell us all kinds of software we can't afford because of those debts."

Vietnam's situation is similar to Peru's

Actually, it's worse. Vietnam's estimated software piracy rate is 97 percent, the world's highest, as opposed to Peru's mere 80 percent. But then, Peru's \$2,400 per capita annual income looks like big money to the average Vietnamese person, who gets more like \$440 per year. Even at the top of the Vietnamese income scale, things are bleak by U.S. standards. Imagine a corporate CEO there earning 50 times the average worker's salary — a ratio that was considered normal in the U.S. before our Corporate Masters decided they should have everything and workers should have nothing — and you come up with \$22,000 per year. \$1,500 in software for a fully-capable office PC is a big dent in that income. Do you really think even a Vietnamese at the top of the country's salary scale is going to cough up full price for Photoshop when he can get it on an illegally copied CD for \$3 or \$5!

But, once again, those pesky trade treaties come into play. Offshore-owned factories in Vietnam that make things like sports shoes, clothing, and circuit boards may offer terrible wages and working conditions by U.S. or European standards, but for many Vietnamese they offer the only available chance to live The Good Life. Those factory salaries offer workers a chance to own such luxuries as a battery-powered radio and a bicycle, possibly even (after years of saving and struggling) a motor scooter and a TV. But if the intellectual property protection provisions of various trade treaties aren't met, the United States and other countries that are heavy in the software, movie, pop music, TV show, and computer game industries — and more and more — will retaliate against "pirate" countries like Vietnam, and all the export-based factory jobs will go away.

So Vietnamese software piracy must — and will — stop. In the minds of proprietary software company executives, this apparently means, "Woo! Lots more sales! Let's break out the champagne!" In the minds of people like Professor Tran Luu Chuong, of Vietnam's Ministry of Science and Technology, it means, "We had better find a way to bring our country online and into the 21st Century without using proprietary software we can't possibly afford, now that the big software companies are getting so nasty about us copying their products without paying them."

Computer virus are more prevalent on Windows than any other system.

an excerpt taken from report "Why Open Source Software / Free Software (OSS/FS)? Look at the Numbers!" by David A. Wheeler. to read the complete report log on to dwheeler@dwheeler.com

Virus infection has been a major cost to users of Microsoft Windows. The LoveLetter virus alone is estimated to have cost \$960 million in direct costs and \$7.7 billion in lost productivity, and the anti-virus software industry sales total nearly \$1 billion annually.

Dr Nic Peeling and Dr Julian Satchell's *Analysis of the Impact of Open Source Software* includes an analysis of the various data sources for virus counts, noting the disproportionate vulnerability of Windows systems.

To Professor Chuong, it is an "extremist" stance to mandate the use of Open Source software by law, while in his eyes a "moderate" stance is merely to encourage its use. And whether through mandates or encouragement, he believes Vietnam needs to use Open Source software for reasons that go beyond money and trade. He said, "We need to increase our IT security and IT sovereignty," and later added, "We need to reduce our independence on international vendors."

I often think U.S. companies — and the U.S. government officials who so readily do their bidding — underestimate the amount of national pride other countries' citizens have. Dr. Chuong is a wizened, white-haired gentleman, old enough to remember U.S. soldiers fighting in his country, perhaps old enough to remember French troops and colonial governors in Hanoi.

He is not interested in protecting American or European software companies' interests. His objective (and his job) is to protect Vietnam's interests, and if that means he funnels his ministry's budget into translating more Open Source software into Vietnamese, and writing custom applications in Vietnamese instead of sending money to foreign companies for software licenses, he will lose no sleep over any potential income those foreign software companies may lose because of his decisions. Indeed, hardly any government officials from "developing countries" seem to be losing much sleep over the possibility of proprietary software companies losing sales to Linux and Open Source, and now a growing number of budget-sequestered U.S. government and corporate IT managers seem to be echoing their third world counterparts' sentiments. I suppose I should be happy about this. After all, as a U.S. taxpayer, every time my own government chooses a low-cost Open Source solution over an expensive proprietary one, it saves me money!

Here is what they said:

The numbers differ in detail, but all sources agree that computer viruses are overwhelmingly more prevalent on Windows than any other system. There are about 60,000 viruses known for Windows, 40 or so for the Macintosh, about 5 for commercial Unix versions, and perhaps 40 for Linux. Most of the Windows viruses are not important, but many hundreds have caused widespread damage. Two or three of the Macintosh viruses were widespread enough to be of importance. None of the Unix or Linux viruses became widespread — most were confined to the laboratory. Many have noted that one reason Windows is attacked more often is simply because there are so many Windows systems in use. Windows is an attractive target for virus writers simply because it is in such widespread use. For a virus to spread, it has to transmit itself to other susceptible computers; on average, each infection has to cause at least one more. The ubiquity of Windows machines makes it easier for this threshold to be reached. There may be a darker reason: there are many who do not like Microsoft's business practices, and perhaps this contributes to the problem. Some of Microsoft's business practices have been proven in court to be illegal, but the U.S. government appears unwilling to effectively punish or stop those practices. Some computer literate people may be taking their frustration out on users of Microsoft's product. This is absolutely wrong, and in most countries illegal.

...Continued on page 4, col 2

Editorial

"Software Freedom" is not just a News Letter, nor is it just a Free Software Movement. It is a Social Movement. This movement gets more strength and creates a greater impetus when we receive encouragement from various corners. We do hope you will keep sending us your feed back, be it bouquets or brickbats, what ever you really feel about us. Yes, we are working towards a "Letters to the Software Freedom" column next time as now we could not compile the entire overwhelming amount of mail received from various sectors.

We also like to bring to your attention that we are raising two issues, "You just can't ignore other office suite" and "FS day to be celebrated". We hope you will find time to peruse on them and send in your responses at indiahills@vsnl.com so that we can published and forward your reactions to the larger section of the concerned community.

And finally we look forward to your subscription for "Software Freedom" to give momentum to the this on going movement.

You just Can't Ignore Other Office Suites

Have you ever come across any Tender/Purchase inquiry carrying "Require Compaq Brand of Computers only" or "Require IBM Brand of Computers only" or "Require HP Brand of Computers only" etc. None of you, I do hope. But you must have come across Tender inquiries stating "Require MS-OFFICE". Well in the past there were not much choices in case of Office Suite.

Now things have changed. There are plenty of other brands for office suite. In my view, before putting up a tender for an Office Suite, a technical committee/user should give their choice for the particular brand with valid reasons, in case they want to procure a particular Brand. Else one should mention all the popular and competent Brand names in the tender inquiry. We invite our readers for an open discussion and look forward for their views.

Free Software Movement Day to be Celebrated !!!

We don't know if we have marked some day for "Free Software Movement" just like Labour's Day, Woman's Day, Valentine's Day etc. If not, one should debate to have a special day to create awareness among the computer users.

...continued from pg 3, col 3

At this point, although this has been speculated many times, I have not found any evidence that this is a widespread motivator for actual attacks. On the other hand, if you are choosing products,

It is extremely unethical to attack an innocent user of a Microsoft product simply because of Microsoft's policies, and I condemn such behavior. do you really want to choose the product whom people may have a vendetta against?

However, the reasons given above don't explain the disproportionate vulnerability of Microsoft's products. A simpler explanation, and one that is easily proven, is that Microsoft has made a number of design choices over the years in Microsoft's products that are fundamentally less secure, and this has made their products a much easier target than many other systems. Examples include execution of start-up macros in Word, execution of attachments in Outlook, and lack of write protection on system directories in Windows 3.1/95/98. This may be because Microsoft has assumed that customers will buy their products whether or not Microsoft secures them; since until recently there's been little competition, there was no need to spend money on "invisible" attributes such as security. It's also possible that Microsoft is still trying to adjust to an Internet-based world; the Internet would not have developed as it has without Unix-like systems, while for many years Microsoft ignored the Internet and then suddenly had to play "catch-up" in the early 1990s. Microsoft has sometimes claimed that they can't secure their products because they want to make sure that their products are "easy to use". While it's true that some security features can make a product harder to use, usually a secured product can be just as easy to use if the security features are carefully designed into the product. Besides, what's so easy to use about a system that has to be reformatted and reinstalled every few months because yet another virus got in? But for whatever the reason, it's demonstrably true that Microsoft's designers have in the past made decisions that made their products' much weaker than other systems.

In contrast, while it's possible to write a virus for OSS/FS operating systems, their design makes it more difficult for viruses to spread... showing that Microsoft's design decisions were not inevitable. It appears that OSS/FS developers tend to select design choices that limit the damage of viruses, perhaps in part because their code is subject to public inspection and comment. For example, OSS/FS programs generally do not support start-up macros nor execution of mail attachments that can be controlled by attackers. Also, leading OSS/FS operating systems (such as GNU/Linux and the *BSDs) have always had write protection on system directories. <http://www.roaringpenguin.com/mimedefang/anti-virus.php3>. OSS/FS systems are not immune to malicious code, but they are certainly more resistant.

The benefits of using Open Source (OSS) used on desktop computers)

Source: FLOSS Report

Continued from the last issue...

Desktop software related to client operating systems...

Open source software on desktop computers can come in different variants. First of all, OSS might be the client or desktop computer operating system, e.g. Linux. Secondly, it might be a certain part of software that is usually considered part of the operating system but developed by different developers than the operating system core. The KDE or Gnome desktops are examples for such software. Most often they are used in combination with Linux.

Higher performance not as important as direct cost savings

Closely related is again the question for the importance of a better price-to-performance ratio. The results are very similar to those for the importance of low license fees. However, the percentage of respondents considering it to have played a very important role is lower than for the low license fee. This outcome fits with the answers about the importance of higher performance. For 65% higher performance has been at least an important reason for their acquisition of Open Source desktop software. For 25% this reason was even very important. These are both lower values than for the license fee criterion.

Indirect cost savings for installation and administration highest across areas

Indirect cost savings are given a relatively high importance from users of OS on desktops.

While 66% consider savings on installation and integration costs to have been at least important for their decision, 63% come to the same conclusion regarding operating and administration cost savings. These are the highest values across all four usage areas. Obviously proprietary software is regarded as being suboptimal with respect to costs for installation and administration.

Better functionality and open source code equally important

Close together are the assessments of better functionality and modifiable source code. Better functionality of OS desktop software was an important or very important reason for their decision for 63% of those establishments surveyed.

As in the other areas analysed, this value is somewhat below those for the lower license fees or the higher stability and better access protection. In comparison, 60% of those using OSS on desktops considered the openness and modifiability of software to have been at least an important decision criterion and 19% even consider it to have been very important. These are larger numbers than for all other usage areas, indicating that the wish to modify software is most pronounced for desktop software.

Also hardware cost savings and higher number of potential applications with high importance across areas

Expected hardware cost savings were of medium importance. For 56% of those using OS desktop software, these have been at least an important decision factor. Again, this value is higher than for all other usage areas. Being able to use smaller computers or use older computers for a longer time can lead to significant cost savings, as the savings on each single computer have to be multiplied by the number of computers in a company.

Again somewhat less important was the higher number of potential applications. 54% of the users of OS software on desktops said that this influenced their decision in favor of OSS at least in an important way. This is, however, a higher value than for all other areas. Additional applications are obviously more important for desktop usage than for server operating systems or databases. The latter are often acquired for a specific purpose.

Training cost savings with lowest importance of indirect cost savings

Training cost savings have only been an important reason for deciding in favor of OS desktop software for 45%. This value is lowest of all potential indirect benefits from using OS software, as it is in the other areas. OS software obviously does not lead to substantial training cost savings.

Existing solutions and know-how important but not very much

Existing solutions and know-how are considered by fewer respondents to have been very important but by more to have been important. Overall 59% of those actually using OSS on desktops have decided to some extent so because they had existing solutions, know-how or experience that would facilitate the use of this software in the establishment.

Apache most popular in this area, second is Perl

Quite many Open Source programs exist in this area, leading to a rather diverse usage of this sort of software. First of all, there is the possibility of using Open Source web servers like Apache. Indeed Apache turned out to be the most popular application in this field. 72% of those using any sort of OS software in connection with websites employ Apache. Second in popularity is Perl, used by 48% of OS users. PHP comes third with 32%. Combining these results with the popularity of Linux as server operating system and MySQL as Open Source database, the acronym LAMP should better stand for Linux, Apache, MySQL, Perl instead of PHP at the end. Nevertheless, to a large extent both Perl and PHP can be used for the same purpose and in similar ways for the operation of websites.

Squid used by 26% of respondents in this area

Squid, the Open Source caching software, is typically used in larger intranets to reduce the amount of traffic on an establishment's external Internet connection. It is

therefore more used to manage retrieval of websites than the operation of an establishment's own websites. 26% of those respondents using any sort of OS software in connection with websites employ Squid.

Tomcat most popular among "Others"
The programming language Python is used by only 8% of respondents in this area.

It is thus much less popular than Perl with which it has several features in common. Of similar popularity are other sorts of Open Source software. Apart from some people mentioning Linux, PHP-Nuke – an OS content management system – was mentioned a few times in the category "Others". Most often indicated was the use of Tomcat. Tomcat is the servlet container that is used in the official reference implementation for the Java Servlet and JavaServer Pages technologies and is by now part of the Apache project.

Product Review

The GIMP

GIMP is an acronym for GNU Image Manipulation Program. It is a freely distributed piece of software suitable for such tasks as photo retouching, image composition and image authoring.

It is an extremely capable piece of software with many capabilities. It can be used as a simple paint program, a expert quality photo retouching program, an online batch processing system, a mass production image renderer, a image format converter, etc.

GIMP is extremely expandable and extensible. It is designed to be augmented with plugins and extensions to do just about anything. The advanced scripting interface allows everything from the simplest task to the most complex image manipulation procedures to be easily scripted.

GIMP is written and developed under X11 on UNIX platforms. There is an OS/2 port in development. There is also a native win32 port available at Tor Lillqvist's site. And some people have reported success in getting GIMP to run in MacOS X.

This is only a very quickly thrown together list of GIMP features. This is only the tip of the iceberg.

- Full suite of painting tools including Brush, Pencil, Airbrush, Clone, etc.
- Tile based memory management so image size is limited only by available disk space.
- Sub-pixel sampling for all paint tools for high quality anti-aliasing
- Full alpha channel support
- Layers and channels
- A Procedural Database for calling internal GIMP functions from external programs as in Script-fu
- Advanced scripting capabilities
- Multiple Undo/Redo (limited only by disk space)
- Virtually unlimited number of images open at one time
- Extremely powerful gradient editor and blend tool.
- Load and save animations in a convenient frame-as-layer format.
- Transformation tools including rotate, scale, shear and flip.
- File formats supported include gif, jpg, png, xpm, tiff, tga, mpeg, ps, pdf, pcx, bmp, and many others.
- Load, display, convert, save to many file formats.
- Selection tools including rectangle, ellipse, free, fuzzy, bezier and intelligent.
- Plug-ins which allow for the easy addition of new file formats and new effect filters.
- Over 100 plugins already available.
- Supports custom brushes and patterns

KNOPPIX®

What is KNOPPIX®

KNOPPIX is a bootable CD with a collection of GNU/Linux software, automatic hardware detection, and support for many graphics cards, sound cards, SCSI and USB devices and other peripherals. KNOPPIX can be used as a Linux demo, educational CD, rescue system, or adapted and used as a platform for commercial software product demos. It is not necessary to install anything on a hard disk. Due to on-the-fly decompression, the CD can have up to 2 GB of executable software installed on it.

A new champ...

The pluses for Mandrake install are its speed and the absolute ease of obtaining and applying updates. It completely obliterates the Windows contenders in both the update category and the installation of attached devices. Although the speed of the Mandrake update is much more a factor of the download size, it is also easier to perform than the Red Hat update process.

Furthermore, the default installation included not one but two graphical environments, and both seem to work exactly as intended. On the issue of Office Suites, the Mandrake 9.0PowerPack install left me with both Open Office 1.0 and Star Office 6.0. On the basis of those pluses, and the sheer speed of the process, Mandrake 9.0 nudges Red Hat 8.0 out of first place in the derby." <http://www.linuxworld.com/>

It's Linux for IBM supercomputer project

Linux will be the main operating system for IBM's upcoming family of "Blue Gene" supercomputers—a major endorsement for the operating system and the open-source computing model it represents. Blue Gene/L, the first member of the family, will contain 65,000 processors and 16 trillion bytes of memory. Due in 2004 or 2005, the system will be able to perform 200 trillion calculations per second.

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory will use the system for performing nuclear weapons simulations. The decision to adopt Linux came, in part, as a result of the growing size and strength of the open-source community. Thousands of developers around the world are participating in the evolution of Linux. Creating a new OS inside of IBM would require a massive engineering effort.

News.com's Stephen Shankland contributed to this report.

E-Governance in India: Too many goals and very little reality

The dotcom revolution brought with it newer concepts of e-business, venture funding, e-commerce, and various other relationship management issues. As the wave is slowly wearing off amid layoffs and company shut-downs, the message that is increasingly getting clearer is that at the end of the day, e-business is nothing but 'business' as usual.

The term 'e-governance' today, is facing a familiar grind. According to one school of thought, a distinction needs to be made between the terms 'e-government' - where citizens can avail of government services such as land records, filing of tax etc; and 'e-governance' - which involves the formulation of laws and regulations to govern cyberspace, such as domain names, etc. See more from here: <http://www.zdnetindia.com>

NEWS Makers

Japan may drop Windows to boost security

Courtesy : indiatimes.com

TOKYO: The Japanese government will consider replacing Microsoft Corp's Windows, used in much of its computer networks, with another operating system to bolster security, a newspaper said on Saturday. The advantage of open source programmes is that unlike Microsoft's software products, they do not require licensing fees and can be modified because their source codes are made available for free. This makes it easier for system operators to cope with any problems that could arise, the paper said.

for the full story visit indiatimes.com

Draft W3C Patent Policy

Attorney Larry Rosen reports <http://newsforge.com> that the World Wide Web Consortium <http://www.w3c.org/> (W3C) needs feedback on their last-call draft <http://www.w3.org/> of a new patent policy. The good news is that this latest draft calls for all W3C specifications to be freely implementable. Larry says "The community now needs to be heard supporting this policy so that it is not undone during the public input and W3C Advisory Council phase." Comments are being accepted until December 31st, 2002, at www.patentpolicy-comment@w3.org. <mailto:www-patentpolicy-comment@w3.org>

Packages Removed by Release Manager.

In accordance with the announcement <http://lists.debian.org> last month, Anthony Towns reported, <http://lists.debian.org/> that about thirty packages that were removed from the distribution. However, at least three more packages were removed from the non-US <http://satie.debian.org> distribution as well. Anthony states that these packages may be re uploaded and will be considered new packages with the usual processing. Please make sure that any known bugs are actually fixed before you do so, though.

Congressman under fire for attack on free software

WASHINGTON — Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., was criticized Wednesday by the chairman of a House technology committee for an attack on the free software movement. A bipartisan group of lawmakers had written a letter urging White House computer security adviser Richard Clarke to find sales opportunities for government-funded software projects. The letter had no mention of the issue of free software, also known as open-source or General Public License (GPL) software. Undermine innovation and security. But when Smith, whose biggest political contributor is Microsoft, began circulating the letter to his fellow Democrats asking for their signatures, he added his own correspondence saying the free software philosophy is "problematic and threaten(s) to undermine innovation and security." The open-source movement advocates that software, such as the Linux operating system, should be distributed free and open to modification by others rather than treated as copyright-protected, for-profit property. Smith's attack on open-source drew an angry response from one of the original authors of the letter, Rep. Tom Davis, R-Va., chairman of the Government Reform Subcommittee on Technology and Procurement Policy.

Prerelease of OpenOffice.org available.

Chris Halls announced <http://lists.debian.org> a new set of prerelease packages for the OpenOffice.org (OOo) application suite. If no problems are found these packages are supposed to be uploaded to unstable soon.

Additionally, upstream <http://www.openoffice.org> asked for help with a new initiative <http://www.openoffice.org> to make OOo a well behaved citizen on ones harddisk by using the systems native installer to become the default way to install, modify, or uninstall it. Naturally, Debian packages are already listed as being supported by the next release.

What about the three Applications I had sent u ?



Give us few weeks to locate it as we are e-governance.



SF

Linux for the non Geek: considering installing Linux? Here's the dope in layman terms

By Anup Kurian

Special thanks to Ms. Anita Bora, Asst. Editor Rediff.com "Rediff Guide to the Net" for forwarding the article.

The media writes about Linux and its creator Linus Torvalds almost everyday. But how can someone not as computer savvy as the uber-geek next door use Linux? And where do you get it? How does one install and configure a Linux system? Where do you turn for help? Get answers to these questions here.

One of the most important concerns is: Can you use Linux for your daily computing needs of word processing, spreadsheets, surfing, playing audio and video files, etc?

The answer: A resounding Yes.

Linux easily substitutes any flavor of Microsoft Windows. Moreover, the old Pentiums and Pentium IIs or Athlons, Durons will work reasonably fast on the latest Linux. So if you have an older buggy version of Windows 95, 98 or Millennium you can go for a Linux Operating System (OS) rather than spending much more on processors, motherboards or RAM to incorporate Windows 2000 or XP.

Before explaining further let's look at the types available. The OS comes in distributions, or distros for short. These distros are built up on the latest Linux kernel and add a lot of graphical utilities, software and applications, installation programmes, etc.

A kernel can be thought of as the blueprint and foundation of Linux distros. As of now the latest Linux kernel is version 2.4.19. Version 3 is planned for May 2003. Check out <http://www.kernel.org/> if you are curious.

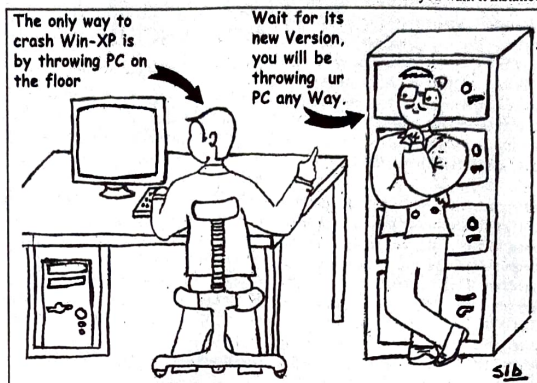
For now, here's a look at some of the biggest and the best distros, with ease of use as the deciding factor. (For a complete listing check Distrowatch)

1. - Considered to be the most userfriendly. The current version 9 has a advanced installation utility that will setup the OS, hardware and peripherals with minimal user input.
2. Redhat Linux - This is the biggest Linux venture so far. The latest version is 8. Redhat (name comes from the red baseball hat the founder used to wear in college) competes with Mandrake in terms of userfriendliness and features. They've also captured the biggest share of the Linux server market.
3. Suse Linux - European company Suse competes with Redhat and Mandrake. But they advise you to buy the CD rather than download the ISO images.
4. Debian Linux - Debian is on version 3.0 and is most suitable for Linux enthusiasts.

What's the best Linux distro for someone who doesn't have the time and energy for hacking? Either Mandrake or Redhat. Applications like Open Office, that can read and write MS Office files; Outlook substitute; an advanced Web browser Mozilla; and GIMP - GNU Image Manipulation Programme are available out of the box for both distros. Also included are XMMS - an MP3/ audio CD player, CD/DVD/ VCD player Xine and XCDROAST a CD-RW utility etc.

Not to mention hundreds of utilities...some of which you'll discover months into working on Linux. If you want database support Oracle, DB2, MySQL are available. Java or Java-based applications and the world's most popular Webserver Apache make Linux their home.

I like GRUB or LILO or select the default suggested by the installer. But make sure the bootloader is loaded on the first sector of the Linux partition, not on the Master Boot Record (MBR). Windows uses information on MBR to boot up, so overwriting that will cause difficulties. Your installation programme will allow you to select the bootloader and where you want it installed.



Prerequisites - If your computer can accommodate an OS from Microsoft other than DOS or Windows 3.1, it will easily accommodate Redhat or Mandrake.

So where do you get Linux? For people with a broadband/ highspeed connection (Cable, DSL etc) ISO images can be downloaded from Mandrake/ Redhat pages or FTP sites. Mandrake 9 has three ISO files of 700 MB and Redhat 8 has five. You need to write the ISO images using your CD-RW utility and the first ISO file (an ISO file is an image file or disk image with iso extension) will contain a bootable installation programme.

The ISO file should not be burned directly to a CD. Instead take the 'Burn Image' option from your CD-RW programme and select the file. Though Redhat 8 has five ISO files, for the typical installation the first three are enough.

How can someone with dialup get these ISO images/ installation CDs? It's a herculean task to download a 700 MB file over dialup and you should check other sources. Your office may have a broadband connection. Ask the system administrator for help. Some computer magazines even carry CDs with a version of Linux.

Once you get the CDs, we can proceed to installation. It's now time to remember the six Ps of computing - Proper Planning Prevents Piss Poor Performance. With that in mind, here's the pre installation 'to do' list:

1. Backup your files on floppies, CDs and the Internet.
2. Make sure you print the installation PDF file or keep a copy on a separate computer and read it completely.
3. Create bootable floppies or CDs of your current OS.
4. Use one 1.44 floppy for making a Linux bootable disk.

The space needed for a normal desktop Mandrake or Redhat installation is 1 to 3 GB depending on the options you select. If you have a single harddisk with Windows installed, the installer will create a separate Linux ext2/ ext3 partition on the available free space and leave your existing Windows intact.

If you have a separate harddisk only for loading Linux, select that. If not, make free space and retain the Windows flavour for the time being. In this scenario, we should take some precautions while installing Linux bootloaders (programmes that load important OS system files and initialise the system). You could implement popular ones

Linux can read FAT/ FAT32 filesystems used by Win 95, 98 or ME. There's also a utility called `ntfs-3g` to read files from Linux partitions while running Windows. However Microsoft has not released information for writing NTFS (New Technology File System) drivers...so if your harddisk has NTFS filesystem used by Win NT/2000 or XP, Linux won't be able to read and write files.

You have a choice of graphical interfaces (called X-Windows) on Linux. The popular ones are KDE and GNOME. If you have enough space, install both and switch between them using Switchdesk (all your applications will be available on both). If you are short on space I suggest using the more refined KDE. You also need to create a user (root user is created automatically) for normal operations. Think of a username like `firstname-and-first-letter-of-lastname`. The installation programme will also give you a choice of booting to a graphical or text interface. If you select the latter, you need to give username and password and then use the 'startx' command to get into X-Windows. Also make sure you create a bootdisk. One important point to note: The root user has the final authority on the system. Don't lose or forget the root password. You'll need to be a root user once in a while.

Once the installation programme is over, if you can boot Linux using the bootdisk, you are done. Check your Internet connection, network, soundcards, printers and other peripherals. The installer should have identified them or asked you for input and installed the proper drivers.

A good forum for new Linux users is Linux Newbie ... search for answers to existing questions before posting your own. Also check out the NHFs - Newbieised Help Files. The next best resource is Google.

You should learn to use the X-Term window (comparable to the DOS window on Windows). As a first step after loading Linux, try installing its version of Yahoo messenger. Installing an application does not involve the usual double click - you have to type one or two commands - daunting as it may seem, the procedure is quite simple. Once you begin to get the hang of it, you can follow these instructions on adding an entry to the Windows bootloader so that you can select between Windows and Linux when booting.

As of now the only major things missing in Linux are video post production applications like Adobe Premiere or Apple Finalcut Pro. But a lot of Hollywood production houses are using Linux clusters for computer graphics and these applications will soon enter the market for the general customer.

What a bureaucrat has to say

R Gopalakrishnan, Secretary to chief minister, Madhya Pradesh

Credits :

WWW.economictimes.indiatimes.com

A more appropriate query would be why haven't governments done it earlier. The implications for public policy are fairly obvious. First is cost.

Commercial software costs money and open source software is free. Even after accounting for training and installation costs of open source software, it may still cost anywhere between one-half to one-tenth of commercial software depending on the application.

The ocean of unnecessary features in commercial software makes hardware expensive and obsolescence cycles shorter. Getting locked into all future upgrades again becomes serious issue. By going along the open source path, a government will spend less money and receive the same or better features, functionality and performance.

Even the money that they spend will not be invested in product prices, but in training and developing tens of thousands of their own people creating a competence that will become a long-term asset for the state and its people.

The issue of cost is vitally tied to liberating India to become a land of one billion opportunities. Digital inclusion will become possible only with low-cost computers combined with open source software and broadband connectivity.

Some experts feel that even at a conservative estimate, the hardware-software savings with an open source based thin client can be 75% or more as compared with MS Windows-office fat desktop. This is perhaps the reason why countries like China, Brazil, South Africa and Germany have chosen open source software and why it finds endorsement in major emerging markets.

The good old standard operating procedure of bureaucracies, when confronted with the unknown, was to ask a question "what is happening in other places?" In this case we seemed to have missed that question.

The issue of security is important for public policy. It is practically impossible to prove proprietary software is more secure than free software. Public systems will need to enshrine security and proprietary software that guards source codes inherently have a problem with governments that would not want their core systems to be dominated by external monopolies.

The good old standard operating procedure of bureaucracies, when confronted with the unknown, was to ask a question "what is happening in other places?" In this case we seemed to have missed that question. The issue of security is important for public policy. It is practically impossible to prove proprietary software is more secure than free software. Public systems will need to enshrine security and proprietary software that guards source codes inherently have a problem with governments that would not want their core systems to be dominated by external monopolies.

We must admit that e-governance, so far in India, has been a play in the margins, the eulogising of the cow that got sold on the internet. As we begin to put more citizen-services in the public domain the issue of costs and security will need to be squarely faced.

Continue on Page 7, Col 3

Humorix

On Line Jokes

Why use Windows, since there is a door?

If OPERATING SYSTEMS RAN THE AIRLINES

UNIX Airways:

Everyone brings one piece of the plane along when they come to the airport. They all go out on the runway and put the plane together piece by piece, arguing non-stop about what kind of plane they are suppose to be building.

Air DOS

Everybody pushes the airplane until it glides, then they jump on and let the plane coast until it hits the ground again. Then they push again, jump on again, and so on...

Mac Airlines:

All the stewards, captains, baggage handlers, and ticket agents look and act exactly the same. Every time you ask questions about details, you are gently but firmly told that you don't need to know, don't want to know, and everything will be done for you without your ever having to know, so just shut up.

Windows Air

The terminal is pretty and colorful, with friendly stewards, easy baggage check and boarding, and a smooth take-off. After about 10 minutes in the air, the plane explodes with no warning whatsoever.

Windows NT Air

Just like Windows Air, but costs more, uses much bigger planes, and takes out all the other aircraft within a 40-mile radius when it explodes

Linux Air:

Disgruntled employees of all the other OS airlines decide to start their own airline. They build the planes, ticket counters, and pave the runways themselves. They charge a small fee to cover the cost of printing the ticket, but you can also download and print the ticket yourself. When you board the plane, you are given a seat, four bolts, a wrench and a copy of the Seat-HOWTO.html. Once settled, the fully adjustable seat is very comfortable, the plane leaves and arrives on time without a single problem, the in-flight meal is wonderful. You try to tell customers of the other airlines about the great trip, but all they can say is, "You had to do what with the seat?"

IMAGINE IF INSTEAD OF CRYPTIC TEXT STRINGS, YOUR COMPUTER PRODUCED ERROR MESSAGES IN HAIKU (ancient Japanese form of poetry is known as haiku)...

Yesterday it worked
Today it is not working
Windows is like that

The Web site you seek
cannot be located but
endless others exist

Stay the patient course
Of little worth is your ire
The network is down

Chaos reigns within,
Reflect, repent, and reboot.
Order shall return

Three things are certain:
Death, taxes, and lost data.
Guess which has occurred.

First snow, then silence.
This thousand dollar screen dies
so beautifully.

Rather than a beep
Or a rude error message,
These words: "File not found."

Windows NT crashed.
I am the Blue Screen of Death.
No one hears your screams.

Serious error.
All shortcuts have disappeared.
Screen. Mind. Both are blank.

A crash reduces
your expensive computer
to a simple stone.

Bill Gates dies and heads up to the pearly gates (no relation). SaintPeter meets him there and says, "Well, you've led an... interesting life, Bill. To be perfectly honest, we're not quite sure which place to send you. So we're going to let you decide." Gates swallows nervously and says, "okay". St. Peter snaps his fingers and they are instantly transported to a sunny beach. There's beer and rock music and topless women playing volleyball. Gates says, "Hey, is this heaven? It's GREAT!" St. Peter says, "No, this is Hell. Let me show you what Heaven is like." He snaps his fingers again and they are instantly transported to a serene city park. There's a soft breeze and birds are chirping and old people are sitting on benches feeding pigeons and playing chess. Gates says, "Well, this is... nice. But, given a choice, I guess I'll take Hell." St. Peter says, "You got it," and snaps his fingers. Gates is instantly imbedded in molten lava where his skin is flayed off in unspeakable agony. All around him he can hear demonic laughter and the screams of the damned. He looks up and shouts, "Hey, it wasn't like this! Where's the beach? Where're the babes?" Saint Peter looks down from his Macintosh and says, "Sorry, Bill. That was the demo version."

- MCSE == Mentally Challenged Slave of the Empire.
- Q: How many Microsoft Programmers does it take to screw in a lightbulb?
A: It cannot be done. You will need to upgrade your house.
- Microsoft does have a Y2K problem... it's called Linux!

Linux: transforms your microcomputer in a workstation.

Windows NT: transforms your workstation in a microcomputer. (Submitted by Paulo F. Sedrez)

When you say "I wrote a program that crashed Windows", people just stare at you blankly and say "Hey, I got those with the system, *for free*"
(By Linus Torvalds)

The jokes are collected from various websites

Continue from Page 6, Col 4

R Gopalakrishnan, Secretary to chief minister, Madhya Pradesh

In the area of education, governments will need to enlist the computer as a tool to push the frontiers of learning to improve quality. We need to transit from the current obsession with mere computer literacy to generate cyber coolies for the market but see the potential of the medium to stimulate the inherent creativity of the human mind. Open source software has been the preferred medium in learning institutions because here students can investigate the medium they work with and construct knowledge.

What can be the down-side of a policy shift to open source software in India? The standard fear is about who will provide maintenance and support. This fear is negated by the fact that there is a blooming support service industry which is set to grow as policy gets proactive on open source software.

Why has not there been a national policy as yet on promotion of open source software? Part of the reason is the policy leadership of southern Indian states where the issues were focused more on IT production than on IT use.

Another part of the reason is fragmented bureaucratic turf. Given the poor penetration of information technology in India, there is now a growing realisation that India will need to move to a more comprehensive "ICT Policy for Development". While formulating such a policy through amulti-sectoralforum that brings together the ministries of planning, finance, HRD, CIT, etc., the ministry of science and technology may need to comprehensively address the question as to whether the "technology framework of a government" can be based on proprietary standards. That will hopefully settle this issue.

Public policy cannot be authored on the basis of freebies or initial sweeteners in terms of discounts offered by monopolies. It has to be informed by a long-term vision. The decision of the government of Madhya Pradesh to prefer open source software of Linux for its computer-enabled education programme was, like the chief minister stated, a matter of "choosing between a free software and a monopoly".

It ought not to be seen as a vote against any particular company. Inherent in the debate on open source software are issues of freedom, monopoly and choice of the buyer. The internet itself is premised on freedom, sharing and decentralized activity. And freedom, is as of yet, one of the best ideas that humankind has produced.

Romance with Mandrake

Romance.ucam.org (<http://romance.ucam.org>) is the highly successful society for single members of Cambridge University - it's fun, free, and very popular. There is also a sister society in Oxford(OxfordRomance.org.uk) which runs the same code, on the same server (a Dual PIII, 1GHz with 1.5GB RAM) located in Cambridge. To date, we have had several thousand members and over 1.4 million messages have been exchanged. We know of at least 3 engagements and one marriage!

The site was initially implemented on MS IIS, using ASP and the Access "database" on Windows 2k. When I took over, we had outgrown this "toy" solution, and it was crashing weekly, and the database was always corrupted. After a brief dalliance with Sun's buggy Chilisoft ASP on Linux, I rewrote the site to use PHP.

(Thanks a lot to asp2php for doing much of the conversion). We use PostgreSQL, Apache, and Mandrake Linux 8.2. PHP is a joy to work with, and I was amazed by the extent to which it all "just worked" out of the box. Nice one, Mandrake!

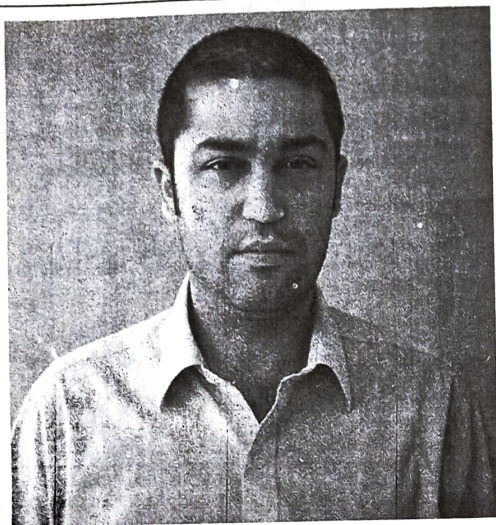
Since then, the site has almost run itself - the only interruptions we get are due to power outages! An additional benefit is that we saved £1100 by not paying for Microsoft's inferior, unstable bugware!

The "Free Software" approach is one we like - our society is very much a community based one, for which we do not charge. We are intending to expand to other Universities soon.

R Romance.ucam.org

UK

The FS Rendezvous



Arash Zaini is a Computer Professional and Free Software movement activist from Iran. Before 2001 he was engaged with several Commercial Projects. But since last year he started completely focusing on Open Source & Free Software. He is doing commercial Projects using Free Software like JAVA which runs on Cross plate Form. But has never tested them on Windows plat form.

He runs an Organization known as Chapar Shabdiz as an Founder & Managing Director which was founded in April 2001 as a spin off from Laico Industrial Group. Chapar Shabdiz offers Linux development and consulting services in areas such as application development, network infrastructure, Internet- or web-based solutions and eBusiness consulting.

He very much believes that Linux is a reliable operating system and that open source produces better software and faster, unlike the traditional models of software development. Open source lives and prospers through the community. He dedicated himself to the principles of open source and believe that they can build up a strong community in Iran contributing to the worldwide success of Linux and open source Software.

He is working as an coordinator on a FARSI language project on Linux known as FARSIKDE integrating it with KDE. Recently he demonstrated the same at the Workshop held at SARAI, New Delhi.

You can reach him by visiting his web site <http://www.chaparshabdiz.com>
interviewed by Software Freedom Network

Actions and Reactions

"Bill Gates donates 100 m \$ cheque to fight aids in India"

- "The numbers (of India's Aids sufferers) are hotly debated. That number(25 million) is highly exaggerated. Efforts to fight menance should be commensurate with the threat. I thing Gates has over done it" **Murli Manohar Joshi**



"We are a poor country. We cannot develop operating systems and platforms on our own,"

Vivek Kulkarni, information secretary of Karnataka

- Let the secretary ask what was the capital of Gates when he started Microsoft and developed operating systems. I think we should fight this Bill Gate's Jihad as well as the federal and state governments' dismissive attitude towards open source applications. **Mohan Das**

"Proprietary software companies hand out free copies for the same reason that cigarette companies give sample packs to college kids- to encourage addiction,"

Richard Stallman

Attention Readers!

The Software Freedom Team requests it's readers to send in their feedbacks & Suggestions at indiahills@vsnl.com. Articles related to Opensource and Free Software are always welcome.

Secure Linux desktop begins shipping to UK police force

Credits : John Lettice, The Register

(john.lettice@theregister.co.uk) of an ultra low cost machine being supplied by the Telford office of Taiwanese company

A pilot scheme which could see police forces throughout England and Wales switching to Linux desktops has kicked off with delivery of the first systems to the West Yorkshire force.

The deployment is taking place under a contract awarded to netproject earlier this year by the UK Police IT Organisation, and if successful will cover over 60,000 desktops. In West Yorks alone the installed base is around 3,500, and a spokesman reckoned that the savings from this would be around £1 million a year. It is however the approach and architecture of the system that is most interesting, because if it is proven to work for the police, it's likely to open doors for Linux in numerous other areas of UK public service and government. Eddie Bleasdale of netproject calls it the "Secure Open Desktop Architecture."

The user-facing part of the system consists of an ultra low cost machine being supplied reader.

by the Telford office of Taiwanese company GCI, price £299, including a smart card

These clients connect via VNC to the business end of the system, which can include legacy Windows systems, making it easier for customers to transition to open source.

The clients themselves are 'stateless,' so a user can log on with their smartcard from any machine on the network, and get immediate access to their personal desktop, which includes Openoffice. For police work this has clear advantages, because it potentially makes mobile connectivity a lot easier.

Bleasdale, who says he has interest from several other organisations, has wider ambitions for the system. Given that the client hardware isn't particularly important, for example, it can be easily swapped out with fanless workstations or appliances that would be silent, and quite possibly more reliable than your average PC.

He also pitches it (presentation available here) in the trusted computing arena, and against the PC-centric and network computer approaches.

Note that the presentation outlines a structure for an "Open Source Infrastructure for Secure E-Business," which is clearly a tad more ambitious than simply re-equipping the whole police force. And note in passing (page 9) a classic example of Eddie's characteristic tact and diplomacy: "Linux is Unix done properly."

Want to Install

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